The perceptions of middle and high school students participating in a school-based mentoring program

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
PARTICIPATING IN A SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING PROGRAM

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive study included a pool of 22 middle and high school students who participated in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program during the 2010-2011 school year, exploring their perceptions related to the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program. Focus group interviews were used to collect data from the participants. Questions asked during the focus group interviews were modified with permission from What’s Working? Tools For Evaluating Your Mentor Program, by Saito (2001) for The Search Institute. The interview questions were semi-structured, which allowed the researcher to engage in an authentic conversation with the participants and also allowed the researcher to probe the participants’ reasoning for their answers, if needed. After the focus group interviews were complete, the researcher engaged in a multiple step data analysis process that involved qualitative coding and sorting. Five key positive themes (trust, help, academic support, support system, and care) and 1 key negative theme (a fear of disappointment) were related to the first research question. Three key positive themes (acknowledgement, trust building, and academic support) were related to the second research question. Only 1 key positive theme (never needed support: students responded that they never experienced a difficult time in their mentoring relationship with which they needed their mentoring facilitator to help them resolve) was related to research question 3. The researcher drew 3 conclusions from the findings, as well as 5 recommendations for mentoring practice and 3 recommendations for future mentoring research.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Over the last few years, mentoring has become widely accepted as a positive intervention to aide youth who are considered at-risk (Walker, 2007). The magnitude of this acceptance can now be found in many pieces of legislation, such as the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that links academic and occupational learning and requires that programs created under the legislation include tutoring, study skill training, mentoring by appropriate adults, leadership development, and other appropriate services that youth need (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, 1998; Walker, 2007). Mentoring as an appropriate intervention has found its way into many human service funding proposals because government officials have recognized its value (Walker, 2007).

In 1997, President Bill Clinton, former Presidents Bush and Ford, and former First Lady Nancy Reagan joined Colin Powell to celebrate volunteerism. It was at this celebration that five essential factors were proposed to help the growing number of disadvantaged youth in America; mentoring was first on the list. In 2003, President G.W. Bush also recognized the power of mentoring and in his State of the Union address he proposed almost a half a billion dollars to go towards new mentoring initiatives, such as expanding the Safe and Stable Family Program that included a mentoring program for children of prisoners (Walker, 2007). Most recently in 2008, president-elect Barack Obama was featured in a public service campaign for ServiceNation.org to promote the importance of mentoring and highlight the impact being a mentor can have on today’s youth (Elliott, 2008).
In his study, *Mentoring, Policy and Politics*, Walker (2007) asks: “How did mentoring fare so well in these times? Is mentoring now a durable part of American social policy? If so—is this unalloyed good news?” (p. 3). Walker begins to answer these questions by first considering the notion of social policy trends, explaining that “social policy trends, like trends in any part of life, are not totally explainable by rational analysis and orderly chains of logic” (p. 4). He continues by providing five arguments as to why mentoring has gained popularity: (a) mentoring makes sense to most people, (b) mentoring fits neatly with dominant American cultural values, (c) mentoring has results, (d) mentoring has the Big Brothers Big Sisters Association as its exemplar, and (e) mentoring’s cost are not high. At the conclusion of his study, Walker identifies many positive aspects of mentoring that help explain its popularity and overall longevity, however, the most important explanation in terms of politics is that both Democrats and Republicans agree upon the need for effective mentoring.

Mentoring also has a strong foundation in the positive youth development movement. Youth development can be described in terms of “the positive relationship between the number of supports and opportunities children experience while growing up—their assets or social capital—and the increased successes and deceased problems they have during adolescence” (Jaffé, 2000, p.10). To investigate the popularity of youth-based mentoring programs and to determine their level of effectiveness, Jekielek, Moore, Hair, and Scarupa (2002) reviewed studies of 10 nationwide youth mentoring programs to answer the critical question: “Do mentoring programs work? Or, to put it another way: Are young people who participate in these programs better off because of this participation?” (p. 1). Jekielek et al. found that youth participating in mentoring
relationships experience better school attendance, better attitudes in school, higher education, and diminished substance abuse. The findings also showed that successful mentoring relationships must include frequent contact between mentors and mentees, have a defined structure, and allow enough time for the relationship between the mentors and mentees to fully develop.

The findings from Jekielek et al.’s (2002) study highlight why school-based mentoring programs are the fastest growing approach to mentoring today. In a review of school-based mentoring programs and their widespread popularity, Herrera (1999) reiterates the recurring research theme identifying “that providing youth with consistent adult support through a well-supervised, frequently meeting, long-term mentoring relationship improves grades and family relationships, and helps prevent initiation of drug and alcohol use” (p. 1). Herrera’s study outlines several unique characteristics of school-based mentoring programs that contribute to its success using the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program: (a) easy access to volunteers, (b) teachers make referrals to the mentoring program and can reach students whose parents may not otherwise be interested in involving their child in mentoring, (c) easy and effective supervision of mentor/mentee matches, and (d) connect mentoring to education.

The specific mentoring program selected for this proposed research study was created in 1996 with the goal of investing in the future of the Sonoma Valley community by providing students who are at-risk and in need of academic and social support with a one-to-one, long-term relationship with a caring adult from the community. The Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program is considered a school-based mentoring program because most of the mentoring activities take place on school grounds. Students
are referred to the mentoring program as a result of various at-risk factors: performing below grade level standards, attendance problems, discipline problems, and living in substandard home conditions. Teachers, counselors, parents, law enforcement officials, and other social service organizations can refer students to the program by submitting a nomination form (see Appendix A). The program is unique because students may also refer themselves to the program. Before students are able to participate in the program, both parental and child permission must be obtained. Currently during the 2010-2011 school year, there are 450 student participants and 220 students waiting to be matched with a mentor. Further description will be provided in the *Nature of Intervention* section later in this chapter.

**Statement of Problem**

In the Sonoma Valley community, there are a large number of at-risk students in grades 2-12 who are in need of academic and social support from a caring adult community member. These students will likely remain at-risk if something is not done to support them. The goal of the Stand By Me Mentoring Program is for each mentee to form a meaningful relationship with his or her mentor and that the relationship will act as a stimulus to assist the mentee in overcoming his or her risk factors.

Past program evaluations from the mentees’ perceptive have been conducted solely through quantitative research methodology in the form of surveys. Through this quantitative data, mentees have identified many benefits of participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program. These benefits include: an improvement in how mentees feel about themselves, school, and their future; mentees’ increased sense of trust; mentees being able to learn important skills that will help them academically and socially;
mentees developing self-confidence; mentees learning how to aspire to achieve their dreams; and mentees learning how to cope with and even overcome their problems (Stand By Me Mentoring Program, 2008). However, despite the rigorous efforts to conduct a thorough program evaluation from the mentees’ perspective with the hope of gaining insight on the positive and negative aspects of participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program, only quantitative methodology has been used. Therefore, in an attempt to validate past quantitative survey data, this researcher will use focus group interviews, a qualitative methodology, to gain further sight from mentees about the perceived benefits and challenges of participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who participate in the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program as it relates to the positive and negative of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive and negative of the mentoring program.

**Research Questions**

Three important research questions emerge to address the purpose of this study:

1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?
2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?

3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

The proposed data collection method is qualitative using small focus group interviews. The focus group interviews will be conducted in Spring 2011, when students will have been engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer. Questions asked during the focus group interviews will address the students’ perceptions as it relates to the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive or negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive or negative aspects of the mentoring program. The focus group interviews will serve as a qualitative follow up to a quantitative survey that students completed in the fall of 2010.

**Operational Definition: Student Perception**

Students’ own unique experiences from participating in the mentor program as it relates to their perceptions of the positive or negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, their perceptions of the positive or negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and their overall perceptions of the positive or negative aspects of the mentoring program. Student perception will be measured qualitatively through focus group interviews once students have been engaged in a mentoring relationship for a minimum of 6 months with the same mentor during the 2010-2011 school year.
Key Terms

**School-based mentoring program.** This term refers to the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program, which is geared towards at-risk students in the Sonoma Valley community who are in need of academic and social support.


Historically children of color and poor youth have been disproportionately at-risk in our school. Yet they are not the only children at-risk. Any child who lacks sufficient support may fail to develop adequate academic and social skills. Prenatal conditions, quality of health, family characteristics, peer influences, community climate, social status may be affected by the support networks and significantly influence a child’s readiness to learn. (p. 13)

Within this study, at-risk factors refer to performing below grade level standards, having attendance problems, having discipline problems, and living in substandard home conditions.

**Nature of Intervention**

**Overview.** Kathy Witkowicki is the Executive Director and founder of the Stand By Me Mentoring Program in Sonoma, California. She founded the program in 1996, with the help of grants, fundraising, and generous donations from community members. Later, in 1999, the program was expanded to eight campuses within the Sonoma Valley Unified School District to form the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring. The Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring is a school-based mentoring program whose goal is to invest in the future of the Sonoma Valley community by providing at-risk
students in grades 2-12 who are in need of academic and social support with an one-to-one, long-term relationship with a caring adult role model from the community. Currently, during the 2010-2011 school year, there are 450 students from this program matched with a mentor.

**Description of school district.** The Sonoma Valley School district is located in Northern California, about one hour north of San Francisco in southeastern Sonoma County. This K-12 district serves over 4,700 students and is made up of four elementary schools serving K-5 grade students, one dual immersion magnet school serving K-5 grade students, two middle schools serving 6-8 grade students, one Montessori-based charter school serving K-8 grade students, one Waldorf charter school serving K-8 grade students, one community school serving 7-10 grade students, one high school serving 9-12 grade students, one continuation high school, and one adult school. The student population is 53% Hispanic or Latino, 42% White, and 2% Asian, and the remaining 3% being a combination of American Indian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, and African American. Nearly 36% of students are English Learners with 55% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. The district’s Academic Performance Index (API) was 733 for the 2009-2010 school year.

**Mentors.** The mentors are community members of Sonoma Valley and become aware of the Stand By Me Mentoring Program through various forms of advertisement such as billboards, cinema ads, press releases, and promotions at community events. Active mentors also help recruit mentors to the program by sharing their personal experience of being a mentor. In order to be approved as a mentor, applicants must submit an application (see Appendix B), undergo fingerprint and criminal background
checks, provide three character references, and participate in interviews with program administrators. Once mentors are approved, they are matched with a mentee based on the mentee’s academic and social needs, as well as mutual interests. The mentor commitment entails: (a) being a mentor for at least one school year, (b) meeting with the mentee for a minimum of 1 hour a week during the school year, (c) attending the initial 3-hour training and orientation session, (d) signing an Expectation Agreement (see Appendix C), and (e) signing the Social Media Policy (see Appendix D). In addition to these commitments, mentors also have an opportunity to attend a Mentor Forum that is offered at the beginning of each school year, may attend ongoing workshops given by guest professionals, and may participate in mentor roundtables and support groups.

**Mentees.** Mentees are students from the Sonoma Valley School District in grades 6-12 who are nominated to the program because they are in need of academic and social support. The mentees are nominated to participate in the program because they have been labeled as at-risk due to one or more of the following factors: performing below grade level standards, attendance problems, discipline problems, and living in substandard home conditions. Teachers, counselors, parents, law enforcement officials, representatives of other social service organizations, and students themselves can submit the nomination form (see Appendix A). Before students are able to participate in the program, both parental and child permission is attained through a Mentee Expectation Agreement Form (see Appendix E). Parents must also complete a Student Profile Sheet (see Appendix F). The mentees promise to: (a) work cooperatively with their mentors, (b) do their personal best, (c) share successes with their family, and (d) be on time to weekly
meetings with their mentor. Participants in this study will be mentees in middle and high schools, due to the qualitative design of the study.

**Time frame.** The mentoring is linked to the academic calendar; the 2010-2011 school year began in August and will end in June. Each mentor is required to meet with his or her mentee weekly for 1 hour during the school year. Mentoring is optional during the summer months but is strongly encouraged. Since there are a large number of students waiting to be matched with a mentor, it is possible that mentoring may begin at various points throughout the school year.

**Fun activities.** In an effort to provide the student participants with experiences that take place outside the school day and away from the school campus, the program offers field trips, social events, entertainment, and other fun opportunities that are free to both the mentor and mentee throughout the school year. This activity component of the program was created because field trips and social events can foster some of the best mentoring moments (Stand By Me, 2008). In addition to the fun activities, an Empowerment Fund was created with the goal of providing disadvantaged students with an opportunity to follow their dreams. Through the fund, students are able participate in a wide variety of extracurricular activities without worrying about the cost. Through these activities, students are able to build their self-esteem, enjoy success, and realize that their dreams can come true. For example, students are able to learn to play a musical instrument, study martial arts, take ballet lessons, or attend art classes. Finally, students have an opportunity to give back to their community by helping out with the environment, the elderly, and the humane treatment of animals.
Cost/funding. The Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program receives 59% of its funding from hosting fundraising events. Grants from private foundations provide 25% of funding, and donations from individuals, local businesses, and merchants of Sonoma Valley provide the remaining 16% of funding. The cost to keep the program running for the 2010-2011 school year is $621,305, which includes salaries for the administrators and the eight Mentor Center Coordinators. An average of $1400.00 is allotted to each mentoring pair during the school year; this includes the cost of activities in which they may choose to participate.

Importance of Study

Mentoring is currently gaining popularity, especially school-based mentoring programs. Extensive research has been conducted showing that “providing youth with consistent adult support through a well-supervised, frequently meeting, long-term mentoring relationship improves grade and family relationships, and helps prevent initiation of drug and alcohol use” (Herrera, 1999, p. 1). This positive impact draws researchers to continue to review mentoring programs and the many variables that exist within them to further identify their effectiveness. An area that has not been researched as much revolves around the following research questions:

1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?

2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?
3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

It is anticipated that addressing these questions will help identify how students feel about their mentoring relationship, the impact of their mentoring relationship, and their overall perception of the mentoring program. These data will help the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program, as well as other school-based mentoring programs, improve their effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who participate in the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program as it relates to the positives or negatives of their mentoring relationship, the positives or negatives of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positives or negatives of the mentoring program. It is hoped that this qualitative descriptive exploration will reveal further positive aspects that can contribute to the power of mentoring and open new areas of interest for further research related to improving mentor program effectiveness.

Delimitations

The Stand By Me Mentoring Program was selected for this study because it exemplifies a well-organized school-based mentoring program that targets at-risk youth in grades 2-12 in California, which is unusual because similar programs tend to target youth in only one age range, such as elementary, middle, or high school. The program was also selected because it adheres to the mentoring best practices that have been adopted by leading mentoring organizations and because it promotes mentor/mentee relationships that exceed one school year. Middle and high school students were selected
as participants in this study because of the type of methodology that will be used. It is likely that students in middle and high school, as compared to students in elementary school, will have had more experience reflecting on their participation in the mentoring program and will be better able to comprehend the interview questions and provide more useful details to support their answers than younger mentees. Additionally, middle and high school students who have been engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer were selected as participants because research shows that the longer the mentor/mentee relationship, the greater the possibility of positive outcomes becomes (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). These students will be able to reflect on and share their personal experience of having a mentor. Finally, school-based mentoring was selected because it is the fastest growing type of mentoring today (Jekielek et al., 2002).

**Limitations**

The amount of time during which students have been matched with their mentor will vary, therefore, one limitation that exists within this study is that the results gathered will be different depending on the amount of time students have been engaged in a mentoring relationship. This limitation has the possibility of hindering the researcher from drawing further conclusions based on the reported lived experiences of the mentees. A second limitation that exists is the fact that each mentor/mentee relationship is different, which could lead to mentees having extremely different experiences in the program and will naturally be reflected in participants’ reported lived experiences. Additionally, there is a possibility that the match between mentor and mentee may be tenuous and there is no guarantee that the pair will have a productive relationship.
Finally, since the data will be collected using focus group interviews, the mentees may not feel comfortable telling the truth and may feel pressured to say positive things regarding their mentoring experience because of the group setting.

**Assumptions**

The researcher assumes that mentees will accurately and honestly report about their perceptions of the mentoring program, both positive and negative. The researcher also assumes that students will be able to verbalize how they feel about their mentoring relationship and that students may feel more comfortable writing the information down or even answering the questions in a one-to-one interview setting.

**Study Organization**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the background on why mentoring has become a widely accepted prevention program for at-risk youth and provided the possible benefits that youth may receive from participating in school-based mentoring programs. Furthermore, the statement of problem, purpose of study, research questions, operational definition, key terms, and nature of intervention of the study were presented. At the conclusion of the chapter, the importance of the study, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were provided.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature related to mentoring that begins with a discussion of at-risk youth and the various types of prevention programs that have been approved to assist them. Mentoring is then highlighted as a promising prevention for at-risk youth; the historical definition and theoretical context of mentoring are also discussed. The chapter continues with a discussion of the importance of targeting at-risk youth and provides a brief description of the types of mentoring programs that are most
commonly used today. The chapter concludes by focusing on school-based mentoring, mentoring best practices, the characteristics of successful mentoring relationships, and challenges that accompany mentoring.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology for this study; it includes the research design and rationale, human subjects, human subject considerations, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and analytic techniques. Chapter 4 will present the results of this study. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the study and suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

This review of literature will begin by exploring the impact that the A Nation At Risk report of 1983 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 had on identifying at-risk youth. Evidence-based prevention programs will be described as one way to help youth overcome their various risk factors. Mentoring will be introduced as one promising prevention program to help youth who fail to meet academic standards and who are socially at-risk. Mentoring will then be discussed in terms of its historical definition and theoretical context. The special considerations that must be made when using mentoring to target at-risk youth will be explained. This will be followed by a discussion of the different types of mentoring, which can either be agency-based, community-based, faith-based, workplace-based, or school-based. The advantage of school-based mentoring when targeting at-risk youth will also be described. Mentoring best practices that were developed by the leading mentoring organization Big Brothers Big Sisters of America will be presented. The characteristics of successful mentoring relationships will be presented along with validating empirical studies. Finally, challenges related to mentoring will be discussed, in addition to the limiting drawbacks related to school-based mentoring programs.

At-Risk Youth

A Nation at Risk. The idea of being an at-risk student is not new; in fact, the U.S. was first labeled at-risk in the 1983 report “A Nation At Risk” from the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). The report “warned in vivid language that the nation’s future prosperity was threatened by the woeful condition of American
education” (Peterson, 2003, p. 27). The intention of the report was to bring about reform in the educational system because at that time members of the NCEE felt education institutions had drifted away from their true purpose and lacked high expectations and standards (NCEE, 1983). Prior to the publishing of this report, most educational debates focused on equal access to resources for all students, however, the opening lines of the report shifted the emphasis to results because the report insisted that all students were able and should have the opportunity to learn (Peterson, 2003). The report began:

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself. (NCEE, 1983, p. 1)

The impact of the report changed the philosophy of education to “all children can learn…[I]t was no longer enough to provide equal facilities; it became necessary to justify programs and expenditures in terms of whether students made genuine gains” (Peterson, 2003, p. 34). The report demanded accountability from teachers, districts, states, and even the government because the nation’s prosperity was in jeopardy.

The NCEE provided several indicators of the risk this nation faced and used the indicators to stress the need for reform, not only for struggling students, but also for the nation as a whole. Some of the more striking indicators included the following:

1. Twenty-three million American adults were illiterate when assessed in everyday reading, writing, and comprehension;
2. Functional illiteracy among minority youth was as high as 70%;

3. There was a drop in SAT scores between 1963 to 1980 by an average of 50 points on the verbal sections and an average of 40 points in mathematics;

4. Internationally, American students had never scored first or second in comparisons of student achievement (NCEE, 1983).

The report discussed the idea of reaching excellence in education as a way to overcome these risk indicators. The NCEE (1983) defined excellence in this way:

At the level of the individual learner, it means performing on the boundary of individual ability in ways that test and push back personal limits, in school and in the workplace. Excellence characterizes a school or college that sets high expectations and goals for all learners, then tries in every way possible to help students reach them. Excellence characterizes a society that has adopted these policies, for it will then be prepared through the education and skill of its people to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. (p. 6)

In order to reach this level of excellence, the NCEE (1983) provided recommendations in the following areas:

1. Curriculum content;
2. Standards and expectations of students;
3. Time devoted to education;
4. Teacher quality; and
5. Educational leadership
6. Financial support of education (p. 3).
These recommendations encouraged those involved in education to take ownership of the problem, set high expectations for all students, review and revise academic standards, and hold all stakeholders accountable for learning (Peterson, 2003).

In 2008, 25 years after A Nation At Risk was published, the U.S. Department of Education (2008) released a report reviewing the progress the nation had made since 1983. This progress report stated that the nation is still at-risk, however, it is now “a nation informed, a nation accountable, and a nation that recognizes there is much work to be done” (p. 6). The report also highlighted the progress that has been made since 1983, such as the implementation of standards-based education, improvements in teacher preparation programs, and higher expectations for students at all levels of instruction.

To illustrate the improvement in students’ proficiency levels since the original report, the 2008 report compared 20 fourth grade students who were born in 1983 to 20 fourth grade students who were born in 1997. The report showed that in 1983, only 6 of the 20 students were proficient in reading and only four were proficient in math. In comparison, there were seven fourth grade students born in 1997 who were proficient in reading and eight who were proficient in math. The above findings were used to show that the U.S. was improving in math but continued to struggle in reading. Overall, the report emphasized that the U.S. was moving in the right direction, especially when reporting student achievement results; this is done by grade, subject, subgroup, school, district and state, and U.S. student achievement results are now easily accessible to all (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), introducing transparency into the educational system. The report concluded with the reality that
While we are finally capable of defining our difficulties, the full solutions to some of them have not yet been found. Where solutions have been found, they have not been put fully in place because not everyone is willing to accept and make the changes that are necessary. (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 14)

**No Child Left Behind.** The grim reality of the nation’s educational system paved the way for legislation like the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, which mandated states to establish content standards and yearly assessments, and Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, which gave states resources to create content standards. Among all recent educational reform legislation, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is by far the most notable. The NCLB act originated from the momentum of the standards and accountability movement and was signed into law by 43\textsuperscript{rd} U.S. President George W. Bush (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). NCLB focused on six important areas:

1. Improving achievement of disadvantaged students;
2. Recruitment and training of teachers and principals;
3. Language instruction for limited English proficient students;
4. Funding for federally impacted areas,
5. Reading first and literacy programs; and
6. Dropout prevention. (Jones, 2009, p. 2)

NCLB also mandates that failing schools offer students choices to receive additional outside support or to attend privately run schools; schools that do not adhere to these guidelines run the risk of losing federal funding (Peterson, 2003).
In essence, NCLB was “designed to close achievement gaps and bring all students to the ‘proficient’ level on state tests by 2013-14, in part by ensuring access to high-quality teachers, improved reading instruction, and other measures” (Olson, 2004, p. 1).

To meet the demands of NCLB, beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, all states were required to test all students in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Additionally, beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, states were required to administer standards-based tests once in grades 3-5, again in grades 6-9, and once in grades 10-12 to comply with the law.

Under NCLB:

federal law requires schools to get a minimum percent of students in each subgroup—including those who are poor, speak limited English, have disabilities, or come from racial- and ethnic- minority backgrounds—to the “proficient” level on state tests each year. (Olson, 2004, p. 3)

This proficiency level is reported as commonly reported as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) scores. Title I schools (schools that receive federal funding for the purposes of improving academic achievement of the disadvantages) that fail to make sufficient achievement growth for 2 consecutive years or more are placed into program improvement. Program improvement schools are given time to make needed improvements to their educational program, however, if they do not make enough improvements, they are at risk of receiving federal sanctions. NCLB stipulates that:

In the first year of improvement status, they must permit students to transfer to a higher-performing public school. In year two, students in such schools also are eligible for free tutoring, known as supplemental services. In the third year, the
schools enter “corrective action,” which may involve such steps as replacing the curriculum, lengthening the school day or year, or decreasing the school’s management authority. Title I schools in year four of improvement must prepare for “restructuring,” which can range from reopening the school as a charter school to replacing its principal and teachers, turning it over to private management, or having it taken over by the state. (Olson, 2004, p. 4)

Implications of A Nation At Risk and NCLB on identifying at-risk youth.

The “A Nation At Risk” report opened many Americans’ eyes to the grim reality of a failing educational system. The report reminded every American that the future prosperity of this country lies in the educational system, encouraging immediate actions to remedy the problem. The NCLB act attempted to make sure every student has a high quality education and is able to make yearly academic growth. Both of these reforms shaped the way at-risk youth are identified in school, by first acknowledging that certain students are not meeting academic expectations because of being disadvantaged or other uncontrollable reasons, and mandating that educational institutions focus on ways to provide equitable access to curriculum and programs for these at-risk students. Most importantly, NCLB demands accountability from schools and because of this, schools are looking to prevention programs to reach their at-risk youth.

Prevention Programs for At-Risk Youth

Youth today are not only at-risk because of academic factors, they also face other risk factors such as: social alienation, substance abuse, financial hardships, sexual abuse, mental and physical health problems, poor living conditions, and a lack of familial support (Vissing & Moore-Vissing, 2006). To help youth overcome these risk factors, the
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has a program that provides evidence-based prevention and intervention programs to youth practitioners and schools that “can make a difference in the lives of children and communities” (“Model Programs Guide,” n.d., para. 1) The scientifically based programs that are provided address issues such as educational problems, mental health, and substance abuse. The programs are grouped into three categories: prevention, sanction, and reentry. In the prevention section, a wide range of programs are provided to reach at-risk youth, such as academic skills enhancement, after school/recreation, alternative school, classroom curricula, leadership and youth development, vocational/job training, and mentoring. Over the last 20 years, these prevention programs were created to help guide at-risk youth away from entering the juvenile justice system. This new model is known as the public health model of delinquency prevention because it focuses on “reducing the risk of [at-risk behavior] and increasing resiliency against problem behavior” (“Prevention,” n.d. para. 2).

**Academic skills enhancement.** Academic skills enhancement programs “use instructional methods designed to increase student engagement in the learning process and hence increase their academic performance and bonding to the school” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 1). These programs are listed as an approved prevention technique because according OJJDP, “academic failure is often viewed as a gateway to delinquency” (“Academic Skills Enhancement,” n.d., para.1).

**After school and recreation.** After school and recreation programs “offer rewarding, challenging, and age-appropriate activities in a safe, structured, and positive environment” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 3). These programs are listed as an approved
prevention technique because they have the possibility of reducing delinquency due to the reduced amount of time youth have to engage in delinquent behavior ("Prevention," n.d.).

**Alternative school.** These programs are for youth who are not able to function in a traditional school setting, often times because their delinquent behavior. Alternative educational environments are listed as an approved prevention because they “place a great deal of emphasis on small classrooms, high teacher-to-student ratios, individualized instruction, noncompetitive performance assessments, and less structured classrooms” ("Program Types," n.d., para. 5).

**Classroom curricula.** Classroom curricula are “classroom-based instruction programs designed to teach students factual information; increase their awareness of social influences to engage in misbehavior; expand their repertoires for recognizing and appropriately responding to risky or potentially harmful situations” ("Program Types," n.d., para. 6). These programs also aim to help improve conflict resolution skills and teach the importance of moral character ("Prevention," n.d.).

**Leadership and youth development.** Leadership and youth development programs help prepare youth to “meet the challenges of adolescence through a series of structured, progressive activities and experiences that help them obtain social, emotional, ethical, physical, and cognitive competencies” ("Program Types," n.d., para. 19). This prevention program is promising because it “views youth as resources and builds on their strengths and capabilities to develop within their own community” ("Program Types," n.d., para. 19).

**Vocational and job training.** Vocational and job training help increase “social and educational functioning” ("Program Types," n.d., para. 29) by providing youth
“social, personal, and vocational skills and employment opportunities to help them achieve economic success [and] avoid involvement in criminal activity” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 29).

**Mentoring.** Mentoring is intended to “support the development of healthy individuals by addressing the need for positive adult contact and, thereby, reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors for problem behavior” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 20). This is done by fostering “relationship[s] over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where an older, caring, more experienced individual provides help to the younger person as he or she goes through life (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 20).

**Mentoring Identified as One Promising Prevention for At-Risk Youth**

The aforementioned prevention programs have all been proven to make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth (“Model Programs Guide,” n.d.). However, for the purposes of this study, mentoring was chosen as the top prevention program and will be discussed for the remainder of this paper because it is “one of the oldest forms of prevention and its influence extends across many fields” (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 3). Mentoring was also selected because it is unique and it “can impact so many different risk factors and can support many different protective factors at the same time” (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 5). The OJJDP reported that according to the U.S. Department of Justice:

the mere presence of a mentor can provide a youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment
opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values, a sense of self-worth, and
perhaps most important, goals and hope for the future. (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 5)

**Historical Definition**

Mentoring has been given many definitions since the initial term was introduced
in Homer’s 800 B.C.E epic poem *The Odyssey*, when Odysseus (Ulysses) was preparing
to leave for war in Troy and asked his friend Mentor to care for his son (McCluskey,
Noller, Lamoureux, & McCluskey, 2004). It was from that epic poem that a mentor came
to be viewed as an experienced person who can help guide another in the right direction.
Over the course of time the various similar definitions were given for the term (Jekielek
et al., 2002; Loscuito, Fox, Hilbert, Sonkowsky, & Taylor, 1999), all agreeing that:

> a mentor is an older, more experienced non-familial person who can serve as a
role model and who engages in a one-to-one, hands on positive relationship with a
younger person that is characterized by interest, caring, and sharing of experience
knowledge and skills. (McCluskey et al., 2004, p. 97)

**Theoretical Context**

According to the OJJDP, in order to help youth overcome the various risk factors,
effective prevention programs “must both reduce risk factors that increase the risk of
problem behavior and enhance protective factors that buffer children from risk”
(“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 5). Mentoring is an effective prevention program because it:
supports the development of healthy individuals by addressing the need for
positive adult contact and, thereby, reducing risk factors (e.g., early and persistent
antisocial behavior, alienation, family management problems, and lack of
commitment to school) and enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs,
opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 5)

Mentoring is also an effective prevention program because it promotes resilience in youth. Rak and Patterson (1996) define resilience as “the capacity of those who are exposed to identifiable risk factors to overcome those risks and avoid long term negative outcomes such as delinquency or school problems” (p. 368). There are two main factors that are commonly cited as indicators of resilience, which are also the foundations of mentoring: “the presence of someone to relate to and the ability to generate that relationship” (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 6). This is why mentoring has the possibility of increasing resiliency in at-risk youth, because:

- youth who are involved with at least one caring adult are more likely to withstand the range of negative influences, including poverty, parental addiction, family mental illness, and family discord than are peers who are not involved in a similar relationship. (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 7)

**Targeting At-Risk Youth**

Mentoring at-risk youth requires special consideration because the students have a greater need for a caring adult role model. At-risk students may never have experienced an adult who follows through with plans; therefore, exposure to mentoring has the potential to reinforce reliability and accountability. Mentoring can also result in several positive outcomes from which at-risk youth are likely to benefit. These outcomes, according to Dappen and Iserhagen (2005), include being “more likely to trust teachers, achieve a more positive attitude toward school, maintain better attendance, perform higher academically, possess higher self-confidence, express feelings, and experience
improved relationships with adults and peers” (p. 22). Herrera (1999) also notes that school-based mentoring that specifically targets at-risk youth can result in “strong relationships that can develop within the school context and these relationships can make a difference in the lives of youth” (p. 16).

**Types of Mentoring Programs**

Traditional one-to-one mentoring is the most common type of mentoring; it consists of connecting one adult with one youth (MENTOR, 2009). In addition to one-to-one mentoring, other types of mentoring are currently being used, such as team mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, and e-mentoring. Team mentoring has become a popular approach to mentoring due to the increased need for qualified mentors; it involves connecting several adults with a small group of youths who have similar needs, with the adult to youth ratio not exceeding 1:4. Group mentoring is used when one adult is connected with up to four youths. Peer mentoring involves older students mentoring their younger peers. E-mentoring is the newest type of mentoring and it involves adults connecting with youth using e-mail and Internet tools. All of the types of mentoring mentioned can be agency-based (taking place at a community agency like an after school program), community-based (taking place anywhere in the community), faith-based (taking place in a house of worship), workplace-based (taking place at the mentor’s place of employment), or school-based (taking place on school grounds). It is important to provide mentoring programs to students within the school environment because in most cases it is the only consistent environment they know.
Table 1

*Summary of Types of Mentor Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-To-One Mentoring</th>
<th>Team Mentoring</th>
<th>Group Mentoring</th>
<th>Peer Mentoring</th>
<th>e-Mentoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecting one adult to one youth</td>
<td>Connecting several adults with a small group of youths who have similar needs 1:4</td>
<td>One adult is connected with up to four youths</td>
<td>Older caring youth mentors a younger peer</td>
<td>Adults connecting with youth using only e-mail and other internet communication tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School-Based Mentoring**

School-based mentoring that targets at-risk youth also requires intensive planning for the staff members involved in the program. Mentors must understand that this type of mentoring can be and most often is a “demanding task requiring dedication and commitment in abundance” (McCluskey et al., 2004, p. 86). It is necessary for mentors to have patience and recognize the important role they play in helping at-risk youth make better decisions and become more aware of themselves and their interactions with others. Trust building is also critical to this type of mentoring relationship and in most cases is the reason why mentoring relationships fail when targeting at-risk youth (McCluskey et al., 2004). The trust building process goes through the developmental stages that were originally described by Erik Erikson in the 1950s and adapted by Ferguson and Snipes (1994): trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus identity confusion, and intimacy versus isolation. As a mentee transitions through these stages, the mentor must be resilient and able to deal with the various emotions the mentee will display.
When participating in a school-based mentoring program targeting at-risk youth, the mentoring program must be a joint effort because:

to be most effective, the mentor needs to work not only with the child, but with others in the child’s environment as well. Parents, teachers, mentors, and other service providers, such as police, social workers, corrections officers, and medical professionals, are all important agents in helping to develop youth. Each needs to understand and practice methods for supporting the development of healthy identities. (Mccluskey et al., 2004, p. 86)

These at-risk youth are able to adapt quickly to the new relationship and respond accordingly. The youth are at-risk for a reason, and an additional caring adult that has a purpose in their lives as a mentor can help show them a different path. These youth are in “desperate need of time, attention, and direction…[and more importantly] several young lives have apparently been turned around through this [type of] mentoring connection” (Mccluskey et al., 2004, p. 87).

VanderVen (2004) furthers the argument for focusing on at-risk youth by providing some compelling benefits to school-based mentoring, the first being investing in the youths’ social capital. Social capital “consists of social structures, networks and connections, and actions that encourage people to work for a common good” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 95). School-based mentoring programs are centered around the idea of building the capacity of participating youth, and doing so benefits not only the youth but also people with whom the youth come into contact: members of society. Another benefit of targeting at-risk youth is to help them overcome attachment issues. At-risk youth “often have a history of neglect, rejection, multiple caretakers, and other
factors that disrupted their ability to form a meaningful bond with a primary caregiver” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 96). Therefore, providing an at-risk youth with a mentor, who is in essence an additional caring non-familial adult role model, could have the possibility of reshaping his/her inability to form meaningful relationships with adults and could positively impact factors that caused the youth to be at-risk. A third compelling benefit to targeting at-risk youth is to improve their resilience. “Resilience in essence is the ability to adapt to adverse life occurrences in a healthy way” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 96). The idea of resilience is significant in the youth development movement because an important goal is to educate youth on how to use coping skills to overcome problems and situations that they are likely to face. Mentoring is again important for at-risk youth because most mentoring programs focus on “interests and social skills that increase coping skills” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 96). Finally, young people must have adaptive social skills in order to thrive in today’s society. VanderVen refers to these social qualities as emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy. All of these abilities are important because “there is no stronger index of emotional health than the ability to get along with and derive pleasure from being with others” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 97).

Informal mentoring vs. formal mentoring. In an attempt to explain the unique nature of mentoring, McCluskey et al. (2004) explain that there are two main types of mentoring: informal and formal. “Informal, spontaneous mentoring occurs during the natural course of events, when someone simply reaches out to give support or direction to another person” (McCluskey, 2004, p. 85). In the case of school-based mentoring, this type of informal meeting is commonly found between students and their teachers and is
often not recognized as a form of mentoring. This type of mentoring may also have a substantial impact on at-risk students because even though there are growing numbers of organized school-based mentoring programs, there are even more students who are in need of this type of structured, non-familial guidance. The other type of mentoring that McCluskey et al. describe, formal mentoring, refers to “planned, instrumental mentoring [that] tends to be more broadly-based and systematic” (p. 85).

A well known formal mentoring program is Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), which Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) describe as the “oldest, best-known and arguably, the most sophisticated mentoring program in the United States” (p. 10). BBBSA’s goal is to give young people aged 6-18 across America a positive, one-to-one relationship with a caring adult that will hopefully leave a lasting impression (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America [BBBSA], 2010). BBBSA offers: community-based mentoring; school-based mentoring; and mentoring specifically for African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and military children. BBBSA has had remarkable success; studies have found that students who participate in their mentoring programs are “more confident in their schoolwork performance; able to get along better with their families; 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs; 27% less likely to begin using alcohol; [and] 52% less likely to skip school” (BBBSA, 2010, para. 6).

Tierney et al. (1995) conducted the first scientifically credible study of the BBBSA to provide evidence that the program has “many positive and socially important effects on the lives of its young participants” (p. 2). The research focused on determining if a one-to-one mentoring relationship made a real difference in the lives of youth with
regard to reduced antisocial activity, improved academic outcomes, better relationships with family and friends, improved self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment.

The study design was comparative, involving approximately 960 male and female youth between the ages of 10-16 who were participating in the BBBSA program between 1992 and 1993. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to a treatment group, in which an attempt to match them with a mentor was made; the other half of the participants were placed on a waitlist and no mentor-mentee match was made (Tierney et al., 1995). The rationale for random assignment was to ensure that “the treatment and control groups [were] statistically equivalent, on average, with respect to all characteristics except program participation” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 8).

Data were collected from the participating youth, their parents, and the mentor program case managers at three different points during the study. The first data collection took place once youth were granted permission to participate; these data were used as the baseline. The second data collection took place once the youth were matched with a mentor. The final data collection occurred at a follow-up towards the end of the program. Youth and their parents answered survey questions and the case managers completed data collection forms.

After 18 months, the researchers compared the two groups and found that youth who were matched with a mentor “were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol; were less likely to hit someone; improved school attendance and performance, and attitudes toward completing schoolwork; and improved peer and family relationships” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 10). The growing popularity of mentoring in the late 1990s can be attributed to this study’s findings. BBBSA’s success also led to other programs and organizations
adopter operating standards as a general framework or guideline of best practices when organizing effective mentoring programs.

**Mentoring Best Practices**

A contributing factor to BBBSA’s success is the fact that all of their participating agencies follow a set of operating standards and customize them to fit the needs of the youth they serve (Tierney et al., 1995). The standards were created by BBBSA’s national office and “represent minimum acceptable program practices” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4). The standards are related to the screening of volunteers and youth who wish to participate in the program, necessary training of the volunteers and youth, and program supervision. Variations of these same standards can be found consistently throughout many types of youth mentoring programs.

**Volunteer screening.** The first and most critical standard is related to volunteer screening. “The purpose of the screening process is to protect the youth by identifying and screening out applicants who pose a safety risk, are unlikely to honor their time commitment or are unlikely to form positive relationships with the youth” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4) and to determine whether they have “qualities to be an effective mentor” (MENTOR, 2009, p. 6). The BBBSA’s screening process is time consuming and can take from three to nine months to complete (Tierney et al., 1995). Most youth mentoring programs’ screening practices involve face-to-face interviews and thorough reference and criminal background checks (MENTOR, 2009; Miller, 2007). After beginning the process, “30 percent [of mentor applicants] either withdrew or were considered by staff to be inappropriate, and 35 percent had not completed all the steps of the process” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4).
Youth screening. The second standard, youth screening, determines if the young person would likely benefit from participating in a program based on BBBSA’s objectives. BBBSA’s youth screening process consists of a written application, followed by interviews with the youth and parent, and concludes with a home assessment (Tierney et al., 1995). Most BBBSA agencies “require that youth have no more than one parent/guardian actively involved in their life, meaning that almost all youth deemed eligible live in single-parent households” (p. 4). Other important aspects of the youth screening process are related to the age of the youth and the agreement from parents that the youth will be able to participate in the program and follow its guidelines.

Training. The third important standard is related to training volunteers in the program requirements, rules, expectations, and procedures to report abuse (Tierney et al., 1995). Effective training is vital to program success because of its implications on the volunteer’s initial perceptions about the mentor/mentee relationship with regard to needed support, connectedness with youth, personal satisfaction, and overall effectiveness as a mentor (Herrera et al., 2007; Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton, & Pepper, 2000; MENTOR, 2009; Miller, 2007). BBBSA does not require, but highly recommends, further training in the areas of “the developmental stages of youth, communication and limit-setting skills, tips on relationship-building, and recommendations on the best way to interact with [mentees]” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4). Programs also have the option to provide the youth with training in various areas related to their participation in the program.

Matching. The fourth standard involves carefully matching the youth with an acceptable volunteer. BBBSA’s recommendation about matching is to “make matches
based on each volunteer’s ability to help meet the needs of specific youth” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4). MENTOR (2009) encourages programs to “match mentors and mentees along dimensions [because it is] likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure” (p. 12). In general, practical factors, such as gender, race and ethnicity, location, religion, and mutual interests, are taken into consideration when pairing mentors with mentees (MENTOR, 2009; Tierney et al., 1995).

**Supervision.** The fifth standard, supervision, is an area that BBBSA emphasizes as critical to program success. Each program has its own specific requirements, however, BBBSA requires that the initial contact between the parent, youth, and volunteer needs to be made within 2 weeks of being matched. In addition, case managers need to have monthly contact with the volunteer, parent, and youth; this is done to provide guidance in the relationship and handle any problems that may arise (Tierney et al., 1995). This is also done to “monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem solving support and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship” (MENTOR, 2009, p. 14). Previous research shows that effective supervision and support can lead to more positive outcomes for the youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Herrera et al., 2000; MENTOR, 2009; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).
Table 2

**Summary of Mentoring Best Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Best Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Screening</td>
<td>Volunteers who are a safety risk, who are unlikely to honor their time, and who are unlikely to form positive relationships; can take between 3-6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Screening</td>
<td>Determines if the young person would likely benefit from participating in a program based on program’s objectives; includes: written application, interviews with youth and parents, and a home assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Initial training related to training volunteers in the program requirements, rules, expectations, and procedures to report abuse; recommends further training in developmental stages of youth, communication and goal setting, and relationship building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>“Make matches based on each volunteer’s ability to help meet the needs of specific youth” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4); consider practical factors such as gender, race and ethnicity, location, religion, and liking mutual activities (MENTOR, 2009; Tierney et al., 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Critical factor to program success; monitors relationship; helps with problem solving; effective supervision and support can lead to more positive outcomes for youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Relationships**

The key ingredient to making all of the aforementioned compelling factors of mentoring true is the relationship formed between the youth and the mentor. This new structured relationship development “offers [youth] another opportunity [to build stable, nurturing relationships], and it is not surprising that outcome studies show an increase in a variety of prosocial behaviors by youth who have a strong and productive relationship with a caring adult” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 97). It is important to understand whether school-based mentoring programs are actually encouraging effective and meaningful mentoring relationships or if they are encouraging ineffective relationships due to the condensed time-frame that comes along with school-based mentoring. Encouraging
effective and meaningful relationships is critical because research shows that “closer, more supportive mentoring relationships are more likely to make positive changes in youth’s lives” (Herrera et al., 2000 p. 6). This section will continue with a discussion of the following characteristics of successful mentoring relationships: matching, relationship duration, frequency and consistency of contact, quality of the connection that forms, and mentor’s approach to the relationship (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Matching. The process of mentor-mentee matching is an extremely important first step to fostering meaningful relationships. According to Dappen and Iserhagen (2005), specific criteria that are directly related to the goals of the program need to be determined before any matches can be made. It is also important to consider extracurricular hobbies and interests because the majority of the activities in which youth and mentors participate are related to shared interests. Herrera et al. (2000) highlight that the “strength of the bond that forms between mentor and youth governs the degree of impact their relationship will have, and that engaging in friendship-based activities is a key component of a relationship that will endure” (p. 8).

According to MENTOR (2009), matching is among six critical evidence-based standards that should be considered when operating effective mentoring programs: recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring and support, and closure. The matching standard states “match mentors and mentees along dimensions likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure” (MENTOR, 2009, p. 12). Before much of the current mentoring research was conducted, many programs naturally matched mentors and youth solely because they were of the same race. This was done because it was thought that the youth would better relate to someone who looked like
they did. However, beginning in 1992 and then again in 1995, Morrow and Styles (1995) studied mentor-youth relationships to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics that exist in both successful and unsuccessful mentor-mentee relationships, as reported by mentors and mentees themselves. Morrow and Styles also considered variables such as same-race matches compared to cross-race matches when mentors and youth identified the relationships as successful or unsuccessful. Morrow and Styles ultimately wanted to find out why some mentoring relationships do well and why others do not.

Morrow and Styles’ (1995) study included 82 mentoring pairs that represented a mixture of male, female, same-race, and cross-race matches from eight different BBBSA organizations across the country. The mentoring pairs met the criteria that they had already established a relationship for a minimum of 4 months but no longer than a year prior to the study. The study was qualitative; the youth and adult each participated in two semi-structured interviews at two points during the study. The study found that both mentors and youth agreed that mentors who focused on being a friend rather than trying to change, fix, or transform the youth were more likely to have successful relationships. The study found no significant difference in relationship quality among same-race matches compared to cross-race matches (Morrow & Styles, 1995), “suggesting that matching on race may not be a critical dimension of a successful mentoring relationship” (MENTOR, 2009, p.12).

**Relationship duration.** Youth who experience longer meaningful relationships have the possibility of gaining greater benefits from mentoring compared to youth who experience shorter relationships that may have ended prematurely (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). In the past, evaluators of mentoring programs linked program quality to the
number of new mentoring pairs because they assumed that growth meant success. However, more recently, researchers have begun focusing on aspects of duration of the match, such as “match closure rates, percentage of matches reaching the initial time commitment and beyond, and the average length of match in the program” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51). The new idea is that “creating a new mentoring relationship is just the starting point [because] a greater marker of quality is whether relationships are sustained over time” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51).

Grossman and Rhodes (2002) utilized Tierney et al.’s (1995) longitudinal data to conduct their study that examined the “differential effects and predictors of mentor relationships of varying length” (p. 202) to determine if “the effects of mentoring relationships will intensify with time” (p. 202). The duration of the mentoring relationships were classified into four different groups: less than 3 months, 3 to almost 6 months, 6 months to almost 12 months, and 12 months or longer. The study found that youth whose relationship ended in less than 3 months experienced “significant declines in their global self-worth and their perceived scholastic competence” (pp. 207-208). In contrast, “youth who were in matches that lasted more than 12 months reported significant increases in their self-worth, perceived social acceptance, perceived scholastic competence, parental relationship quality, school value, and decreases in both drug and alcohol use” (p. 208). Overall, the study findings show that the longer the relationship, the greater possibility of positive outcomes.

**Frequency and consistency of mentor and youth contact.** Frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful relationship (DuBois & Neville, 1997). “Reliability is a cornerstone of trust, and for
many youth who have experienced significant disruptions in important relationships [such as at-risk youth], it can be critical to the formation of a lasting and meaningful bond with a mentor” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51). Mentoring programs that follow the mentoring best practices have minimum requirements for how often and for how long mentors and youth should be in contact on a weekly and monthly basis (MENTOR, 2009). It is important that the mentor-youth relationship be given time to develop and “it is generally thought that spending time together regularly creates opportunities for mentors to become more directly involved in youth’s lives and for positive changes to occur” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51).

In a 2007 study, Spencer targeted 24 mentoring pairs who were engaged in successful ongoing mentoring relationships to understand the elements that contributed to their relationship success and the impact frequent interaction between the youth and the adult had on the relationship. The mentoring pairs participated in in-depth, audio taped, semi-structured interviews both individually and together. The questions focused on expectations, memories, typical activities, times of conflict or stress, and anticipated length of relationship to discover the contributing factors to frequent and consistent relationships. Spencer found that one critical area that contributes to unsuccessful relationships is ending within the first 3 months because the relationship did not have time to fully develop. In contrast, relationships that last for at least 1 year and follow mentoring best practices tend to produce greater benefits for the youth participants.

**Quality of the connection that forms.** Youth who are emotionally engaged in close mentoring relationships have improved outcomes in academics and ideas of self-worth compared to youth who are not emotionally engaged or in close relationships.
(Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). It is because of these results that “it is important to assess perceptions of closeness and whether the adult has become a meaningful person in the child’s life” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 52) throughout the mentoring relationship from the youth’s perspective.

Goldner and Mayseless (2009) conducted a study to assess the qualities of mentor-youth relationships related to closeness and dependency as reported by youth and mentors. The research was conducted using the largest Israeli mentoring program known as Perach (Hebrew acronym for Mentoring Project) that was established in 1974. Perach targets disadvantaged youth and connects them with university students who earn a small grant for their service. The findings from this study show a relationship between the quality of mentor-youth relationships and improved academic and social functioning. Overall, “this study provided cross-cultural evidence of the association between closeness in mentoring relationships and progress in protégés’ social and academic adjustment even in a short-term intervention” (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009, p. 10).

**Mentor’s approach to the mentoring relationship.** The way the mentor approaches the mentoring relationship has recently emerged as an important factor in evaluating the qualities of effective mentoring relationships (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). The mentoring approach refers to “how the mentor thinks about [the relationship], engages with [the youth], and responds to the youth [within the relationship]” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 52). There are two common approaches mentors take: developmental (youth-centered) approach and prescriptive. Mentors who fall under the developmental approach spend a great deal of time at the beginning of the relationship focusing on activities that help build a strong connection with the youth. These mentors “place a high
value on making the relationship enjoyable, and set developmentally appropriate expectations that are informed by the youth’s preferences and interests” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 53). Mentors who fall under the prescriptive approach tend to establish developmentally inappropriate or unrealistic goals for the youth without getting any input from the youth. These mentors “pay less attention to building an emotional connection with the young person” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 53) and put more emphasis on getting the mentoring job done, which is seen as getting the youth back on the right path.

In addition to the developmental and prescriptive approaches, the mentoring relationship quality also includes: the mentor’s positive regard, authenticity, empathy, warmth, and ability to provide needed support (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). Regardless of which approach the mentor takes, it remains important to be genuine with the youth and act as a role model and not a parent, doctor, or therapist. Furthermore, “actively striving to be empathic, or to understand the young person’s frame of reference and emotional experiences from the youth’s perspective, may convey that the mentor both cares about and understands the protégé for who he or she is” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 53).

Jones and Perkins (2006) conducted a study examining the lived experience related to the perceptions and experiences youth and adults have when participating in community-based mentoring relationships with the intention of shedding light on the causes of youth and adult separation within a community setting. The reason given for conducting such a study was adults tend to have negative stereotypes of today’s youth and in order to get youth to participate within their communities, adults need to reach out and overcome their negative stereotypes. The participants completed the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale, a 38 questions survey used to assess youth and adult perceptions
of the mentoring relationship in three areas: youth involvement, adult involvement, and youth-adult interactions. The study found that relationships that were youth-led had more positive results compared to relationships that were adult-led. The findings from this study further illustrate that youth-centered relationships are connected to positive mentoring results.

Table 3

Summary of the Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Study Cited and Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>The first step to fostering meaningful relationships. “The strength of the bond that forms between mentor and youth governs the degree of impact their relationship will have [on the youth]” (Herrera et al., 2000)</td>
<td>Morrow &amp; Styles, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Duration</td>
<td>Youths who experience longer meaningful relationships have the possibility of gaining greater benefits from mentoring compared to youth who experience shorter relationships that may have ended prematurely (Deutsch &amp; Spencer, 2009).</td>
<td>Grossman &amp; Rhodes, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency &amp; Consistency of contact</td>
<td>Frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful relationship (DuBois &amp; Neville, 1997).</td>
<td>Spencer, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Connection</td>
<td>Youths who are emotionally engaged in close mentoring relationships have improved outcomes in academics and ideas of self-worth (Grossman &amp; Rhodes, 2002)</td>
<td>Goldner &amp; Mayseless, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor’s Approach</td>
<td>“How the mentor thinks about [the relationship], engages with [the youth], and responds to the youth [within the relationship]” (Deutsch &amp; Spencer, p. 52).</td>
<td>assessing the qualities of mentor-youth relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jones &amp; Perkins, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptions &amp; experiences related to relationship separation due to mentor’s approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges

Despite the many known positive aspects of mentoring, there are also challenges that come with the practice. VanderVen (2004) describes one of the common challenges as premature or early termination of the mentoring relationship by the mentor, “since it can reinforce distrust of adults” (p. 98) that mentees, especially at-risk ones, may already possess. Another challenge is dealing with students who have attachment issues because of other circumstances in their lives. Placing this type of student in a one-to-one mentoring relationship could do more harm than good because the student may cling to the stability that the mentor provides. A third and crucial challenge is the inattention given to matching students with appropriate mentors. Many programs carelessly match students with mentors because they are of the same gender or racial group, failing to realize that “matches of members of both same and different racial groups have been found to be successful, [only] if other ingredients for successful relationship formation are present” (VanderVan, 2004, p. 100).

It is also important to note that most “discussions of mentoring tend to center on the poignant and often powerful stories of how the presence of a supportive adult made all the difference in a young person’s life” (Spencer, 2007, p. 2). These stories are rightfully told because they attract the needed funding and volunteers. However, it is just as important to tell the unpopular stories of “what happens when these relationships do not go well” (Spencer, 2007, pp. 2-3) because this learning can also positively impact further program improvements. Spencer (2007) conducted a qualitative study to understand the factors that contribute to mentoring relationship failures by interviewing adults and students who participated in two community-based mentoring programs and
asking them about their impression of why their mentoring relationship failed. Spencer found six recurring themes that offered common explanations for early termination of mentoring relationships:

1. Mentor or protégé abandonment: either the mentor or student left the relationship;
2. Perceived lack of protégé motivation: mentors felt students did not really want or need a mentor;
3. Unfulfilled expectations: both mentors and students had expectations for the relationship and when these were not met, the relationship suffered;
4. Deficiencies in mentor relational skills, including the inability to bridge cultural divides: mentors did not focus the relationship on the students, they had unrealistic mentoring expectations, and were not aware of how cultural biases impact the relationships;
5. Family interference: lack of family support for the relationship;
6. Inadequate agency support: either not enough support or too much support. (p. 10)

**Challenges with school-based mentoring programs.** Jucovy (2000) discusses the drawbacks that exist when creating school-based mentoring programs, as opposed to other types of mentoring programs such as community-based programs. The first drawback is that school-based mentoring programs are more suitable for elementary schools rather than middle or high schools. This is because:

   elementary schools are relatively small, and students are with the same teacher for most of the day, making it easier to schedule mentor-student meetings. In
contrast, middle and high schools are usually large and administratively complex, and this has made it difficult for mentoring programs to gain entry. (Jucovy, 2000, p. 11)

The next drawback of school-based mentoring is that there is a limit to the range of experience mentors can provide students. Jucovy (2000) argues that:

   because of the place-based nature of the meetings, school mentoring may not be a good approach for programs whose goals are to help youth develop job-readiness skills, provide career exploration opportunities, or expose youth to other experiences requiring activities that take place away from the school. (p. 11)

Finally, the last drawback to school-based mentoring is the limited amount of time the mentoring relationship has to flourish. This is because “high-risk children and youth tend to move frequently, and when the move results in their enrolling in a different school, they are lost to the program” (Jucovy, 2000, p. 12).

To help organizations overcome the aforementioned drawbacks, Jucovy (2000) provides a list of suggested practices to either begin a school-based mentoring program or improve an existing program:

1. Identify any connections your organization may currently have to the school system or individual schools;
2. Seek access to the highest-level decision making authority available to you within the school district;
3. Show how your program will help achieve existing educational objectives;
4. Find a champion (a supporter);
5. Get buy-in from key school-related groups;
6. Be alert to potential “turf” issues;
7. Be sure there is a shared understanding of a mentor’s role;
8. Be sensitive to schools’ concerns about the well-being of their students. (pp. 15-17)

**Impact of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program**

**Study.** A recent challenge to mentoring is the failed government-led mentoring initiative that was intended to promote quality formal mentoring. The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Student Mentoring Program, a federal grant program that was authorized under NCLB, section 4130, was managed by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS). The program was geared towards at-risk youth and focused on their academic and social needs (Bernstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009). The goal of the mentoring program was to address “the lack of supportive adults at critical junctures in the lives of students at risk by providing funds to schools and community-and faith-based organizations to create school based mentoring programs targeting children in grades 4-8” (Bernstein et al., 2009, p. 15).

According to Bernstein et al. (2009), programs that received the ED Student Mentoring Program grant were responsible for carrying out numerous best practices such as: identifying targeted students; mentor selection that includes recruiting, training, and ongoing support; organized supervision and monitoring of mentor relationships; and incorporating activities that were “designed to improve interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers, other adults and family members; increase personal responsibility and community involvement; discourage drug and alcohol use, use of weapons and other
delinquency involvement; reduce dropout rates; and improve academic achievement” (pp. 15-16), which failed to take place.

Bernstein et al. (2009) conducted an experimentally designed impact study of the ED Student Mentoring Program focusing on the success and effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs that were funded by the ED program and implemented by different organizations across the U.S. in 2004 and 2005. The majority of the participating mentoring programs either had an academic focus or focused on preventing or reducing at-risk behaviors. The research questions for this study were:

1. What is the impact of ED school-based mentoring programs on students’ interpersonal relationships with adults, personal responsibility, and community involvement?
2. What is the impact of ED school-based mentoring programs on students’ school engagement (e.g., attendance, positive attitude towards school) and academic achievement?
3. What is the impact of ED school-based mentoring programs on students’ high-risk or delinquent behavior? (Bernstein et al., 2009, p. 7)

The study found that students in the treatment group (those who received mentoring) “did not report statistically significant differences in interpersonal relationships, personal responsibility, and community involvement at the end of the spring school term relative to students in the control group” (Bernstein et al., 2009, p. 53). Additionally, “students in the treatment group did not exhibit statistically significant differences in academic achievement or school engagement relative to students in the control group” (Bernstein et al., 2009, p. 53). Finally, “students in the treatment group did not exhibit statistically
significant lower levels of high risk or delinquent behavior relative to students in the control group” (Bernstein et al., 2009, p. 53). The negative results of this study led to the 2010 elimination of funding for this program.

Summary

In conclusion, mentoring is just one of many promising prevention programs that aim to help at-risk youth. Mentoring stands out because of its longevity, benefits, and various models of implementation. Mentoring is an ideal prevention program for at-risk youth, not only because it helps build their resiliency to overcome numerous risk factors, but also because it provides youth with an additional caring adult role model. This chapter discussed the benefits of school-based mentoring, as well as recent empirical research that shows in order for mentoring to be effective, best practices must be utilized. Additionally, mentoring organizations must also foster successful mentoring relationships by paying attention to matching, relationship duration, frequency and consistency of the contact between the mentor and youth, and the quality of the mentoring relationship. Although it generates many known benefits, mentoring also has its challenges and it is important that mentoring organizations pay attention to the most common challenge: early termination of the mentoring relationship. Finally, it is important to remember that even though mentoring is just one way to reach at-risk youth, its benefits certainly outweigh its challenges.
Chapter 3: Methods

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who participate in the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program as it related to the positives and negatives of their mentoring relationship, the positives and negatives of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positives and negatives of the mentoring program.

This qualitative descriptive study collected data in Spring 2011, during the 2010-2011 school year, from 22 middle and high school participants in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program. Data related to students’ perceptions was collected through qualitative focus group interviews in Spring 2011, when students had been engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer. Questions asked during the focus group interviews were be related to the students’ perception of the positives and negatives of their mentoring relationship, the positives and negatives of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positives and negatives of the mentoring program. This study was not part of the program evaluation for the Stand by Me Mentoring Program. It was a separate and independently conducted dissertation research project. Whereas the Stand by Me Mentoring Program used a quantitative survey to collect data about students’ mentoring experiences in the fall of the 2010-2011 school year, this study used qualitative focus group interviews to explore more deeply and to better understand mentees’ site-based mentoring program experiences. The quantitative survey data was not used in this dissertation.
A qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive study, was selected for this research project because it is a “study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 139). The researcher utilized this methodology to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a middle or high school student participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program and to further understand from their perspective the impact, if any, that the program has had on their lives. Finally, a qualitative descriptive study was selected by considering the age range of the participants and selecting a methodology that would foster a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the participants to address the purpose of this study. The researcher acts as a listener, which typically turns the formal qualitative interview into an informal conversation because the participants tend to feel comfortable sharing their experiences with the researcher.

Focus group interviews were selected as the data collection tool for this study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), “face-to-face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and therefore gain their cooperation; thus, such interviews yield the highest response rates in survey research” (p. 185). A focus group is conducted when “a researcher may want to interview several participants simultaneously” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 146). Focus group interviews were selected because they are useful to researchers particularly when “time is limited, [when] people feel more comfortable talking in a group than alone, [and when] interaction among participants may be more informative than individually conducted interviews” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 146).
The interview questions that were used in this study were semi-structured, which means “the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p.185). This semi-structured interview format was selected because it allowed the researcher to probe the participants’ reasoning for their answers, if needed. This type of interview format also contributes to the participants “feel[ing] as if they’re simply engaging in a friendly chat with the researcher” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p.184), which is helpful because the researcher’s goal is to “gain participants’ cooperation and encourage them to respond honestly” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 185) to the selected interview questions.

The qualitative focus group interview methodology was selected because despite rigorous efforts to conduct program evaluation from the mentees’ perspective, only a quantitative methodology has been used. The researcher and program administrators feel that a thorough program evaluation should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative components, however, the program has not been able to conduct the qualitative component because of the time commitment it demands. Therefore, the researcher collected qualitative data from mentees, in the form of focus group interviews, with the hope of gaining further insight from mentees on the positive and negative aspects of their participation in the program. After the qualitative data is shared with the mentoring program, the leaders of the program will be able to compare the qualitative responses to the quantitative responses to find out if there are any similarities or differences.

**Human Subjects**

The subjects for this study were middle and high school students who are participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program during the 2010-2011 school year.
These students were recruited from an eligible pool of participants that was generated by the Mentor Center Coordinators at all three school sites. In order to be eligible to participate in the study, students must have currently been participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program and have been engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer.

**Human Subject Consideration**

The Program Coordinator of the Stand By Me Mentoring Program granted the researcher permission to conduct this study (see Appendix G), as well as the Superintendent (see Appendix H) and principals from each school site (see Appendix I). Secondly, the researcher went through Pepperdine University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) process by submitting the pre-IRB Methods Review application and the IRB application. This study qualified for expedited review because it entailed gathering information about perceptions through a focus group interview methodology. To gain informed consent, the researcher asked the Mentor Coordinator at each site to create a list of eligible subjects who met the criteria to participate in the study, which was having been in the program for at least six months. The lists included the names of the student and parent, address, and phone number. The lists were e-mailed to the researcher and the researcher randomly selected ten prospective participants from each school site to send the parental consent (see Appendix J) and student assent (see Appendix K) letters to by regular mail. The researcher included two copies of both the parental consent and student assent letters, with directions for parents and students to sign one copy and keep the other copy for their records. The researcher also included a stamped self-addressed envelope in the mailing, to allow the parental consent and students assent letters to be returned.
directly to the researcher. Once the researcher received the signed parental consent and student assent letters, the researcher continued by contacting the prospective participants and their parents to provide information regarding the date, location, and time of the focus group. The researcher contacted all twenty-two prospective participants who returned both the parental consent and student assent letters. The parental consent letter and student assent letter served as the only recruitment strategy. A focus group reminder notice (see Appendix L) was sent to the participants through regular mail one week before the focus groups took place.

Participants should experience minimal risk during this study, such as ordinary discomforts when answering questions from an adult. Participants were asked to address questions related to their perceptions of participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program as it relates to their mentoring relationship; the impact of their mentoring relationship; and the overall mentoring program. It was possible that students may have become upset because they were asked to reflect on parts of their mentoring experience that may not have been pleasant. If this occurred, the researcher made a referral to the school counselor, who was available to provide additional support to students. Students may have also experienced anxiety because they are unaware of the types of questions that they were asked during the focus group interview. If this occurred, the researcher reassured students about the types of questions that were be asked. Students may have also experienced fatigue as a result of sitting for an extended period during the focus group interviews. If this occurred, the researcher allowed students to take a short break. Finally, in the case of adverse or unexpected events, the researcher provided a counselor referral to any participant who either expressed or demonstrated the need to discuss any
unpleasant mentoring experience. Additionally, under California law, the researcher took the necessary steps if any participant alleged child abuse, or indicated that he or she wished to do serious harm to self, others, or property.

At the beginning of the focus group, the researcher went through a welcome script (see Appendix M), which included a brief introduction of the researcher, welcoming the students, and thanking students for their participation in the focus group. The researcher then provided an overview of the topic and reviewed why students were asked to participate in the focus group interview. The researcher continued by reviewing the focus group guidelines that were posted on chart paper. These guidelines were used to inform students about what a focus group is and how a focus group works. Since focus groups were being used, there was an additional risk that students may repeat or share with someone outside of the focus group things that were shared by students during the focus groups. To address this possible risk, as part of the welcome script, the researcher also discussed the importance of confidentiality with students in an attempt to inform them in an age appropriate manner. The researcher explained confidentiality using the following example:

Think of it like when a friend tells you something that others may or may not already know and you want to share what your friend told you with someone else BUT you decide not to because don’t want to mess up the trust that you have with your friend. You wouldn’t want to share what your friend told you with anyone else unless you first get your friend’s permission.
The researcher continued the focus groups with an icebreaker to get students motivated to participate in the discussion. These things were done to also create trust amongst the group and to help establish clear expectations among the participants.

Participants in this study were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they may choose to opt out of participating at any time during the study. This information was be provided in both the parental consent and student assent letters, as well as verbally stated at the beginning of each focus group interview session. The researcher kept the participants’ responses confidential throughout the study. Participants did not have to identify themselves while being audio recorded during the focus group interviews and only the researcher and other focus group participants knew their identity. Participant names were included in transcriptions of the interviews. The data from the interviews will be shared together, so that the mentoring program will not be able to determine which responses came from which school site. The data collected from the focus group interviews will be kept confidential throughout the study and locked in a secured file box. At the completion of the study, the transcribed interviews were stored on a computer using password protection and will be destroyed after three years. The outcomes of this study were provided to the program administrators of the Stand By Me Mentoring Program electronically through portable document (PDF) format.

**Instrumentation**

Qualitative data was collected in the form of focus group interviews. Student participants in this study were asked focus group questions taken from *What’s Working? Tools For Evaluating Your Mentor Program*, by Saito (2001) for The Search Institute (see Appendix N). The questions were intended for youth ages 9 and over, which was
within the age rage of the participants in this study. The focus group interview questions were intended as a follow-up to a quantitative survey that the students completed in October 2010, which was also modified from a survey (see Appendix O) that is included in the aforementioned publication.

Interview questions (see Appendix P) that were asked in the focus groups were separated into three groups that are directly related to the research questions of this study:

1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?
   a. What do you like about having a mentor?
   b. What do you not like about having a mentor?
   c. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?
   d. If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say?

2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?
   a. Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you? (For example, has having a mentor helped you get along better with your family or friends or teachers? Or, do you feel like having a mentor has helped you do better at school? Or, have you learned anything new, experienced things you might not otherwise have experienced?)
b. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?

c. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it’s like to have a mentor?

d. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?

3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

   a. What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it?

   b. Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the facilitator could have better helped you.

The researcher contacted two experts in the field of mentoring to get their feedback on the interview questions. The researcher asked each expert their opinion on whether the interview questions were aligned with the study’s research questions; if the questions were worded appropriately for the age of the participants; and if the questions were worded in such a way that they will provide meaningful responses. The first expert to respond has been working in the field of mentoring since 1998 and has conducted several notable evaluations and impact studies of mentoring programs. This expert has also worked closely with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to help them design and implement evaluations of their programs. Currently, this expert is working on an evaluation of a mentoring program to outline the effects of mentoring on higher risk youth.
### Table 4

**Correlation between Research Questions, Interview Questions, and Literature Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Cited Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship? | a. What do you like about having a mentor?  
  b. What do you not like about having a mentor?  
  c. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?  
  d. If a friend asked you about what it is like to have a mentor, what would you say? | Herrera et al., 2000  
  Tierney et al., 1995 |
| 2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship? | a. Has your mentor helped you in any way?  
  If so, in what ways has he or she helped you?  
  b. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?  
  c. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it is like to have a mentor?  
  d. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be? |  |
| 3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program? | a. What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it?  
  b. Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the facilitator could have better helped you. |  |

The researcher engaged in a 30-minute phone conversation with the expert to go over the interview questions. This expert felt that the interview questions were aligned with the research questions. The expert is currently working with the same age group as the participants in this study and felt that the questions were age appropriate and would allow for meaningful responses if participants felt comfortable sharing their experience. This expert shared the importance of having a welcome script and beginning with some sort of icebreaker to help the participants feel comfortable. The researcher shared that
both a welcome script and icebreaker were being used at the beginning of each focus group. This expert also shared that it would be helpful to know how long each participant has been connected with their mentor because this could factor into their ability to respond to certain interview questions. The second expert to respond is the lead advisor to one of the largest training and technical assistance providers to youth mentoring programs. This expert has in depth knowledge about the different mentoring models and mentoring for specific populations, such as at-risk youth. This expert felt that the interview questions were appropriately aligned to the study’s research questions and seemed to be worded in an age appropriate manner. This expert did not respond to whether the questions are worded in such a way that will provide meaningful responses, however, the expert did caution the researcher about using examples when asking the interview questions with the explanation that students tend to give similar responses to the example that was used and explained that the researcher should be careful not to influence any of their responses. From the expert feedback, the researcher decided to ask participants how long they have been connected with their mentor has a follow-up question using the semi-structured interview format. The researcher also decided to limit the examples provided to students in an attempt not to influence their responses.

After receiving expert feedback, the researcher conducted a pilot test using students of a similar age and demographic to the prospective participants of this study who participated in a mentoring program for nine months. This pilot test was conducted to help the researcher understand the utility and reliability of the interview questions, as well as to check whether the interview questions produced information that addressed each research question. The researcher used the data from the pilot test to practice
sorting, coding and identifying themes from the data to prepare for the actual data
analysis from the focus groups.

Setting, Data Collection, and Procedures

Students were recruited from Adele Harrison Middle School, Altimira Middle
School, and Sonoma Valley High School, all of which participate in the Stand By Me
Mentoring Program. These schools were chosen because subjects in the desired age range
attend either middle or high school. Additionally, the schools were chosen because they
were the only two middle schools and high school within the Sonoma Valley Unified
School District. The Sonoma Valley Unified School district is located in Northern
California, about one hour north of San Francisco in southeastern Sonoma County. The
K-12 district serves over 4,700 students and is made up of four elementary schools
serving K-5 grade students, one dual immersion magnet school serving K-5 grade
students, two middle schools serving 6-8 grade students, one Montessori-based charter
school serving K-8 grade students, one Waldorf charter school serving K-8 grade
students, one community school serving 7-10 grade students, one high school, one
continuation high school, and one adult school. The student population is 53% Hispanic
or Latino, 42% White, and 2% Asian, and the remaining 3% being a combination of
American Indian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, and African American. Nearly 36% of
students are English Learners with 55% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price
lunch. The district’s Academic Performance Index (API) was 733 for the 2009-2010
school year.

The researcher engaged 22 participants in this study. The participants were from
an eligible pool of 118 middle school and 120 high school students who were
participating in the program during the 2010-2011 school year and who have also been engaged in a mentoring relationship for a minimum of 6 months. The 22 student participants returned both the parental consent and student assent letters to the researcher and were cleared to participate in the study. Out of the 30 parental consent and student assent letters that were mailed out, only 22 students returned both letters, so the researcher continued the study as planned.

The researcher conducted a total of three focus group interview sessions; one at each school site. There were 8 student participants from Sonoma Valley High School, 7 student participants from Adele Harrison Middle School, and 7 student participants from Altimira Middle School. The researcher intended to keep the focus groups relatively small to allow each student to actively engage in answering the questions and provide details. The data collection took place over a 2-day period: 1 day Adele Harrison Middle School and Sonoma Valley High School and another day at Altimira Middle School. A reminder notice was sent to participants one week prior to the actual focus group interviews to remind both students and parents. The researcher conducted the audiotaped focus group interview sessions inside the Mentor Center at each school site using a digital audio-recorder. The focus group interviews duration ranged from 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Since the focus group interviews took place during students’ lunch break, the researcher provided students with pizza, fruit, and a drink for lunch.

Analytic Techniques

Once the data collection process was complete, the researcher began a multiple step qualitative data analysis process, which Creswell (2009) describes as “preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into
understanding the data, representing the data, and making interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (p. 183). The researcher utilized Creswell’s generic six steps approach to analyze the qualitative data. The following steps were used:

1. The researcher “organize[d] and prepare [d] the data for analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). To do this, the researcher had the audio from the focus group interviews transcribed into a Microsoft Word Document to prepare for further analysis.

2. The researcher “read through all the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185) to “obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). During this step, the researcher also recorded student responses to each interview question onto colored adhesive notes to help with the next step of the analysis. Three different color adhesive notes were used to differentiate between the responses from each school site. Using the different color adhesive notes helped the researcher record student responses into the appropriate tables later in the process.

3. The researcher began “detailed analysis with a coding process” (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). Creswell (2009) defines coding as “the process of organizing the material into chunk or segments of text before bringing meaning to information” (p. 186). Coding “involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term” (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). To begin this process, the researcher first combined similar responses from each school site to help with reduction of repeated data. Next, the researcher sorted the
responses to each interview question as either positive and negative and recorded the number of each type of response for each school site. Last, the researcher reviewed both the positive and negative responses and developed codes based on the ideas that emerged from the data (Creswell, 2009). Creswell notes that codes usually address “topics that readers would expect to find, that are surprising and that were not anticipated, that are unusual, and that address a larger theoretical perspective” (pp. 186-187). At this point in the data analysis process, the researcher asked another graduate student who has experience with qualitative coding to go through the same coding process to cross-check codes (Creswell, 2009) by comparing results.

4. The researcher used “the coding process to generate themes for analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). During this step the researcher reviewed the coding that took place in the previous step to “generate a small number of themes” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). Creswell (2009) suggests generating between five to seven themes, which “should display multiple perspectives from individuals and be supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). During this step, the researcher recorded positive and negative themes that emerged from the coding process.

5. The researcher determined how the “themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). To do this, the researcher used tables that displayed the positive and negative themes, recorded the number of responses for each theme, and included key words and phrases directly from student responses to illustrate the themes. To present the findings to each
research question, the researcher will display a separate table for each school site that will also be separated by each interview question. There will be separate tables for the positive and negative themes. Finally, overall summary tables that list all of the emerged positive and negative themes will be included for each interview question.

6. During the final step, the researcher made “an interpretation or meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). This step is characterized as reflecting on lessons learned from the data that could be:

   the researcher’s personal interpretation, couched in the understanding that the inquirer brings to the study from her or his own culture, history, and experiences. It could also be a meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with the information gleaned from the literature or theories (Creswell, 2009, p. 189).

   To do this, the researcher included a summary and discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the final chapter of this dissertation.

The above data analysis steps were taken to help ensure qualitative validity and reliability of the data analysis process. Creswell (2009) states that qualitative validity is when “the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures” (p.190). He then explains that qualitative reliability is when “the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). In addition to the above data analysis steps, the researcher also used one of eight validity strategies that Creswell (2009) explain, “should enhance the researcher’s ability to assess the accuracy of the findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy” (p. 191). The
validity strategy was spending “prolonged time in the field” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). This allowed the researcher to develop “an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Furthermore, the researcher used two of the four reliability procedures that Creswell (2009) describe, which were “check[ing] transcripts to make sure they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription” (p. 190) and asking another graduate student to “cross-check codes” (p.190).
Chapter 4: Results of the Study

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who participate in the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program. Specifically, this study sought to explore how students’ perceptions related to the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program.

Restatement of Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?

2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?

3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

Review of Research Design

In Spring 2011 the researcher conducted a qualitative descriptive study to understand students’ perceptions about participating in the Stand By Mentoring Program as they related to their mentoring relationship, the impact of their mentoring relationship,
and the mentoring program itself. Whereas the Stand by Me Mentoring Program used a quantitative survey to collect data about students’ mentoring experiences, this study used qualitative focus group interviews to explore more deeply and better understand mentees’ mentoring program experiences. A total of 22 middle and high school students participated in this study; participants attended one of three schools within the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. There were eight students from Sonoma Valley High School, seven students from Adele Harrison Middle School, and seven students from Altimira Middle School. All of the students were mentees in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program and were engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer.

Questions asked during the focus group interviews were modified from *What’s Working? Tools For Evaluating Your Mentor Program*, by Saito (2001) for The Search Institute (see Appendix N) and were intended for youth aged 9 and over, which was within the age range of the participants in this study. The interview questions were semi-structured, which allowed the researcher to engage in an authentic conversation with the participants and also allowed the researcher to probe the participants’ reasoning for their answers, if needed.

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher elicited feedback from two experts in the field of mentoring on whether the interview questions were aligned with the study’s research questions, if the questions were worded appropriately for the age of the participants, and if the questions were worded in such a way that would generate meaningful responses. The researcher also conducted a pilot test using students of a similar age and demographic to the participants of this study. This pilot test was conducted to help the researcher understand the utility, validity and reliability of the
interview questions, as well as to check whether the interview questions produced information that addressed each research question. The researcher used the data gathered from the pilot test to practice sorting, coding, and identifying themes to prepare for the actual data analysis from the focus groups.

In order to participate in the study, each student was required to return the parental consent and student assent forms to the researcher. One focus group took place at each of the three school sites. After the focus groups were complete, the researcher engaged in a six-step data analysis process that involved:

1. Transcribing the audio from the focus groups into a Microsoft Word Document,
2. Reading through the data and recording students responses on colored adhesive notes that differentiated responses from students at each school site,
3. Sorting the data based on similar responses to each question from the different school sites and developing appropriate codes based on the ideas that emerged from the data (Creswell, 2009),
4. Recording the emerged positive and negative themes,
5. Creating tables to display the findings to each research question broken down by responses to each interview question that will be provided in this chapter, and
6. Discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations that will be presented in Chapter 5.

Before presenting the findings in this study it is important to note that the number of respondents differ from the number of responses that are provided in the tables below.
Due to the authentic conversational nature of the focus group interviews, some respondents did not respond to every question and some respondents had the opportunity to respond more than once to some of the interview questions. Therefore, it is important to reiterate that there were a total of 22 middle and high school student participants: 8 participants from Sonoma Valley High School, 7 participants from Adele Harrison Middle School, and 7 participants from Altimira Middle School. It is also important to note that out of the 22 participants, only five participants were male: three from Sonoma Valley High School and two from Adele Harrison Middle School. Altimira Middle School was the only all female gender group; when comparing the researcher’s experience of facilitating both middle school groups, the gender-like group seemed more comfortable responding to the interview questions.

In the following sections, the findings from this study will be presented using tables that have the emerged themes listed in order based on the total number of responses, as well as exact key words and phrases from students’ responses. The reader should note that some key words and phrases were repeated, and when this repetition occurred, the researcher placed an asterisk next to the repeated key words and phrases.

**Research Question 1 Findings**

Research Question 1 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship? To address this research question, four interview questions were asked:

1. What do you like about having a mentor?
2. What do you not like about having a mentor?
3. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?

4. If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say?

**Responses to Interview Question 1a.** Interview question 1a asked: What do you like about having a mentor? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as a breakdown of the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.

As summarized in Table 5, there were a total of 19 Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from students’ responses: trust, help, and friendship. The themes of trust and help had the greatest number of responses (eight) and the theme friendship had the fewest number of responses (three).

As summarized in Table 6, there were a total of six Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: trust and help. Both themes had the same number of responses (three).

As summarized in Table 7, there were a total of 10 Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Four positive themes emerged from students’ responses: trust, fun activities, common interest, and help. The themes of trust and fun activities had the same number of responses (three), and the themes of common interest and help had the same number of responses (two).
Table 5

Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trust           | 8                   | • Someone who will keep your problem confidential  
|                 |                     | • Someone who is always there for me inside of school and out  
|                 |                     | • Someone who is just there for you  
|                 |                     | • Having someone you can trust *  
|                 |                     | • Someone to get advice from who you trust  
|                 |                     | • Someone who you know won’t judge you  
|                 |                     | • Someone who wouldn’t spread rumors about you  
| Help            | 8                   | • Helps me with my grades  
|                 |                     | • Helps me in school *  
|                 |                     | • Someone to guide you in the right direction  
|                 |                     | • Just someone to help you  
|                 |                     | • Someone to help you solve life problems step by step  
|                 |                     | • Someone to help with problems outside of school  
|                 |                     | • Someone to help with all my problems  
| Friendship      | 3                   | • Like a best friend  
|                 |                     | • A friend * |

Note. * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

Table 6

Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trust           | 3                   | • Somebody to talk to  
|                 |                     | • Someone you can share your feelings with  
|                 |                     | • Someone you can trust  
| Help            | 3                   | • My parents don’t know English, so my mentor helps me with my English  
|                 |                     | • Someone to help you with your work  
|                 |                     | • Someone to help with school stuff and outside of school stuff  

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Table 7

*Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• She is there for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I can tell her stuff that I can’t tell anyone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I can talk to her about anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• She takes me fun places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I get to go to different types of classes with her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I learn new things with her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• We are alike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• We have fun together because we like the same things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Helps with my homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Give a lot of help with my homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, there were 35 responses to this interview question that were used to identify the five positive themes: trust, help, friendship, fun activities, and common interest. The themes of trust and help had the greatest number of responses from all three school sites. The theme of friendship emerged based on a small number of responses from students on at the high school, whereas students at the middle schools responded that engaging in the fun activities and having common interests with their mentors were what they liked about having a mentor. These data are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses to Interview Question 1b. Interview question 1b asked: What do you not like about having a mentor? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the negative themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as a breakdown of the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as negative.

As summarized in Table 9, there were a total of six Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Three negative themes emerged from students’ responses: lack of input, a fear of disappointment, and inconsistency. All three themes had the same number of responses (two).

Table 9
Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 1b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Input</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• They choose events for us without asking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I may already have plans but my mentor chooses events for us to attend and sometimes I don’t want to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Fear of Disappointment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• I can’t say no to my mentor because I don’t want to let her down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When you get a bad grade and you don’t want to let them down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• I don’t see her very much, only like twice a month because she is busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sometimes things come up and she can’t meet with me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As summarized in Table 10, there were a total of two Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two negative themes emerged from students’ responses: meeting time conflict and a fear of disappointment. Both themes had the same number of responses (one).
Table 10

_Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 1b_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time Conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• She pulls me out of class and then I miss something important that I have to make up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fear of Disappointment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Disappointing them with grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 11, there were a total of five Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three negative themes emerged from students’ responses: meeting time conflict, negative connotations, and a fear of disappointment. The themes of meeting time conflict and negative connotations had the same number of responses (two), and the theme of disappointment only had one response.

Table 11

_Altimira Middle School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 1b_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time Conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• I miss important things in class and I have to make it up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Our meeting time goes by too fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Connotations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• When others find out you have a mentor, they think something is wrong with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When people say that mentors only give presents, which it so not true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fear of Disappointment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• When both my mom and my mentor makes plans for me, I end up having to choose and I don’t want to hurt my mentor’s feelings or my mom’s feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 13 responses to this interview question were used to identify the five negative themes: a fear of disappointment, meeting time conflict, inconsistency, negative connotations, and lack of input. The theme a fear of disappointment had the greatest
number of responses from all three school sites. Only middle school students from both school sites responded that they experienced a meeting time conflict due to having to be pulled out of class to meet with their mentors on a weekly basis. Additionally, only the high school students responded that they have experienced inconsistency from their mentors in regards to their mentors keeping their weekly meeting commitment. High school students also responded that their mentors sometimes fail to obtain their input when selecting activities for the pair to enjoy together. Finally, middle school students at one middle school responded that their peers associate a negative connotation with having a mentor. These data are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Fear of Disappointment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time Conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Connotations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Input</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to Interview Question 1c. Interview question 1c asked: What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive and negative themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as the total number of responses. Responses to this interview question were classified as either positive or negative.
As shown in Table 13, there were a total of eight Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from students’ responses: likable, support system, and resource. The theme likable had the greatest number of responses (five). The themes support system and resource had a similar number of responses.

Table 13

*Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Likable         | 5                   | • They think of her as part of our family  
|                 |                     | • My parents like her*  
|                 |                     | • They like her after getting to know her  
|                 |                     | • They think she is awesome  
| Support System  | 2                   | • My mom likes it because there is someone else to get on me  
|                 |                     | • My dad, mom, and mentor work as a team to keep me on track  
| Resource        | 1                   | • She even helps my mom with translating things into English |

*Note.* * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As presented in Table 14, there were a total of three Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Two negative themes emerged from students’ responses: difficult transition and parental replacement. Both themes had a similar number of responses.
Table 14

Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 1c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• It was hard for my parents to accept someone else in my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• At first, my parents questioned what my mentor was teaching me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Replacement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• My mom thought she was replacing her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As summarized in Table 15, there were a total of seven Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from the responses: academic support, support system, and moral support. All three themes had a similar number of responses, with academic support generating the greatest number of responses (three).

Table 15

Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• My mom likes that when she isn’t able to help me with my homework, my mentor is able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mom thinks its better for me because I get better grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My grandmother feels it’s a good support for my grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• My parents like that I can talk to someone besides them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mom likes it because I have someone else to talk to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• My parents feel it is good moral support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As summarized in Table 16, there were a total of nine Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from students’ responses: support system, academic support, and safety. The theme of support
system had a slightly greater number of responses (four) compared to the themes of academic support (three) and safety (two).

Table 16

**Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1c**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• My mom likes it because my mentor is really smart and she can help me out with things that my mom can’t because she is new to the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mom likes it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My dad likes it because she helps me with a lot of things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mom likes it because its one more person that I can talk to about my problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• My grandmother likes it because I get better grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mentor helps me with my homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mom likes it because my mentor can help me with my homework when she can’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• They like it because they feel that if I’m with her then I’m safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• They like it because they feel its another set of eyes watching me so that I won’t get in trouble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 24 responses to this interview question were used to identify the six positive themes: support system, academic support, likable, safety, moral support, and resource. The theme of support system had the greatest number of responses from all three school sites; students responded that their parents liked that they had a mentor because the mentor added to their overall support system. Students at both middle schools responded that their parents like that they had a mentor because of the academic support the mentors provide. Students at only the high school responded that their parents grew to like their mentor over time. Students at only one middle school responded that their parents liked that they had a mentor because of the extra level of safety, which contributed to their overall well-being. Two students at the other middle school shared
that their parents liked the additional moral support that the mentors provide. Finally, one high school student responded that the mentor even acts as a resource for her parent.

These data are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, only three responses to this interview question were related to two negative themes: difficult transition and parental replacement. The theme of difficult transition only had two responses, which were related to parents not understanding the purpose of a mentor and having to adjust to their child having a mentor. The theme of parental replacement only had one response related to parents feeling that the mentor would replace them as parents. All of the negative responses came from students at the high school. These data are summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

*Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 1c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Replacement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses to Interview Question 1d. Interview question 1d asked: If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.

As presented in Table 19, there were a total of four Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: care and academic support. Both themes had the same number of responses (two).

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Someone to have you in check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• An extra set of eyes on you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Someone to check on your grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Someone to check on your homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 20, there were a total of nine Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Four positive themes emerged from students’ responses: trust, care, academic support, and help. All of the themes had a similar number of responses; trust and care had the greatest number of responses, (three), academic support had the second most (two), and help had the fewest (one).

As presented in Table 21, there were a total of six Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from
students’ responses: care, help, and fun. All of the themes generated the same number of responses.

Table 20

*Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Someone to give you advice from an older point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It’s good to have someone to talk to *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It’s like having a best friend because my mentor has been around longer than any of my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mentor is my best friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Someone that knows more about me than any of my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Someone that knows more about me than any of my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Someone that knows more about me than any of my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Someone that knows more about me than any of my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Someone to help you in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It’s a great tool that you can use to help you with your school work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Someone to help you with your problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

Table 21

*Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• A mentor is there to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mentor always listens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• A mentor helps you out a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A mentor helps you go through things in your life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• It is really fun to have a mentor*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

Overall, 19 responses to this interview question were used to identify the five positive themes: care, academic support, trust, help, and fun. The theme of care had the greatest number of responses from all three school sites; students responded that the mentors showed that they cared by being there and listening to their problems. Students at the high school and one middle school responded that they would tell a friend that their
mentors provide them with academic support. Students from one middle school responded that having someone to trust is an important part of having a mentor. Students at both middle schools responded that their mentors help them get through their problems. Finally, students from one middle school responded that if a friend asked, they would share that it is fun having a mentor because of all the things you get to do with them. These data are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 1d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary: Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship? To address this research question, four interview questions were asked:

1. What do you like about having a mentor?
2. What do you not like about having a mentor?
3. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?
4. If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say?

Overall, there were a total of 12 positive themes related to Research Question 1: trust, help, academic support, support system, care, fun, likable, friendship, safety, moral
support, common interest, and resource. Based on student responses from all three school sites, five themes emerged as the top positive aspects of their mentoring relationship: trust, help, academic support, support system, and care. These data are summarized in Table 23.

Table 23

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Responses to Interview Question 1a, 1c, and 1d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, a total of seven negative themes were related to Research Question 1: a fear of disappointment, meeting time conflict, inconsistency, negative connotations, lack of input, difficult transition, and parental replacement. Based on student responses from all three school sites, one theme emerged as the top negative aspect of their mentoring relationship: a fear of disappointment. These data are summarized in Table 24.
Table 24

*Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Responses to Interview Question 1b and 1c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Fear of Disappointment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time Conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Connotations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Input</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Replacement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 2 Findings**

Research Question 2 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship? To address this research question, four interview questions were asked:

1. Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you?
2. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?
3. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it is like to have a mentor?
4. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?

**Responses to Interview Question 2a.** Interview Question 2a asked: Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’
responses to this interview questions, as well as a breakdown of the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.

As summarized in Table 25, there were a total of 12 Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Five positive themes emerged from students’ responses: relationship building, academic support, being supportive, family support, and self-esteem. The theme of relationship building had the greatest number of responses (four). The themes of academic support and being supportive generated the same number of responses (three). Finally, the themes of family support and self-esteem also had the same number of responses (one).

Table 25

Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• With friend problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• With my boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me get along with my family*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Helped me with school because my grades were bad and she pushed me to do better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me to learn to study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me with school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Supportive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• I can talk to her and not feel uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She talks with me about everything, even things my parents wont talk to me about like sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She talks to me about everything I need to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Helped me and my family get through hard times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Raising my self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As presented in Table 26, there were a total of eight Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: academic support and relationship building. The theme of academic
support had the greatest number of responses (seven). The theme of relationship building had the fewest number of responses (one).

Table 26

*Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses Interview to Question 2a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>• With math*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Homework*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All my school work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Dealing with friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As shown in Table 27, there were a total of six Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from students’ responses: dealing with problems, academic support, and self-esteem. The theme of dealing with problems had the greatest number of responses (four). The themes of academic support and self-esteem both generated the same number of responses (one).

Table 27

*Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Dealing with my problems*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning how to deal with problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dealing with my dad’s death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Helps with my homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Taught me how to come out of my shell and not be shy anymore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants
Overall, 26 responses to this interview question were used to identify the six positive themes: academic support, relationship building, dealing with problems, being supportive, self-esteem, and family support. The theme of academic support had the greatest number of responses from all three school sites; these students responded that their mentors helped them with homework or in other challenging subject areas. Students at the high school and one middle school responded that their mentors helped them build relationships with their peers and family members. Students at only one middle school responded that their mentors helped them deal with their problems. Additionally, students at the high school responded that their mentors were supportive by always being there to listen. Self-esteem also emerged as a positive theme from a small number of responses at the high school and one middle school. Finally, the theme of family support emerged from one response at the high school, this student shared that the mentor provided support to help her and her family get through hard times. These data are summarized in Table 28.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Supportive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses to Interview Question 2b. Interview question 2b asked: How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive and negative themes that emerged from students’ responses to this question, as well as a breakdown of the total number of responses. It is important to note that responses to this interview question were classified as both positive and negative.

As presented in Table 29, there were a total of three Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: self-empowerment and awareness to seek help. Self-empowerment had the greatest number of responses (two) and awareness to seek help had the fewest number of responses (one).

Table 29

Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Empowerment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Helped me come out of my shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Raised my self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness to Seek Help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• She helped me get into therapy and I needed it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 30, there were a total of two Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: academic achievement. Students’ responses to this interview question were all related to their schoolwork and their mentors inspiring them to achieve more in school.
As shown in Table 31, there was a total of one Adele Harrison Middle School student response to this interview question. One negative theme emerged from the student response: no change. This student responded that he experienced no change in how he felt about himself after having a mentor.

As illustrated in Table 32, there were a total of five Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: self-empowerment and awareness to seek help. The theme of self-empowerment had the greatest number of responses (four) and the theme of awareness to seek help had the fewest number of responses (one).
Overall, 10 responses to this interview question were used to identify the three positive themes: self-empowerment, awareness to seek help, and academic achievement. The theme of self-empowerment had the greatest number of responses from the high school and one middle school; students responded that their mentors helped them gain confidence in themselves. Students at the high school and one middle school responded that their mentors helped them become aware of how to seek help for themselves. Finally, two students at one middle school responded that their mentors help them improve their academic achievement in school. These data are summarized in Table 33.

Table 33

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 2b*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Empowerment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness to Seek Help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, only one response to this interview question was used to identify the one negative theme: no change. This negative theme emerged from one student at one middle school site, in which the student responded that there was no change on the way he feels about himself after working with his mentor. These data are summarized in Table 34.
Table 34

*Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 2b*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Theme</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responses to Interview Question 2c.** Interview question 2c asked: Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it’s like to have a mentor? Student responses to this question are presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive and negative themes that emerged from students’ responses to this question, as well as a breakdown of the total number of responses. It is important to note that responses to this interview question were classified as positive and negative.

As presented in Table 35, there were a total of three Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: trust building. Students indicated that beginning with an academic focus like helping with homework led to the development of trust between themselves and their mentors.

Table 35

*Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Theme</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust Building</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• We did activities to build our trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mentor started with just helping me with my homework and then we did other things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My mentor started to help me academically and then with everything else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 36, there were a total of five Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. One negative theme emerged from students’ responses: difficult transition. The theme of difficult transition refers to students having difficulty transitioning from not having a mentor to having a mentor.

Table 36

*Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Theme</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Difficult Transition   | 5                   | • I didn’t know I was getting a mentor  
• I didn’t understand what a mentor was  
• It was awkward at first because we were complete opposites  
• It just felt uncomfortable in the beginning |

As presented in Table 37, there were a total of four Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: trust building. Students responded that engaging in activities with their mentors helped them become comfortable and fostered trust building between themselves and their mentors.

Table 37

*Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses Interview to Question 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trust Building        | 4                   | • We made presents for people  
• We baked together  
• We did activities to get closer |

As shown in Table 38, there were a total of five Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: trust building. Students responded that spending time with their mentors and doing activities together helped them to build trust.
Table 38

*Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust Building</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• At first I didn’t trust her but then we did activities and we got to know each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Spending time with her helped me trust her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I trust her now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• We had to build trust with each other*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants*

As presented in Table 39, there were a total of five Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One negative theme emerged from students’ responses: difficult transition.

Table 39

*Middle School Students’ Negative Responses to Interview Question 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• I just didn’t know what to say when I first got my mentor*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It was just awkward because no one told me what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I felt like I didn’t want a mentor *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants*

Overall, 12 responses to this interview question were used to identify the one positive theme: trust building. Trust building emerged as a theme based on responses from all three school sites. Students shared that trust between themselves and their mentors initially began to develop by engaging in activities together. These data are summarized in Table 40.
Table 40

Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 2c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust Building</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, were 10 responses to this interview question were used to identify the one negative theme: difficult transition. This theme emerged from students’ responses at the high school and one middle school. The theme of difficult transition refers to students having difficulty transitioning from not having a mentor to having a mentor. Students shared that they were not sure of what to say to their mentors in the beginning, that they were unaware that they were getting a mentor, and that they were even unsure if they wanted a mentor. These data are summarized in Table 41.

Table 41

Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 2c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responses to Interview Questions 2d.** Interview question 2d asked: If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be? Student responses to this question will be presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.
As summarized in Table 42, there were a total of 17 Sonoma Valley Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from students’ responses: acknowledgement and positive impact. The theme of acknowledgement had the greatest number of responses (14) and the theme of positive impacts had three responses.

As summarized in Table 43, there were a total of 15 Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Two positive themes emerged from student response: acknowledgement and positive impact. The theme of acknowledgement had the greatest number of responses (12) and the theme of positive impact had three responses.

Table 42

Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>• Thank you for being there when I was in trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for never leaving me hanging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for putting up with me when my parents didn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for all your help*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I’m grateful she’s in my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I appreciate that she always shows up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I appreciate what she has done for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I love you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She’s awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I’m happy she’s my mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You’re the best*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She has helped calm me down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Without her, I would have dropped out of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She changed my life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants
As summarized by Table 44, there were a total of 10 Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: acknowledgement.

Table 43

_Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses Interview to Question 2d_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>• Thank you for being part of my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for helping me keep my grades up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you because now I have someone I trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for being in my life so long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for helping me out with everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for being a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you because I can talk to her about anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for being there for so many things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You are a big part of my life*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• You are a big part of my life*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note. *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants_

Table 44

_Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 2d_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Theme</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>• Thank you for helping me with my problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for guiding me through sad times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for being there for me as I go through rough patches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for being there for me*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I really appreciate her*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I”m grateful that she”s my mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She”s awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• She”s the best because she”s there for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note. *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants_
Overall, there were 42 responses to this interview question that was used to identify the two positive themes: acknowledgement and positive impact. The theme acknowledgement had the greatest number of responses from all three school sites, students responded that they were thankful for everything that they mentors have done for them and wanted their mentors to know how much they appreciate them being in their lives. The theme positive impact emerged from students’ responses from the high school and one middle school, students responded that their mentors have had a positive impact on their lives and are now play a big part in their lives. These data are summarized in Table 45.

Table 45

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 2d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary: Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship? To address this research question, four interview questions were asked:

1. Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you?
2. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?
3. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it is like to have a mentor?

4. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?

Overall, there were a total of 12 positive themes related to Research Question 2: acknowledgement, trust building, academic support, positive impact, self-empowerment, relationship building, dealing with problems, being supportive, awareness to seek help, self esteem, academic achievement, and family support. Based on student responses from all three school sites, three themes emerged as the top positive aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship: acknowledgement, trust building, and academic support. These data are summarized in Table 46.

Table 46

*Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Responses to Interview Question 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Building</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Empowerment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Supportive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness to Seek Help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, there were a total of two negative themes related to Research Question 2: difficult transition and no change. Based on student responses from two school sites, one
theme emerged as the top negative aspect of the impact of their mentoring relationship: difficult transition. These data are summarized in Table 47.

Table 47

*Overall Summary of Negative Themes that Emerged from Students’ Responses to Interview Question 2b and 2c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Transition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 3 Findings**

Research Question 3 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program? To address this research question, two interview questions were asked:

1. What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it?
2. Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the facilitator could have better helped you.

**Responses to Interview Question 3a.** Interview question 3a asked: What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it? Student responses to this question will be presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.
As presented in Table 48, there were a total of six Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: relationship.

Table 48

*Sonoma Valley High School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 3a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Theme</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>• She’s like my family now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You don’t want to loose your best friend*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You can’t let go*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As summarized in Table 49, there were a total of seven Adele Harrison Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. Three positive themes emerged from students’ responses: fun activities, trust, and support. The theme of fun activities had the greatest number of responses (three) and the themes of trust and support had the same number of responses (two).

Table 49

*Adele Harrison Middle School Students’ Positive Responses Interview to Question 3a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fun Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• The activities*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The fun we have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Having someone to talk to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Having someone I trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• The help from my mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The support from my mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As presented in Table 50, there were a total of two Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: fun activities.
Overall, 15 responses to this interview question were used to identify the four positive themes: relationship, fun activities, trust, and support. The theme of relationship had the greatest number of responses from students at only the high school; these high school students all began their mentoring relationship in sixth grade and have had time to place value on the relationship formed with their mentor. The theme of fun activities had the next greatest number of responses from students at both middle schools; engaging in fun activities seemed to be highly important to the middle school students. Finally, students at one middle school responded that the trust and support that they have gotten from their mentors has caused them to continue participating in the mentoring program.

These data are summarized in Table 51.

Table 51

Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 3a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to Interview Question 3b. Interview question 3b asked: Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the
facilitator could have better helped you. Student responses to this question will be presented separately for each school site followed by an overall summary table that lists the positive themes that emerged from students’ responses to this interview question, as well as the total number of responses. It is important to note that all responses to this interview question were classified as positive.

As presented in Table 52, there were a total of five Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: never needed support. Students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentor, in which they needed help from the mentor facilitator to work through.

Table 52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Needed Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Never had a problem with my mentor*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Never*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

As presented in Table 53, there were a total of six Sonoma Valley High School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: never needed support. Students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentor, in which they needed help from the mentor facilitator to work through.
As illustrated in Table 54, there were a total of five Altimira Middle School students’ responses to this interview question. One positive theme emerged from students’ responses: never needed support.

Table 54

Altimira Middle School Students’ Positive Responses to Interview Question 3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Key Words and Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Needed Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• No*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a response that was given by multiple participants

Overall, there were 16 responses to this interview question that was used to identify the one positive theme: never needed support. Students at all of the school sites responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentor in which they felt the needed more support from their mentor facilitator. These data are summarized in Table 55.

Table 55

Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Positive Responses to Question 3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Theme</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Needed Support</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary: Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program? To address this research question, two interview questions were asked:

1. What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it?
2. Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the facilitator could have better helped you.

Overall, a total of five positive themes were related to Research Question 3: never needed support, relationship, fun activities, trust, and support. Based on student responses from all three school sites, one theme emerged as the top positive aspect of the mentoring program: never needed support. Students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentor during which they needed additional support from the mentor facilitator. These data are summarized in Table 56.

Table 56

Overall Summary of Positive Themes that Emerged from Students’ Responses to Interview Question 3a and 3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Themes</th>
<th>Overall Number of Responses</th>
<th>Sonoma Valley High School</th>
<th>Adele Harrison Middle School</th>
<th>Altimira Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Needed Support</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Findings Highlights

Twenty-two middle and high school students from two middle schools and one high school in the Sonoma Valley Unified School District participated in the focus group interviews in this research study. An analysis of interview data related to students’ perceptions about the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationships (Research Question 1) revealed 12 positive themes and seven negative themes. From the 12 positive themes, 5 themes were common among the three school sites and are considered key positive themes: trust, help, academic support, support system, and care. From the seven negative themes, one theme was common among the three school sites and is considered a key negative theme: a fear of disappointment.

Secondly, an analysis of interview data related to students’ perceptions about the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationships (Research Question 2) revealed 12 positive themes and 2 negative themes. From the 12 positive themes, 3 themes were common among the three school sites and are considered key positive themes: acknowledgement, trust building, and academic support. There were no key negative themes that were common among all three school sites.

Finally, an analysis of interview data related to students’ perceptions about the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring program (Research Question 3) revealed five positive themes and no negative themes. From the five positive themes, one theme was common among the three school sites and is considered a key positive theme: never needed support. Students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their relationship with their mentor. There were no negative themes that emerged for this research question.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who participate in the Sonoma Valley Stand By Me Mentoring Program as they related to the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?

2. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?

3. What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

This qualitative descriptive study was conducted in Spring 2011 to gain a better understanding of students’ perceptions as a result of their participation in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program, specifically their perceptions related to their mentoring relationship, the impact of their mentoring relationship, and to the mentoring program itself. Whereas the Stand by Me Mentoring Program had used a quantitative survey in the Fall of 2010 to collect data about students’ mentoring experiences, this study used qualitative focus group interviews to explore more deeply and to better understand mentees’ mentoring
program experiences. A total of 22 middle and high school students participated in this study; all participants attended one of three schools within the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. There were 8 students from Sonoma Valley High School, 7 students from Adele Harrison Middle School, and 7 students from Altimira Middle School. All of the students were mentees in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program and were engaged in a mentoring relationship for 6 months or longer.

The researcher conducted the focus group interviews in person with student subjects at each of the three school sites. The focus group interview questions were adapted from the publication *What’s Working? Tools For Evaluating Your Mentor Program* (see Appendix N) by Saito (2001), and modified with permission from The Search Institute. The 10 interview questions were semi-structured, which allowed the researcher to engage in an authentic conversation with the participants and also allowed the researcher to probe the participants’ reasoning for their answers, if needed. The interview questions were directly related to the three research questions and inquired about students’ perceptions of the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their relationship, and the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program itself.

The actual focus group interviews took place over a two-day period in Spring 2011; two focus group interviews were conducted on day one and the final focus group interview was conducted on day two. The length of the interviews ranged from 30-40 minutes; all interviews were digitally audio-recorded. Of the 22 participants, only 5 were male: 3 from Sonoma Valley High School and 2 from Adele Harrison Middle School. Altimira Middle School was the only same-gender group (female); when comparing the
researcher’s experience facilitating both middle school groups, the all-female group seemed more comfortable responding to the interview questions. Overall, the researcher observed that the high school participants placed more value on the relationships that they formed with their mentors over anything else compared to the middle school students, who seemed to value engaging in fun activities with their mentors.

**Discussion of Findings**

Research question one. Four interview questions were used to answer research question one and determine what middle and high school mentees in the Stand by Me Mentoring Program perceived to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship. An analysis of interview data revealed 12 positive themes and 7 negative themes. Of the 12 positive themes, only 5 themes were common among the three school sites and are considered to be the key positive themes: trust, help, academic support, support system, and care. Of the seven negative themes, only one theme was common among the three school sites and is considered to be the key negative theme: a fear of disappointment.

The first key positive theme, trust, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students responded that having someone to trust is extremely important to them. This can be attributed to the fact that all of the participants are considered at-risk and it is more likely that at-risk youth have never experienced a trusting relationship with an adult. This trusting mentoring relationship can also result in several positive outcomes from which at-risk youth are likely to benefit. These outcomes, according to Dappen and Iserhagen (2005), include being “more likely to trust teachers, achieve a more positive attitude toward school, maintain better attendance, perform higher academically, possess
higher self-confidence, express feelings, and experience improved relationships with adults and peers” (p. 22). Students reported that having someone who listens without judging, having someone to depend on, having someone who always shows up when they are supposed to, and having someone who supports them all helped build trust in their mentoring relationships. Since trust emerged among the top positive key themes, it is important for mentors to make sure that they are forming a trusting relationship with their mentees in order for the mentoring to be successful. According to DuBois and Neville (1997) frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful trusting relationship. This is because “reliability is a cornerstone of trust, and for many youth who have experienced significant disruptions in important relationships, it can be critical to the formation of a lasting and meaningful bond with a mentor” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51). Finally, this key finding also aligns with one of the main goals of mentoring, which is to increase the personal connectedness of the youth, and in order to trust, there must also be a high level of closeness between the youth and the mentor (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

The second key positive theme finding, help, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students stated that having someone to help them in both academic and personal areas was extremely important to them. This finding also aligns with two of the positive outcomes of mentoring that Dappen and Iserhagen (2005) describe: performing higher academically and being able to express feelings. It is again important to note that all of these students are considered at-risk for various reasons and something as small as getting help with schoolwork or receiving useful advice about life’s problems is more help than most of these students have ever received from an adult. This finding
promotes the idea of resilience in youth because being exposed to the benefits of help-seeking helps build their capacity to overcome the risk factors to which they have been exposed (Rak & Patterson, 1996). This finding also exemplifies another goal of mentoring, to “support the development of healthy individuals by addressing the need for positive adult contact” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 20), and in this case, it is done by fostering a “relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where an older, caring, more experienced individual provides help to the younger person as he or she goes through life” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 20).

The third key positive theme finding, academic support, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students responded that having someone to provide them academic support was extremely important to them. This finding is consistent with the goals of school-based mentoring, which tend to have more of an academic focus because the majority of the mentoring takes place on school grounds (MENTOR, 2009). It also aligns with many of the positive outcomes that Dappen and Iserhagen (2005) describe, including “more likely to trust teachers, achieve a more positive attitude toward school, maintain better attendance, perform higher academically, possess higher self-confidence” (p.22). Since school-based mentoring is centered around the idea of building the capacity of the youth (VanderVen, 2004), it is not surprising that students valued the academic support they got from their mentors because the support helped them achieve more in school by showing them that with the right support, anything is possible.

The fourth key positive theme finding, support system, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students responded that having their mentors contribute to their support system was extremely important to them. Providing youth
support is an essential component of successful mentoring relationships. Extensive research has demonstrated that “providing youth with consistent adult support through a well-supervised, frequently meeting, long-term mentoring relationship improves grades and family relationships, and helps prevent initiation of drug and alcohol use” (Herrera, 1999, p.1). In most cases, these students either do not have a support system or their families are simply too busy working to provide them the support they need. At-risk students “often have a history of neglect, rejection, multiple caretakers, and other factors that disrupt their ability to form meaningful bond[s]” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 96) and may never get the support they need from their family. Therefore, providing at-risk students with a mentor, who is in essence an additional caring non-familial adult role model, could have the possibility of reshaping their inability to form meaningful relationships with adults, which will ultimately strengthen their support system.

The fifth key positive theme finding, care, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students responded that knowing that their mentors care for them was extremely important. Student responses centered on their mentors being their best friends and knowing them better than anyone else, being there just to listen, and showing that they care by making sure the students make good decisions. These responses align with key factors that contribute to quality mentoring relationships that Deutsch and Spencer (2009) describe as the mentor’s: positive regard, authenticity, empathy, warmth, and ability to provide needed support. The responses also align with one of the positive outcomes that Dappen and Iserhagen (2005) describe: experiencing improved relationships with adults and peers. Furthermore, “actively striving to be empathic, or to understand the young person’s frame of reference and emotional experiences from the
youth’s perspective, may convey that the mentor both cares about and understands the protégé for who he or she is” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 53). From student responses, it is clear that they felt that their mentors demonstrated these qualities and truly cared about them. This awareness of caring is healthy because it contributes to the students’ emotional intelligence due to the argument that “there is no stronger index of emotional health then the ability to get along with and derive pleasure from being with others” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 97).

The key negative theme finding, a fear of disappointment, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students’ responses were related to not wanting to disappointment their mentors by earning bad grades in school and not wanting to hurt their mentors’ feelings when deciding whether or not to participate in activities. Although this is a negative theme finding, it can be attributed to the positive outcomes of mentoring due to the fact that it is because students have formed positive relationships with their mentors that they care about how their mentor feels about them and their actions. Research shows that “closer, more supportive mentoring relationships are more likely to make positive changes in youth’s lives” (Herrera et al., 2000, p. 6) and simply caring about the mentors’ feelings illustrate the closeness of the mentees’ relationships with their mentors. Additionally, caring about the mentors’ feelings also attests to the quality of the connection that is formed between students and their mentors. It is important to remember that youths who are emotionally engaged in close mentoring relationships have improved outcomes in academics and ideas of self-worth compared to youths who are not emotionally engaged or involved in close relationships (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Again, this finding can be connected to the idea of resilience because “resilience in
essence is the ability to adapt to adverse life occurrences in a healthy way” (VanderVen, 2004, p. 96) and not wanting to cause disappointment can be viewed as a healthy reaction because of the meaningful relationship that has been formed.

**Research question two.** Four interview questions were used to answer research question two and determine what middle and high school mentees in the Stand by Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship. An analysis of interview data revealed 12 positive themes and 2 negative themes. From the 12 positive themes, only 3 themes were common among the three school sites and are considered to be the key positive themes: acknowledgement, trust building, and academic support. No key negative themes were common among all three school sites.

The first key positive theme, acknowledgement, emerged from students’ responses at all three school sites. Being able to simply acknowledge their mentors with gratitude was extremely important to students. These students truly appreciate all of the time and energy that their mentors have given them. Students may not be aware that mentoring is intended to “support the development of healthy individuals by addressing the need for positive adult contact and, thereby, reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors” (“Program Types,” n.d., para. 20), but they are aware that they are gaining so much from being in a mentoring relationship that they simply want to stay thank you to their mentors. It is clear from the students’ responses that many of the mentors in this program are aware that youth today are not only at risk because of academic factors, they also face other risk factors such as social alienation, substance abuse, financial hardships, sexual abuse, mental and physical health problems, poor
living conditions, and a lack of familial support, in addition to other unfortunate risk factors (Vising & Moore-Vissing, 2006). The mentors are doing their best to be the additional caring adult that all of these students need. It is also not surprising that these students want to acknowledge their mentors because these students may have never experienced an adult who follows through with plans and they are now aware of the many positive outcomes that they are experiencing as a result of mentoring (Dappen & Iserhagen, 2005).

The second key positive theme finding, trust building, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students responded that the activities they engaged in with their mentors were the main sources of trust building. These activities ranged from academic tasks to engaging in activities based on common interests. Students’ responses in this area align with two qualities of successful mentoring relationships: matching and frequency and consistency of mentor and youth contact. The first quality, matching, is important because it is the first step to fostering meaningful relationships (Dappen & Iserhagen, 2005; MENTOR, 2009; Tierney et al., 1995). Mentoring research shows that it is important to consider extra-curricular hobbies and interests when matching because the majority of the activities in which the youth and mentors engage are related to shared interests (Dappen & Iserhagen, 2005; Herrera et al., 2000). Herrera et al. (2000) also note that the “strength of the bond that forms between mentor and youth governs the degree of impact their relationship will have, and the engaging in friendship-based activities is a key component of a relationship that will endure” (p. 8). The next quality, frequency and consistency of mentor and youth contact, is also important because frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful relationship.
(DuBois & Neville, 1997), which also allows trust to develop. Furthermore, “it is generally thought that spending time together regularly creates opportunities for mentors to become more directly involved in youth’s lives and for positive changes to occur” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51). Overall, it is clear from students’ responses that the variety of activities in which they engaged in with their mentors led to trust building, which ultimately had a positive impact on their mentoring relationships.

The third key positive theme finding, academic support, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. Students reported that having their mentors support them academically in areas in which they were experiencing difficulty was extremely important. Students stated that their mentors helped them in all subject areas, helped them with homework, taught them how to study and prepare for tests, and pushed them to want to do better in school. This finding is not surprising because these students were referred to this program because they were at-risk and in “desperate need of time, attention, and direction” (McCluskey et al., 2004, p. 87) in many areas. Furthermore, this is a school-based mentoring program and mentors naturally begin the relationship by providing academic support. This finding also aligns with the positive outcomes of mentoring because it promotes students achieving a more positive attitude about school, performing higher academically, and increasing self-confidence in school (Dappen & Iserhagen, 2005).

**Research question three.** Two interview questions were used to answer research question three and determine what middle and high school mentees in the Stand by Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program. An analysis of interview data revealed five positive themes and no negative
themes. Of the five positive themes, one theme was common among the three school sites and is considered to be the key positive theme: never needed support (students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentor with which they needed help from the mentor facilitator to resolve). No negative themes emerged for this research question.

The only key positive theme finding, never needed support, emerged from student responses at all three school sites. This theme refers to the fact that students responded that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentors with which they needed help from the mentor facilitator to resolve. Students responses can be attributed to the fact that the mentoring program is doing a good job of matching students with appropriate mentors, providing mentors the right training to foster successful relationships, and maintaining adequate supervision of the mentoring pairs (DuBois et al., 2002; Herrera et al., 2000, 2007; MENTOR, 2009; Miller, 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Tierney et al., 1995).

Conclusions

Three general conclusions were drawn from this study. The first conclusion was that trust is the foundation for successful mentoring relationships. Student responses provided examples of how important trust was in forming their positive mentoring relationships. In support of this conclusion, Herrera et al. (2000) noted that “closer, more supportive mentoring relationships are more likely to make positive changes in youth’s lives” (p. 6). Deutsch and Spencer (2009) also added that “reliability is a cornerstone of trust, and for many youth who have experienced significant disruptions in important relationships, it can be critical to the formation of a lasting and meaningful bond with a
mentor” (p. 51). Research conducted by Grossman and Rhodes (2002) maintains that youths who are emotionally engaged in close mentoring relationships have improved outcomes in academics and ideas of self-worth compared to youths who are not emotionally engaged or in close relationships. These connections illustrate how important trust is to the foundation of successful mentoring relationships.

In order for trust to exist in the mentoring relationship, mentors must take their time to build trust early in the relationship. Doing this is important because a lack of trust contributes to the reasons why mentoring relationships fail when targeting at-risk youth (McCluskey et al., 2004). Trust building is easiest done through engaging in activities that have an academic focus or are based on common interests. Student responses offered examples of the types of activities that were used to build trust in their mentoring relationships, such as, “my mentor started with just helping me with my homework and then we did other things,” “we baked together,” and “we made presents for people.” It is important to remember that frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful relationship and this contact should focus on engaging in common activities (DuBois & Neville, 1997).

The second conclusion is that in order to promote successful mentoring relationships, programs need to focus on ongoing contact between the mentors and mentees, supervision of the mentoring pairs, and conduct evaluations at regular intervals from both the mentor and mentee perspectives. The first goal is “make matches based on each volunteer’s ability to help meet the needs of specific youth” (Tierney et al., 1995, p. 4) and to “match mentors and mentees along dimensions likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure” (MENTOR, 2009, p. 12). Once matching is done
successfully, it is then important to train mentors. Effective training is vital to program success because of its implications on the volunteer’s initial perceptions about the mentor/mentee relationship with regard to needed support, connectedness with youth, personal satisfaction, and overall effectiveness as a mentor (Herrera et al., 2000, 2007; MENTOR, 2009; Miller, 2007). Proper mentor training will also support longer mentoring relationships because the mentors are better prepared to resolve difficult situations with their mentees.

Promoting longer, more meaningful relationships is also important because, according to Deutsch and Spencer (2009), youths who experience longer, more meaningful relationships have the possibility of gaining greater benefits from mentoring compared to youths who experience shorter relationships that may have ended prematurely. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) concur that the longer the relationship, the greater the possibility of positive outcomes. Next, it is important that mentors and mentees maintain ongoing consistent contact throughout the relationship. DuBois and Neville (1997) found that frequent and ongoing contact between the mentor and youth is critical to building a meaningful relationship. It is important that the mentoring relationship is given time to develop and “it is generally thought that spending time together regularly creates opportunities for mentors to become more directly involved in youth’s lives and for positive changes to occur” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 51).

Once the mentoring relationship has been established, supervision is critical to its success. Supervision is needed to “monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem solving support and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship” (MENTOR, 2009, p.14). Previous research shows that
effective supervision and support can lead to more positive outcomes for the youth (DuBois et al., 2002; Herrera et al., 2000; MENTOR, 2009; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Finally, it is important to conduct evaluations with both the mentors and mentees at regular intervals to continue to monitor the success of the mentoring relationships. This is an area that has not been researched as much as other areas, however, current research shows that “it is important to assess perceptions of closeness and whether the adult has become a meaningful person in the child’s life” (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 52), because if a meaningful connection is not formed between the mentor and mentee, the mentee will not benefit from the positive outcomes of mentoring.

The third and final conclusion is that if the mentoring relationship is successful, mentoring has the potential to improve the youth’s relationships with adults, family members, and peers; improve academic support; and increase self-confidence and motivation. This conclusion is consistent with many of the previous findings from other mentoring research, which found that youth participating in mentoring relationships experience better school attendance, higher education, better attitudes in school, and prevention of substance abuse (Jekielek et al., 2002), as well as “providing youth with consistent adult support through a well-supervised, frequently meeting, long-term mentoring relationship improve grades, and family relationships” (Herrera, 1999, p.1). Dappen and Iserhagen (2005) also concluded that mentoring can result in several positive outcomes that at-risk youth are likely to benefit from, such as being “more likely to trust teachers, achieve a more positive attitude toward school, maintain better attendance perform higher academically, possess higher self-confidence, express feelings, and experience improved relationships with adults and peers” (p. 22). An impact study of the
well-known Big Brothers Big Sisters of America mentoring program found that students who participate in mentoring programs are more confident in their schoolwork, able to get along better with their families, less likely to begin using drugs and alcohol, and less likely to skip school (BBBSA, 2010; Tierney et al., 1995). All of these findings illustrate the power of mentoring when successful mentoring relationships are formed and are consistent with the key findings from this study.

**Recommendations for Practice and Future Research**

This study was designed to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students participating in a school-based mentoring program related to the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship, the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program itself. The findings of this study can be used to inform mentoring program practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

**Recommendations for practice.** Based on the findings of this study, the researcher is offering the following recommendations for practice, some of which are specific to the Stand By Me Mentoring program, and others of which can be applied to all mentoring programs.

The researcher recommends that the Stand By Me Mentoring program continue to:

1. Follow the mentoring best practices: volunteer screening, youth screening, training, matching, and supervision.

2. Offer mentoring pairs a variety of fun activities to engage in together because the activities foster trust building. This is important because trust was found to be the foundation of successful mentoring relationships.
The researcher recommends that the Stand By Me Mentoring program start to:

1. In addition to the mentoring best practices that were mentioned above, implement ongoing evaluations from both mentor and mentee perspectives. These evaluations should occur at appropriate intervals to help monitor the success of the mentoring relationships, as well as other program components. These evaluations should be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative portions.

2. Provide ongoing training for mentors focusing on how to build trusting, meaningful relationships. This is important because in order for students to benefit from mentoring, they must constantly be engaged in meaningful relationships.

3. Make sure they educate students on the purposes of having a mentor prior to matching them with mentors. Doing this will alleviate the types of confusion that students reported in study.

**Recommendations for future research.** Based on the findings of this study, the researcher is offering the following recommendations for future research:

1. Conduct the same study but expand it to include mentors and parent perspectives to be able to triangulate the data.

2. Conduct the same study but only at the middle school level, separate the groups based on gender to try to elicit more participation from participants.

3. Conduct the same study but separate groups to only include middle or high school students and then include students from a variety of districts with similar demographics.
Chapter Summary

This qualitative study on the perceptions of middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program found 10 main findings:

1. Students reported that the trust they formed with their mentors was an important positive aspect of their mentoring relationships.
2. Students reported that the help they received from their mentors was an important positive aspect of their mentoring relationships.
3. Students reported that the academic support they received from their mentors was an important positive aspect of their mentoring relationships.
4. Students reported that their mentors being their support system was an important positive aspect of their mentoring relationships.
5. Students reported that knowing that their mentors cared for them was an important positive aspect of their mentoring relationships.
6. Students reported that not wanting to cause their mentors disappointment was an important negative aspect of their mentoring relationships.
7. Students reported that being able to acknowledge their mentors was an important positive aspect of the impact of their mentoring relationships.
8. Students reported that trust building was an important positive aspect of the impact of their mentoring relationship.
9. Students reported that the academic support they received from their mentors was an important positive aspect of the impact of their mentoring relationship.
10. Students reported that they never experienced a difficult time with their mentors during which they needed help from their facilitator, which they described as an important positive aspect of the impact of their mentoring relationship.

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that trust is the foundation for successful mentoring relationships and in order to promote successful mentoring relationships, programs need to focus on ongoing contact between the mentor and mentee, supervision of the mentoring pairs, and conduct evaluations with both mentors and mentees at regular intervals. Additionally, the study concurred with findings from other mentoring research that if the mentoring relationship is successful, mentoring has the potential to improve the youth’s relationships with adults, family, and peers; improve academic support; and increase self-confidence and motivation.

In conclusion, since the objective of many mentoring programs that target at-risk youth is to “improve interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers, other adults and family members; increase personal responsibility and community involvement; discourage drug and alcohol use, use of weapons and other delinquency involvement; reduce dropout rates; and improve academic achievement” (Bernstein et al., 2009, pp. 15-16), it is not difficult to agree that mentoring is a powerful tool. This is because mentoring “supports the development of healthy individuals by addressing the need for positive adult contact and, thereby reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors” (“Mentoring,” n.d., para. 5), all of which are done by simply forming a meaningful relationship with a mentor, who is in essence an additional caring non-familial adult role model. If this is all that needs to be done, more school districts should consider implementing well-organized school-based mentoring programs. However, in order for
mentoring to be successful, programs need a constant stream of caring, dedicated volunteers.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Student Nomination Form

STUDENT REFERRAL FORM

MENTOR PROGRAM

Today’s Date: _____________
Student’s Name: _____________________________________________
Grade as of Sept. 2010: _________
Who is making referral (Name): _______________________________________
Relation to the student: ( )Teacher ( )Parent ( )Guardian ( )Other:__________________

In order to match the child with the proper Mentor, please take a moment to fill in the following questions with as much detail as possible. Use back of sheet if needed, Thank you:

REASON FOR REFERRAL:   ( )Academic ( )Social ( )Both

ACADEMIC HELP:
( )Math ( )Reading ( )Other: ______________________________________________
Student’s Weaknesses in this area(s): ________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Does this child do his/her work in Spanish?          ( )Yes  ( )No  ( )Uncertain
Does this child’s parent/guardian speak English?   ( )Yes ( )No ( )Uncertain

SOCIAL SUPPORT:
Which role model is most needed:  ( )Male  ( )Female
Please give a brief description why:    _________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Whom does this child live with?(  )Mom (  )Dad (  )Both Parents(  )Other/Guardian:_____
(All information on this form will remain confidential)

-For Mentor Program Use Only-
Parent/Guardian’s Name: ___________________________
MailingAddress: ____________________________________
Home Phone: ___________________ Work Phone: ______________
Permission Status: ________________________________

Student/Teacher: Best Day: _____________ Best Time: ___________
Mentor’s Name: __________________ Phone: __________________
Start Date: _________________________ Day/Time: _____________

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APPENDIX B
Mentor Application

PERSONAL INFORMATION
Name ________________________________________________________________
Residence Address _________________________________ City/Zip______________
Mailing Address_______________________________ City/Zip______________
Home Phone ____________Cell Phone__________________ Work Phone______________
E-mail Address _________________________________________Fax______________
Person to contact in an emergency __________________________________________
Emergency Phone # _________________________
Date of Birth: ___/___/___          Sex:  M ___ F___  Marital Status: ___________
How did you hear about this program? (Please check one or more, if applicable.)
   Billboard:______ Newspaper Ad:______ Recruitment Booth:______ Friend:_____
   Movie Cinema Ad:_______ Coffee Sleeve Ad:_______ Fundraising Event:_____
Previous residences during the last three years:
Address:____________________City_______________State_________Dates________
Address:__________________City_______________State_________Dates________
Address:__________________City_______________State_________Dates________

JOB HISTORY  Employment history (past 3 years, starting with most recent)
Employer’s Name:_________________________Supervisor’s Name___________
   Phone:________________________Position Title:_________________________
Employer’s Name:_________________________Supervisor’s Name___________
   Phone:________________________Position Title:_________________________
Can we contact Supervisor or Employer as a reference?_______ If no, please explain:
________________________________________________________________________

EDUCATION
Highest level achieved:_____________________________________________________
Name and location of school:________________________________________________

LEGAL HISTORY
Have you ever been investigated for or charged with any offense involving a person
under the age of 18?________________ If yes, please explain_________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever been investigated for or charged with any other offenses within the last
10 years? _____________If yes, please explain __________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
MEDICAL HISTORY
Are you currently a user of illegal drugs?_______ If yes, please explain_______

_______________________________________________________________________

Have you had problems with or been treated for alcohol or drug abuse within the last five years?_______ If yes, please explain____________________________________

Do you have any physical or mental condition that would limit your ability to be a Mentor?_______ If yes, please explain____________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

REFERENCES: (Please list THREE references with phone numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
How do you hope to help a child in our program?________________________________

What do you hope to gain from your mentoring experience?___________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Hobbies/Interests: _____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Please list any previous experience working with children: ________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Please list any other non-profit organizations in Sonoma Valley that you have volunteered for:

_______________________________________________________________________

Personality Traits: Please check those that best describe yourself…

(  )friendly  (  )funny  (  )quiet  (  )serious  (  )patient
(  )reserved  (  )talkative  (  )musical  (  )outgoing  (  )athletic
(  )artistic  (  )organized  (  )curious  (  )studious  (  )thoughtful
PLACEMENT INFORMATION:
Languages spoken ______________________________________________________
My interest is in helping a child succeed:  (  )Academically  (  )Socially  (  )Both
I prefer to work with:(  )Boy (  )Girl (  )Either  Age preference (5-7,8-10,11-14):_____
I prefer to mentor at (please check one site):
___ Flowery (K-5th grade)  ___ El Verano (K-5th grade)  ___ Sassarini (K-5th grade)
___ Prestwood (K-5th grade)  ___ Dunbar (K-5th grade)  ___ Altimira (6th-8th grade)
___ Adele Harrison (6th–8th)  ___ Sonoma Valley High School (9th–12th grade)
___ Wherever needed

Time availability on (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Days Available</th>
<th>Best Times to Mentor</th>
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I understand that disclosure of the information that I have provided in this application will be limited to those employees of the Sonoma Valley Unified School District ("SVUSD") and volunteers who participate in the selection and evaluation of Mentors for the SVUSD’s Stand By Me Mentoring Program. I further understand that, if my application is denied, I am not entitled to an explanation of the reasons for such denial, nor am I entitled to a review of such action by the SVUSD or its Board of Trustees. I represent that all of the information I have provided in this application is true and correct and understand that such information will be relied upon by the Stand By Me Mentoring Program in considering my application.

___________________________________  ____________________________
Applicant Signature                  Date

*Attach an extra sheet if additional space is needed.

Sonoma Valley Unified School District
The MISSION of the Sonoma Valley Unified School District is to educate and inspire all students for full participation in a changing, global society through quality learning experiences that promote individual excellence.
APPENDIX C

Mentor Expectation Agreement

EXPECTATION AGREEMENT

As a MENTOR participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I have read and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the Mentor Handbook, and I enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to work with my Mentee.

I am aware that all mentoring activity that takes place on campus during the school day is under the direct supervision of the Mentor Program. I also understand that any interaction between the Mentee and myself which occurs off campus, outside of the scheduled school day, is not under the supervision of the Mentor Program, but is the sole responsibility of the child’s parent or guardian and requires their consent.

In addition, I also understand that any mentoring relationship may be terminated in the interest of the student, the Mentor, or the Mentor Program at any time. I understand that all information shared will be kept strictly confidential and that this agreement is in effect for the duration of this mentor/mentee relationship.

___________________________________
Mentor’s Signature
_______________________________
Date

Below are the agreements that your mentee and their parent signs before your first mentoring meeting:

As a STUDENT participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I promise to work cooperatively with my Mentor, do my personal best, and share my successes with my family. I understand and respect the time and energy that my mentor will give to our mentoring relationship, and agree to show up to the mentor center on our scheduled day and time. If my schedule changes or I am sick, I commit to contacting my mentor as soon as possible to let him/her know that I will be absent.

As a PARENT of a child participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I welcome the opportunity for my child to be involved. I promise to support the program by encouraging my son/daughter to work cooperatively and do their personal best.

I am aware that all mentoring activity that takes place on campus during the school day is under the direct supervision of the Mentor Program. I also understand that any interaction between the Mentor and my child that occurs off campus, outside the scheduled school day, is not under the supervision of the Mentor Program, but is my sole responsibility as the parent/guardian.

In order to best serve my child, I agree to allow access to my child’s records (demographics, GPA, discipline referrals, SAT scores, and attendance) to be used in an overall evaluation of the program. In addition, I give my permission for my child’s records to be made available to their mentor, so that the mentor may provide support in the areas needed. I agree to allow school personnel (teachers, mentor center coordinator, counselors, principal) to confer with my child’s mentor as the situation warrants. I understand that all information shared will be kept strictly confidential and that this agreement is in effect for the duration of this mentor/mentee relationship.
APPENDIX D

Social Media Policy

Stand By Me Social Media Policy

Zero-Tolerance Rules

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by Mentors of The Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance (Stand By Me). For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

Stand By Me Mentors are not allowed to publish, comment or share photos or information about their mentee or their mentoring relationship via social media at any time or in any way. Mentors may not establish “Friend” relationships with their mentees via social media. Mentors may include their role as a Mentor with the Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance in their on-line profile information for site such as LinkedIn, but they must respect the privacy of their mentee at all times. This includes the following: the mentees name, age, school, family, personal issues, academic issues, accomplishments or struggles may not be discussed or referred to at any time, in any form of social media.

Profile Information

Any reference to Mentoring in your profile on social media sites must be consistent with the 'Stand By Me' website or other 'Stand By Me' publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Executive Director and/or Program Director if you have any questions.

Don't Tell Secrets

It is not okay to publish confidential information regarding any person associated with the Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our projects, mentors, staff, financial information, research, or mentees. In other words, if it not on our website, it should not be published elsewhere.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously regarding mentoring, do not use pseudonyms or false screen names to talk about mentoring. We believe in transparency and honesty. Do not say
anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details. Be aware that your profile information may be viewed by your mentee, and so we advise using Privacy Controls whenever possible. As an adult role model for an at-risk youth, please keep in mind that not everything you do should be shared via social media.

**Think About Consequences**

For example, consider what might happen if a mentee saw that their mentor was discussing their relationship online? Or consider the feeling of a parent if photos of their child were to appear on Social Media websites of which they do not approve. It’s all about judgment: using social media to share, or seek input on mentoring is potentially damaging and ill-advised.

**Please note**

Social Media Policy violations will be subject to potential termination of Mentoring Relationships.
APPENDIX E

Mentee Expectation Agreement (Middle and High School)

EXPECTATION AGREEMENT

As a STUDENT participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I promise to work cooperatively with my Mentor, do my personal best, and share my successes with my family. I understand and respect the time and energy that my mentor will give to our mentoring relationship, and agree to show up to the mentor center on our scheduled day and time. If my schedule changes or I am sick, I commit to contacting my mentor as soon as possible to let him/her know that I will be absent.

___________________________________
Student’s Signature

___________________________________
Date

As a PARENT of a child participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I welcome the opportunity for my child to be involved. I promise to support the program by encouraging my son/daughter to work cooperatively and do their personal best.

I am aware that all mentoring activity that takes place on campus during the school day is under the direct supervision of the Mentor Program. I also understand that any interaction between the Mentor and my child that occurs off campus, outside the scheduled school day, is not under the supervision of the Mentor Program, but is my sole responsibility as the parent/guardian.

In order to best serve my child, I agree to allow access to my child’s records (demographics, GPA, discipline referrals, SAT scores, and attendance) to be used in an overall evaluation of the program. In addition, I give my permission for my child’s records to be made available to their mentor, so that the mentor may provide support in the areas needed.

I agree to allow school personnel (teachers, mentor center coordinator, counselors, principal) to confer with my child’s mentor as the situation warrants. I understand that all information shared will be kept strictly confidential and that this agreement is in effect for the duration of this mentor/mentee relationship.

___________________________________
Parent’s Signature

___________________________________
Date

Below is the agreement that your child’s mentor signs before the mentor & mentee’s first meeting…

As a MENTOR participating in the “Stand By Me” Mentor Program, I have read and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the Mentor Handbook, and I enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to work with my Mentee.

I am aware that all mentoring activity that takes place on campus during the school day is under the direct supervision of the Mentor Program. I also understand that any interaction between the Mentee and myself which occurs off campus, outside of the scheduled school day, is not under the supervision of the Mentor Program, but is the sole responsibility of the child’s parent or guardian and requires their consent.

In addition, I also understand that any mentoring relationship may be terminated in the interest of the student, the Mentor, or the Mentor Program at any time. I understand that all information shared will be kept strictly confidential and that this agreement is in effect for the duration of this mentor/mentee relationship.
APPENDIX F

Student Profile Sheet (Middle and High School)

STUDENT PROFILE SHEET

Date: __________
Name: ___________________________________________ School __________________
Grade as of Sept. 2010: ________________
DOB: __________________
Parent/Guardian’s Names: ________________________________________________
Who does the student live with? ( ) Mom & Dad ( ) Mom ( ) Dad ( ) Grandparent ( ) Other __
Does your child have allergies? YES _____ NO _____ Please explain ________
Sibling’s Names:__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
Please check the boxes above for any child already participating in the Mentor Program.

If you need more space to answer the questions below, please feel free to use the back of this form.
Student’s Interests/Hobbies/Activities:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Circle any of the words below which best describe your child:
quiet happy friendly curious studious sensitive moody nervous outgoing sad
motivated musical artistic funny patient organized athletic serious shy
Student’s Strengths:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Does your child make friends easily? YES ______ NO ______
Does your child like school? YES ______ NO ______
What does your child find easy in school? ___________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
What does your child find challenging in school? ________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Student’s Need:___________________________________________________________
Does your child turn in homework? Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never ______
In general, where does your child go after school? Home ______ Day Care ______ Boys & Girls
Club ______ Other (location) __________________

Sonoma Valley Unified School District
The MISSION of the Sonoma Valley Unified School District is to educate and inspire all students for full participation
In a changing, global society through quality learning experiences that promote individual excellence.
Email Permission from “Stand By Me” Mentoring Program

Hi Annette,
We are happy to have you survey our mentees in the new year and look forward to meeting you soon. If you would like to come up to one of our Mentor Training/Orientation, it's a great time to learn more about our program. Our Executive Director is entertaining and fun to listen to. Our Mentor Facilitator, Katy, also helps with the Orientation. They usually happen during the week from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. We could have lunch after the orientation and then visit our middle school mentor centers. We just scheduled the training for Tuesday, September 14th, but will need to confirm with the folks on the new mentor list before it's confirmed on the calendar.
There will be more trainings throughout the month, so if the above date doesn't work for you, let me know.
Talk to you soon! Tina

On Jul 27, 2010, at 12:12 PM, Annette Marshall wrote:
Hi Tina,
I first want to thank you again for taking time to speak with me about your program; I love hearing mentoring success stories! Like I mentioned on the phone, I am a 2nd grade teacher in Lawndale and also a doctoral student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles. My interest in mentoring grew when I got my master's degree in educational leadership and created a mentoring program for 4th and 5th grade students at my school to help build their assets, improve attendance, decrease behavior referrals, and build a meaningful connection with a non-familial caring adult.

Here is the information regarding my proposed dissertation study:

The working title of my dissertation is The Lived Experience of Students Participating in a School-Based Mentoring Program.
Lived Experience refers to students':

1. perceptions of the effects of the mentoring relationship;
2. perceptions of the quality of the mentoring relationship; and
3. overall perceptions of the mentoring program.

My hope is get permission to give the survey to students to find out what they think about the mentoring program related to the three areas listed above.

Ideally, I would like to give the survey in either February or March of 2011, after the mentoring pairs had time to build a connection.

The survey is a tool that the Search Institute (creator of the 40 Developmental Assets) provides to help evaluate mentoring programs. I am attaching the survey for your reference (begins on page 53).
TO: ______________

FROM: Annette Marshall

DATE: March 21, 2011

SUBJECT: Superintendent or Designee permission to Conduct Study

I would like your permission to conduct a research study at Adele Harrison Middle School, Altímira Middle School, and Sonoma Valley High School as part of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. I am researching students’ perceptions of participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program as a mentee.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who are participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program as it relates to their mentoring relationship, the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the mentoring program. One focus group interview will be conducted at each school site with no more than ten students at each site who have been participating in the mentoring program for six months are longer. The goal of the focus group interviews is to gain further insight from mentees on their perceptions of participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ mentoring program and to help the program determine if they are effectively meeting student needs.

The study will require one meeting with students for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour during their lunch break (lunch will be provided). The focus groups will take place on school campus inside the Mentor Center.

Students will be audiotaped during the focus group to keep track of the responses. The tapes will be stored in a locked file box that only the researcher has access to and will only be used for research purposes. The tapes will be destroyed once this study has successfully been published.

Student names will not be included in the findings of this study. The findings from this study will be shared with the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program to help improve program effectiveness. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personally identifying information will be released.

The benefits from your district’s participation in this study include, shedding light on the positives or negatives of having a school-based mentoring program and the importance of hearing from students about how they feel about the mentoring program.
Student participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Students have the right to refuse participation in or withdrawal from this study at any time without interfering with his or her participation in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program. Students also have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked during the focus group. A copy of the informed consent forms and the interview questions are attached for your information.

Please sign and return one copy of this form to:
Annette Marshall
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

You may also email the signed form to xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx. If you have any questions regarding this study please feel free to contact me at xxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx or xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you have further questions, you may also contact Dr. Jennifer Rumack at xxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx and xxx-xxx-xxxx

Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, that you willingly agree for me to invite students participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program at Adele Harrison Middle School, Altimira Middle School, and Sonoma Valley High School to participate in this study, and that you have received a copy of this form.

Respectfully,

____________________
Annette Marshall

Attachments:
Copy of the Superintendents or Designee Permission to Conduct Study;
Student Assent and Parental Consent Forms;
Focus Group Interview Questions

I hereby consent to my school district’s participation in the research described above.

_________________________________________
School District

_________________________________________
Superintendent or Designee Signature

_________________________________________
Please Print Superintendent or Designee’s Name

_________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX I

Principal’s Permission to Conduct Study

TO: ____________________ Principal at __________________________

FROM: Annette Marshall

DATE: March 21, 2011

SUBJECT: Principal permission to Conduct Study

I would like your permission to conduct a research study at ____________________________ as part of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. I am researching students’ perceptions of participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program as a mentee.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of middle and high school students who are participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program as it relates to their mentoring relationship, the impact of their mentoring relationship, and the mentoring program. One focus group interview will be conducted at your school site with no more than ten students who have been participating in the mentoring program for six months or longer. The goal of the focus group interview is to gain further insight from mentees on their perceptions of participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ mentoring program and to help the program determine if they are effectively meeting student needs.

The study will require one meeting with students for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour during their lunch break (lunch will be provided). The focus groups will take place on school campus inside the Mentor Center.

Students will be audiotaped during the focus group to keep track of the responses. The tapes will be stored in a locked file box that only the researcher has access to and will only be used for research purposes. The tapes will be destroyed once this study has successfully been published.

Student names will not be included in the findings of this study. The findings from this study will be shared with the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program to help improve program effectiveness. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personally identifying information will be released.

The benefits from your school’s participation in this study include, shedding light on the positives or negatives of having a school-based mentoring program and the importance of hearing from students about how they feel about the mentoring program.
Student participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Students have the right to refuse participation in or withdrawal from this study at any time without interfering with his or her participation in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program. Students also have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked during the focus group. A copy of the informed consent forms and the interview questions are attached for your information.

Please sign and return one copy of this form to:
Annette Marshall
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

You may also email the signed form to xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx. If you have any questions regarding this study please feel free to contact me at xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx or xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you have further questions, you may also contact Dr. Jennifer Rumack at xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx and xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, that you willingly agree for me to invite students participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program your school site to participate in this study, and that you have received a copy of this form.

Respectfully,

_____________________
Annette Marshall

Attachments:
Copy of the Principal Permission to Conduct Study;
Student Assent and Parental Consent Forms;
Focus Group Interview Questions

I hereby consent to my school site’s participation in the research described above.

________________________________________________________________________
School Name
________________________________________________________________________
Principal Signature
________________________________________________________________________
Please Print Principal’s Name
________________________________________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX J

Parental Consent Letter

“Stand By Me” Mentoring Program Mentee Focus Group Interview

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Your child ______________________________ has been invited to participate in a research study that is designed to understand his or her experience from participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program as a mentee. The study will be conducted by Annette Marshall, a doctoral student from Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Rumack.

In order to be considered as a participant in this research study, your child must have been in the mentoring program for at least six months. This study will use focus group interviews, which means your child will be asked questions in a small group setting with no more than nine other mentees from the program. The questions are related to his or her perceptions from participating in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program.

The study will require one meeting with your child for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour during his or her lunch break (lunch will be provided). The focus group will take place on school campus inside the Mentor Center.

Your child will be audiotaped during the focus group to keep track of the responses. The tapes will be stored in a locked file box that only the researcher has access to and will only be used for research purposes. The tapes will be destroyed once this study has successfully been published.

Your child’s name will not be included in the findings of this study. The findings from this study will be shared with the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program to help improve program effectiveness. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personally identifying information will be released.

The possible benefits from your child’s participation in this study include, shedding light on the positives or negatives of having a school-based mentoring program and the importance of hearing from students about how they feel about the mentoring program.

It is possible for your child to experience minimal risks from participation in this study. These risks may include but are not limited to, fatigue or anxiety. If your child should experience any of these risks, the investigator will allow him or her to take a break or reassure your child of the types of questions he or she will be asked. Your child will also have the option to see a school counselor if he or she becomes upset.

It is important to understand that your child's participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the right to refuse your child’s participation in, or withdrawal from this study at any time without interfering with his or her participation in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program. Your child also has the right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked during the focus group. Please understand that the researcher may find it necessary to end your child’s participation in the study.

No personal identifying information from your child’s participation in this study will be released to others without other permission, or as required by law. Information regarding to the ’Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program will be shared with the program and presented as feedback from all three focus groups together to protect your child’s confidentiality. Under California law, an exception to this privilege of confidentiality includes but is not limited to the alleged or probable abuse of a child, physical abuse of an elder or a dependent adult, or if a person indicates she or he wishes to do serious harm to self, others, or property.

Your child will receive no compensation, except for the free lunch during the focus group interview, financial or otherwise, for participating in study.
If you have any question regarding the study procedures, please contact Annette Marshall at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@pepperdine.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you have further questions, you may also contact Dr. Jennifer Rumack at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@Pepperdine.edu and xxx-xxx-xxxx.

If you have questions about your child’s rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chairperson of the GPS Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, at Yuying.Tsong@Pepperdine.edu and (310) 568-5768.

I understand to my satisfaction the information in the consent form regarding my child’s participation in the research project. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to my child’s participation in the research described above. Please sign and return one copy of this form and keep the other copy for your records.

The participant is a minor (age ________).

________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian/Custodian signature  Date

Relationship to minor (Check):  ___ Mother  ___ Father  ___ Legal Guardian
APPENDIX K

Student Assent Letter

“Stand By Me” Mentoring Program Mentee Focus Group Interview

My name is Annette Marshall, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology. Your parent/guardian has given me permission for you to participate in a study that I am conducting about your feelings on being a mentee in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program.

The choice to participate is up to you. If you decide to participate in this study, I will ask you questions in a small group setting with about nine other mentees from the program. The questions will be related to your thoughts about being a mentee in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program. Your participation in the focus group should take one meeting for about 45 minutes to 1 hour during your lunch break. I will provide you with pizza, fruit, and a drink for your lunch. We will meet in the Mentor Center at your school.

To help me keep track of your answers to the questions, I will audiotape the entire focus group.

At the end of the study, I will share the results with the leaders of the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring program but your name will not be included. If the results of this study are published or presented to professional audiences, your name will not be included.

The expectation is that your participation in this study may be of help in the future to other mentees who participate in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program.

If you are interested, I would like to invite you to agree to participate in my study. I want you to know that the choice to participate is completely up to you. No one is going to force you to do something you are not interested in doing. Even if you start the study and then decide that you are no longer interested in continuing, just let me know and I will stop your participation in the study. If you decide not to participate in the study, it will not impact your participation in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program.

If you get bored or tired during our meeting, just let me know, and we can take a break. If you are bothered by some of the things we talk about, let me know so we can talk about what is bothering you. The only time that I will have to share information with your parents and the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring program is if abuse or harm to yourself, others, or property is involved.

If you decide to participate in this study, your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank You! If you have any questions, you may contact me at xxxxxxxxxx@pepperdine.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Please sign and return one copy of this letter and keep the other copy for your records.

Youth’s signature ____________________________ Date ____________

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APPENDIX L

Focus Group Reminder Notice

REMINDER:
'Stand By Me' Mentee Focus Group

Date: TBD
Time: During Your Lunch Break
Location: Inside Your Mentor Center

Please remember that lunch will be provided

See you there!
Welcome:

Thank you for coming today!

My name is Annette Marshall and I will be your facilitator during today’s focus group. I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles and I am conducting a study on what mentees have to say about this mentoring program. You were invited to participate in this focus group because of your participation in the ‘Stand By Me’ Mentoring Program.

Overview of the Topic:

You are here today because I would like to learn about your mentoring experience while participating this program. During this focus group, there are no right or wrong answers and it is important to understand that I want to hear about both positive and negative experiences you may have had in the program.

Guidelines:

A focus group is like a survey, but it is a conversation with a group of people

I am here to guide the conversation but you will do most of the talking

This is a group conversation, so you don’t have to wait to be called on

I am audio recording the session, so it is important to speak one at a time

Your name won’t be included when I transcribe this conversation, so no one in the program will be able to match your name to your responses

It is important to keep things that each other share in this focus group confidential. Here is an example to help you understand what I mean by confidential: Think of it like when a friend tells you something that others may or may not already know and you want to share what your friend told you with someone else BUT you decide not to because don’t want to mess up the trust you have with your friend. You wouldn’t want to share what your friend told you with anyone else unless you first get your friend’s permission.

If you need to take a break, just let me know

Ice-Breaker:

We will start the discussion by going around the room and you sharing your grade and your favorite “hangout” or place to go with friends.
Mentee Interview Questions

In most cases you will not want to use all of these questions in each interview; it would take too long.

Introduction
“I’m going to ask you some questions about what it is like for you to have a mentor. This information will not be shared directly with your mentor. It will be used to help the program staff improve the program.”

Background
1. What do you usually do when you are with your mentor?

2. How often do you see your mentor?

Perceptions of the Mentoring Relationship
3. What do you like about having a mentor?

4. What do you not like about having a mentor?

5. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?

6. If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say?

Impact of the Mentoring Relationship
7. Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you? (For example, has having a mentor helped you get along better with your family or friends or teachers? Or, do you feel like having a mentor has helped you do better at school? Or have you learned anything new, experienced things you might not otherwise have experienced?)

8. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?

9. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it’s like to have a mentor?

10. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?

Program
11. On a scale of one to five—five is best—how would you rate this program?

12. What changes do you think we could make to improve the program?
## Mentee Survey from "What’s Working?" Publication

### Appendix O

#### Section C: Perceptions of the Quality of the Mentoring Relationship

**Notes:** Please circle one response for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>NOT TRUE AT ALL</th>
<th>NOT VERY TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. My mentor makes fun of me in ways I don’t like.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. My mentor almost always asks me what I want to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. When I’m with my mentor, I feel special.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Sometimes my mentor promises we will do something; then we don’t do it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. My mentor is always interested in what I want to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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48. Is there anything else you want us to know about this program, your experience in it, or your mentor? If so, what?

49. In general, how would you rate this program overall? (circle one)

   Excellent   Good   Both Good and Bad   Bad   Really Awful
APPENDIX P

Focus Group Interview Questions

Research Question #1: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of their mentoring relationship?

1. What do you like about having a mentor?
2. What do you not like about having a mentor?
3. What do you think your parent(s) think about you having a mentor?
4. If a friend asked you about what it’s like to have a mentor, what would you say?

Research Question #2: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the impact of their mentoring relationship?

5. Has your mentor helped you in any way? If so, in what ways has he or she helped you? (For example, has having a mentor helped you get along better with your family or friends or teachers? Or, do you feel like having a mentor has helped you do better at school? Or, have you learned anything new, experienced things you might not otherwise have experienced?)
6. How has having a mentor made you feel different about yourself?
7. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your mentor or about what it’s like to have a mentor?
8. If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?

Research Questions #3: What do middle and high school students participating in the Stand By Me Mentoring Program perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of the mentoring program?

9. What is it about this program that has kept you participating in it?
10. Have you experienced a time when you felt you needed more support from the mentor center facilitator to work through a difficult time with your mentor? If so, please tell me how the facilitator could have better helped you.
APPENDIX Q

2010-2011 Mentee Survey

Please take a moment to tell us how you feel about being a mentee in the 'Stand By Me' Mentor Program. This information will help us know what you think about your experience as a mentee. We will use this information to provide you the best mentoring experience we can. Your name will remain private and will not be shared with anyone outside the Mentoring Program.

Your Name (optional): ________________________________

Your Age: ___ Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

Grade: ___ School: ________________________________

Where do you usually meet with your Mentor? ________________________________

How long have you had a Mentor?

___ 0-1 Years
___ 2-3 Years
___ 4-5 Years
___ 6 or more Years

About how often do you meet with your Mentor?

___ Once a month or less
___ Once a week
___ Twice a week
___ More than twice a week

How much time do you spend with your Mentee per week (average)?

___ 1 hour or less
___ 1-2 hours
___ 3-5 hours
___ 5 or more hours

BECAUSE I HAVE A MENTOR:

I feel like my mentor cares about me

Agree ___ Disagree ___ Don't Know ___

I feel like my mentor will help me if I need it

Agree ___ Disagree ___ Don't Know ___

I feel like I have more options for my future

Agree ___ Disagree ___ Don’t Know ___

I have higher expectations of myself (expect myself to do better)

Agree ___ Disagree ___ Don't Know ___
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have more interests and hobbies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more involved in activities (like sports, music, youth programs, art classes, culinary classes, etc.)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like school better since I have a mentor</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try harder in school since I have a mentor</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>My grades and test scores are better since I have a mentor</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I come to school better prepared (such as having my homework done)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>My behavior in class is better (such as I pay attention and don’t interrupt)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am better able to say how I feel</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to say NO to wrong or dangerous things</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to not use alcohol and other drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am more likely to not be in a gang</td>
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<tr>
<td>I get along better with my family</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get along better with friends</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get along better with teachers</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like myself more since I have a mentor</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I am a better person</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentor almost always asks me what I want to do</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am with my mentor, I feel special.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentor is interested in what I want to do</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes my mentor promises we will do something, then we don't</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor talks to me in ways I do not like</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am with my mentor, I feel excited</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentor and I like to do a lot of the same things</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I am with my mentor, I feel sad</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel I can trust my mentor</td>
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<td>My mentor thinks of fun and interesting things to do</td>
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<td>When I am with my mentor, I feel important</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wish my mentor knew me better</td>
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<tr>
<td>I like it when my mentor gives me advice</td>
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