

MENTORING TOWARDS RESILIENT THOUGHT

A Synthesis Project Presented

By

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## ABSTRACT

### MENTORING TOWARDS RESILIENT THOUGHT

December 2009

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The focus of my Synthesis Project is the development of a *Curriculum Guide* that outlines the importance of building relationships with young people that are meaningful, supported, structured and collaborative. In developing this guide, I felt it was essential to create a framework that will support my work within youth development, for young people ages 9-19, in order to scaffold learning and foster opportunities for resilient thought. In addition to supporting these learning opportunities, I also felt it was important to develop a foundation from which the staff that I supervise and work with understand the importance of their role and the impact relationship-building can have on these young people. This guide promotes the development of youth serving professionals as reflective practitioners and mentors in order to build a structured and supportive experience for both the mentor and the young people (mentees), that is intentional and reflects the experience, needs and interests of those within the relationship.

In the field of Positive Youth Development, youth-serving professionals acknowledge that the most important relationship in the life of a young person, outside of the family unit, is a positive and supportive non-parental adult who assumes the role of a mentor. The role of a

mentor, in the natural setting of an after-school or out-of-school time program, not only helps to foster opportunities that build life and career skills, but also provides the kind of support that young people need towards developing resilient thought. Fostering opportunities that allow young people to develop both a resilient core and an optimistic outlook are essential when promoting the development of perseverance that can guide these young people to persist in the face of adversity, hardship and/or change. This guide also identifies important ways to support and enhance my own work in fostering opportunities to encourage resiliency-building within youth development. It is also essential in developing opportunities that enrich out-of-school time quality programming and staff growth through the development of a framework that encourages and scaffolds thinking and learning to promote the development of dispositions from a strengths-based approach.

This project highlights the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship, the process and the developmental tools that can be utilized and modified. It also identifies ways of transferring dispositions that promote perseverance in other areas of their lives towards a holistic approach to fostering resilient thought. Within out-of-school time Programs and through a Positive Youth Development philosophy, mentoring and encouraging young people towards the development of resilient thought, is a process that can allow for authentic learning and living in order for young people to persevere in an ever-changing world.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

**“Our true nature could be compared to the sky. . .We should always try and remember: the clouds are not the sky. . .They only hang there and pass by. . .and they can never stain or mark the sky in any way.”**

**(The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying)**

Over the course of my work in youth development, I have come to understand that the greatest impact an adult can have on youth is a willingness to build a relationship with that youth. This relationship-building can influence these young people in the way they face the world, its many challenges and how aware they are of their own perseverance in facing of these challenges. In developing this perseverance, the role of an adult beyond the family unit as a mentor in the life of young people, can significantly influence who they can become and also how they view themselves throughout their developmental process. The support and encouragement of an adult in a mentoring capacity can help foster the development of not only a sense of purpose and belonging for the youth, but also help these youth to understand how to belong and persevere outside of the adult/youth relationship. It is the mentoring relationship that can determine for many youth how they belong, who they reach out to and why/how they persist. If the mentoring relationship is developed and sustained for both the mentor and the mentee, the developmental and reflective processes that are essential for growth can impact and endure throughout the life of the young person.

The influence that mentoring can have on young people can be immense, however, researchers and organizations, such as *Mass Mentors*, emphasize that it is important that those involved with the mentoring process understand and reflect on the impact that they can and will have on those with whom they are building these experiences and relationships. The mentoring



process is an essential component to building relationships and opportunities that not only support learning, but also their lives. Through youth work, I have realized that the mentoring process can be an integral component in supporting young people, as well as in developing their resilient natures. Even though my role in the youth development field has evolved to focus more on the administrative components of developing youth programs and experiences, my most rewarding experiences have been working with and helping to develop young people within our program. As a professional in the field of youth development, I have always understood my role to be to support and encourage young people, whether that support and encouragement is through direct service opportunities or whether this connection is through programs that were designed and structured for these youth. Also, I have always intuitively understood that as a youth development professional, as well as the Director of a youth center, my role is to encourage and foster the development of certain competencies in our young people in order for them to become productive and competent members of their community. What I did not realize was the extent to which youth serving professionals and agencies can greatly impact the growth, development and ultimately the resiliency of these young people. Although I understood this concept intuitively, and I knew how to engage young people through their own ideas, experiences and expertise, I had not realized or experienced how much a young person could connect with someone outside his/her family and/or peer group. In addition, I had not realized the influence that a person could have on young people in the way that I seemed to have impacted a small group of youth within my center, and especially with one young woman who I watched grow up.

In reflecting on my relationship with this young woman, who I have known since she was a freshman at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, she was an integral part of our program

and community. As part of the program at our youth center, she had been involved as a volunteer in youth councils, school-year internship programs, was an elected official as part of our youth center's youth government and had also taken on a variety of leadership roles by leading certain "youth-led" trainings and community initiatives. Throughout the process, she not only worked closely with me and her peer group in order to develop a culture and community within our center, but she also learned how to connect the work of the center to the work of the high school. She made these connections by not only engaging other students who were not involved in our youth center's programming, but also by engaging teachers and school officials in the important work that she and the group were developing and implementing. As she developed and "aged" through the program, my relationship with her also changed with her needs and experiences, as well as with my own.

As this young woman began her senior year in high school, and I became more involved in her senior experiences; attending her assemblies and presentations, visiting colleges and assisting her in making her own community connections, I became more involved in her "world" outside of the youth center and also meeting the other people and connections in her life. It was through these meetings and presentations that I had a better understanding of what my impact had been on her over the course of her time within our program. As we interacted with teachers, faculty and other agencies, she began introducing me as her mentor. Throughout our relationship, I had never referred to myself as a mentor nor had she ever used that language with me. This relationship that developed naturally over the course of years and tremendous work was indeed a mentoring relationship. The impact that this relationship had not only on the young woman, but also on me, had been great. In reflecting on this experience and the term, "mentor," and thinking about this shift in language from using titles such as "youth worker" and

moving to the idea of the reflective process of a mentor, made me think further about what my connection to her life meant, what impact I had on her development and what skills and competencies I had encouraged her to develop. Furthermore, I began reflecting on the work of the youth center and how the youth development staff viewed their own roles. Did they understand the impact that they can have on young people? Do they think about the impact they can have? Do they view themselves as mentors to the young people with whom we serve? Even though the relationship that had developed over the past five years was not a formally matched mentoring pair, as found with formal mentoring programs, such as *Big Brothers and Big Sisters*, the mentoring experience that evolved impacted her decisions, her “know-how” and her ability to persevere.

In addition, as I have reflected on what areas of support I identified for the mentee and also others with whom I have mentored, I have realized that the main areas of quality that I have focused on are connectedness and transference, supportive structures, confidence in the process and modeling a sense of self-efficacy throughout programs and processes. It has been through these mentoring relationships, my own reflective process and throughout the course of my studies within the *Critical and Creative Thinking Program (CCT)*, that I have become increasingly interested in how to bridge these ideas as well as my work within the CCT Program, to both my personal and professional life. More specifically, as a professional in the field of Human Services, I have become interested in how I can become more intentional as a reflective practitioner and affect change within my youth-serving agency. In supporting the idea of intentional reflection, I also realized that this change could promote and sustain quality programs for not only the young people who are served, but also the staff who would implement and oversee these quality programs. Therefore, the framework and process that I will implement

within my agency is the concept of how staff can mentor young people toward the development of resilient thought.

Mentoring towards resilient thought is a process of designing and supporting intentional opportunities with which youth serving professionals develop relationships with young people that support their individual growth, as well as the growth of competencies and skills that will support the development their own perseverance. Mentoring towards resilient thought is not only an approach to working with young people that supports and structures their experiences through relationships, but it also allows youth development professionals to view and understand the impact of their work through a reflective lens. This process compels youth professionals to examine how they interact with young people by reflecting on the impact of individual relationships through developmentally appropriate interactions, identifying supports needed and developing expectations that are related to all who are involved in the relationship. Mentoring within this capacity places the meaningful engagement of the mentee at the center of the work. The work must then focus on the supportive structures and opportunities designed with the young people in mind, and also ensuring that the young people have a voice in the design. The process of mentoring towards resilient thought is not a process of showing young people how to “be” or “do,” instead, it is a process that enables mentees to learn the best process for themselves with guidance, and for the mentors to act as advocates for the mentees within this experiential process.

As a part of the process of developing a framework that encourages young people to develop resilient thought, my own reflective process and youth and staff engagement and development towards this meaningful participation, has led me to assess the ways in which we promote the development of the young people throughout the program. My work within my

youth serving agency with young people, ages nine to nineteen, supports their development within the youth program and beyond. In addition, my role is also to support and develop the staff to provide the most effective methods and resources needed to support these young people. In thinking about the process of developing sustainable, quality programs, I began thinking not only about staff outcomes, expectations and short and long-term goals, but also how these relate to youth outcomes, and the expectations we have for the young people and their roles within our programs.

### **Supporting Youth Programming**

In thinking about how to support our young people to persevere not only within the youth program but also beyond, youth serving agencies must determine what type of programming the staff must develop and implement in order to encourage outcomes that foster the development of sources of resiliency. In addition, youth serving agencies must ask themselves what skills the staff need to implement these programs. They must also ask what types of thought are fostered by both programs and staff, and what role the staff should play in the development of these programs, skills and dispositional thought. Furthermore, the development of quality within the programs must not only focus on how we view the roles of the staff within these programs, but also how we view the roles of the young people whom we serve.

In reflecting on the process of how we view and support staff and youth outcomes, the focus of direct service staff and also those who train and supervise these staff, must be the development of resilient thought. This development of dispositions promotes the ability of individuals to persevere in the face of adversity, to develop a sense of belonging and purpose and to see beyond the moment and transfer thinking that allows for multi-dimensional thought and problem-solving. Resilient thought allows individuals to not only affect change for themselves,

but it can also affect and impact the larger community. In many ways, my work at my youth center has been primarily focused on offering quality programs that foster resilient thought to promote the development of critical and creative thinking skills. Therefore, our goal is to develop specific dispositional thought that impacts not only who the young people are, but also who they strive to be beyond the program.

### **Developing a Framework That Fosters Resilient Thought**

While our focus is on the development of resilient thought, and supporting its development through our agency's quality programming, we must also work with and train our staff to not only understand resiliency and how it should be supported in all learners and thinkers, but also how we support a process that is intentional and reinforced throughout the learning process at each level of development. In focusing on this developmental framework, that supports and encourages the process of mentoring towards resilient thought through both staff and youth engagement, youth service providers must reflect on their intentionality in how they can both develop within the process and how the process can impact each of them beyond the relationship. The process of building these "intentional" connections is to embed reflective opportunities within the relationship for both the mentor and the mentee in order for each to identify and build experiences that will lead them to become reflective practitioners in their lives.

In identifying this process of developing resilient thought through intentional connections, while building on the work of previous semesters, the focus of my *Synthesis Project* is the development of a curriculum guide, *Mentoring Towards Resilient Thought*. This guide not only supports the development of resilient thought by focusing on thinking strategies, skills, needs and developmental stages of young people, but also is a tool for youth serving staff to understand their role of as a mentor at each level of the developmental process. The guide

outlines the importance of the staff acting as “intentional mentors,” that is, individuals who are committed to developing consistent, reflective, strong and healthy relationships with young people in order to not only help them persist in the community, but also allow them to foster and transfer skills that they can utilize in a complex world.

The curriculum guide is divided into three, themed areas to meet the needs of the three programs that are developed and supported within the youth center: the pre-teen program (ages nine to eleven) the middle school program (primarily 12 and 13 year- olds) and the teen program (14 to 19 year-olds). Each section identifies the developmental characteristics, thinking strategies and needs of each age group, how each group will be prepared to graduate to the next program, and also how to persevere in that program and beyond. By developing and implementing this curriculum guide, the goal is that the young people persevere through programming that scaffolds learning and skill-building and fosters developmental thought beyond the programmatic moment, and the age and/or stage of youth development.

In addition, by supporting these youth to think beyond themselves, the guide also addresses and furthers the development of the staff’s roles, and what is required and/or needed at each level of the program for youth development. The staff component focuses on the following:

- ✓ Goals and outcomes
- ✓ How roles should be sustained and maintained
- ✓ Strategies that can be utilized to foster resilient thought
- ✓ How this process can become intentional
- ✓ Tools that can be used and developed to monitor the effectiveness of relationships and skill-building
- ✓ Development of comprehensive programming and reflective practices (i.e. development of the reflective practitioner, evaluative tools and rubrics)

Furthermore, this guide is also a resource that will present many options for both staff and youth develop quality programming, and offer opportunities that lend themselves to “transferable learning and knowledge-building.” This transference of skills and knowledge is a key to helping young people to build strategic thought processes that allow them to persevere in the face of adversity. In order to encourage authentic learning that promotes perseverance, the guide also serves as a flexible foundation for learning and relationship-building.



## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### What is Resiliency?

Throughout the course of my research in the area of resiliency within the *Critical and Creative Thinking Program*, I have often wondered why some individuals persevere in the face of change, transitions and/or adversity, while others seem not to have the adequate skills, capabilities and/or resources to thrive. This idea of resiliency became alive for me as a student in some of my classes and seminars, such as Critical and Creative Thinking, in which we would delve into what it meant to be a critical and creative thinker. Upon further reflection on my experiences in these courses, I often found myself wondering how do those who strive to be innovative, original and think in ways that promote perspective-building, persevere in a world that does not always allow or accept new and innovative ideas and/or perspectives. I also wondered how these people persisted in the face of adversity, and how they continued when they knew that they are moving against the grain. I found myself curious to know what had influenced their resilient natures in order to continue thinking and creating outside of society's influences. I thought further about these resilient individuals and reflected on my own experiences of resiliency-building, who and what influenced my own ideas and dispositions and how had I learned to motivate myself beyond other persuasions. To this end, I began focusing and reflecting not only on my own experiences, but also those of others and asked the following questions: What is it about these resilient individuals who can cope, problem-solve and make transitions that allow them, in many instances, to not only persevere in the face of adversity, but to also emerge from these experiences stronger? What characteristics, traits and/or dispositions do these individuals possess that allow them to face these challenges? Furthermore, what has not

yet developed in those individuals who may not feel that they are capable of coping or persisting?

As I continued to think about this idea of perseverance, and its connection to youth development, I have spent much of the time focusing on and researching the effects of resiliency-building in young people, and how this innate ability manifests itself in some individuals and not so readily in others. If “we are all born with innate resiliency,” (Henderson, Bernard, Sharp-Light, 1999, 5), why then are some young people and adults better equipped to persevere than others? Furthermore, how are we able to encourage resiliency-building in others?

Resiliency is a process of change, and it is the ability to face and overcome an obstacle and emerge as a stronger individual. Developing resiliency is a process that takes time, must utilize perspective-building and must be supported in an environment that encourages individual growth and reflection. Historically, however, resiliency had been studied through a “problem-focused” approach. As Bonnie Bernard, M.S.W., states, resiliency research was developed by looking at risk factors of specific diseases and “these studies have been retrospective in design, that is, they do a onetime historical assessment of adults with these existing, identified problems” (1991, 1). In my review of the literature, the study and evaluation of resiliency in individuals typically did not take into account how and when resiliency was developed and/or utilized. The study of resiliency focused on assessments of patients, typically adults, who were involved with “onetime” evaluations, not longitudinal studies. Furthermore, this research mainly examined patients with existing disorders. Resiliency studies, therefore, were filled with the assessments of risk factors due to existing disorders, sicknesses and/or socioeconomic status. This problem-focused perspective, as Bonnie Bernard states, perpetuates a perspective of continuous, negative outcomes.

However, over the course of the past 30 years, the focus of resiliency as risk-based or as a preventative approach has experienced a shift in thinking. With the inclusion of the first longitudinal studies by researchers such as Emmy Werner, Ruth Smith (Henderson, Bernard, Sharp-Light, 1999, 5-9), and Norman Garmezy and Michael Rutter (Davis, 1999, 1-4), researchers began looking at resiliency in younger children and developed their studies and evaluations as they continued to follow and study these young people into adulthood. In contrast to the previous negative view of those considered “high risk,” resiliency studies have moved from a preventative arena to a more “protective” process. The focus on resiliency-building is not solely to help individuals overcome specific challenges in their lives, it is however, an opportunity to develop and encourage innate abilities that allow individuals to face vulnerabilities and bounce back through a process that can grow and change with them. Bernard stresses resiliency-building through a proactive approach, through examining the traits of a resilient young person and the protective factors that must be present within the family, the school and the community (Bernard, 1991, 8-23).

In the review of the literature, it became very clear that the process of developing resiliency in young people should begin with the development of skills and dispositions that include higher-ordered thinking and transference. Such knowledge-building should include learning, not only for immediate comprehension-building, but also learning for meaning and understanding that transcends the moment. Learning through transcendence should include strategies that young people can utilize to incorporate critical and creative processes. Although many researchers look to critical and creative thinking as a product of the resilient person (i.e. Are they flexible, problem-solvers, aware of complexities, weighing alternatives, innovative, original, open-minded, able to move beyond the norms?), these thinking strategies can and

should be utilized as tools in order to produce or strengthen the outcomes that are then measured as sources of resiliency.

In utilizing critical and creative thinking processes as strategies for authentic learning, young people must be immersed in environments that offer and support learning and thinking that goes beyond the individual, the classroom and the community. In order for this to occur, organizations and agencies must offer young people opportunities to think beyond themselves. Dispositional thought must be encouraged in all areas of thinking and living.

### **How Does Resiliency Manifest Itself?**

*“The world breaks everyone, and afterward some are strong at the broken places.”*

**(Ernest Hemingway)**

When we think about resiliency, we automatically think of a strong individual who can face any challenge and be victorious, however, this is typically not the case. Also, when thinking about those young people who have been labeled “at-risk” or “high-risk,” they are typically labeled as not being resilient or without the capacity for resiliency. As Bonnie Bernard states, although the idea of resiliency-building is important in young people who are considered “high-risk” due to socio-economic status, families dealing with mental illness, criminality and also drug and alcohol abuse, there is a low percentage of young people repeating the patterns of their family in their adult lives. Although a certain percentage of “high-risk” children developed problems, a higher percentage did not; “while one out of four children of alcoholic parents develops alcohol problems, three out of four do not” (Bernard, 1991, 3). Furthermore, researchers such as Norman Garmezy, a pioneer in the research of children who were viewed as “high risk” (i.e. born into poverty, living in war-torn areas, parents were mentally ill, and/or parents were abusers or addicts), found that “50% to 70% of them somehow manage to develop

significant competencies and grow up to lead successful lives as adults with strong abilities to love and to work.” (Davis, 1999, 2).

In compiling this research over the course of this project it became clear that resiliency, by nature, is a fluid, ever-changing component of who we are. To be resilient thinkers and learners, individuals must build dispositions that allow them to face life-long adversity with a mental flexibility. Resiliency is not static, nor does it remain the same throughout our lives. Resiliency ebbs and flows throughout our lives; sometimes we may remain strong, at other moments we may give in to our vulnerabilities. What matters is how we return to our resilient cores and how we decide to use those challenging times as tools. As Werner and Smith state, resiliency offers individuals, “self-righting” capacities (Duffy, 1999, 3). In order to persevere, there are specific capacities that “appear to transcend ethnic, social class, geographical and historical boundaries” (Henderson, Bernard, Sharp-Light, 1999, 7). These “self-righting” capacities are the keys to our resilient natures and also integral mechanisms for human development.

Although we may be born with “innate resiliency,” in order for it to develop, it must be nurtured in an environment that understands how and why the individual and the processes are integral components of each other’s growth. In Davis’ research, Michael Rutter’s work is highlighted, stating that although resiliency is an innate part of who we are, “resilience may reside in the social context as much as in the individual.” (Davis, 1999, 3). Therefore, in order for young people to build their resiliency and prosper, protective factors must include support from their families, schools and communities. In each of these areas, these individuals must be given opportunities to develop and practice behaviors that allow them to not only build competencies, including social competence, problem-solving, autonomy and a sense of purpose

and future, but also dispositional thought that they can access beyond the classroom, enrichment programs or the confines of the family unit.

### **Fostering Supportive Environments**

When offered the supportive environments necessary for academic and also human (socio-emotional) development, the resilient individual, namely the resilient young person, will exhibit key traits that are measures of resiliency: Competence (feeling successful); Belonging (feeling valued); Usefulness (feeling needed); Potency (feeling empowered); Optimism (feeling encouraged and hopeful) (i.e. CBUPO) (Sagor, 1996, 39). These resiliency outcomes (CBUPO) must be essential components of building a resilient community. Furthermore, there are other attributes that can also exemplify resiliency in children, which include “responsiveness, flexibility, empathy and caring, communication skills, a sense of humor and any other pro-social behavior” (Bernard, 1991, 4). Young people must have many opportunities in which they feel encouraged and supported towards development of these outcomes and attributes. In addition, both in the classroom, as well as within enrichment programs, young people must be encouraged to achieve beyond the learning environment and what they may perceive as being their own limitations.

As the young person gradually ages through a youth program, school system and/or naturally matures within the family unit, the need to build supportive structures and opportunities must not cease, but must continue to foster opportunities to develop resilient thinking and behaviors. Thus, the need for resiliency-building throughout early childhood to adolescent years must continue and evolve with the needs of these young people. With the challenges that increase with the onset of adolescent and young adult years, in which the care and support of these young people seems to decrease as they get older, it must include a process that is more

intentional, strengthened and carried on and continued through the secondary years. In a discussion with Dr. Donna Duffy, clinical psychologist at Middlesex Community College (Bedford, MA), on November 10, 2008, about resiliency-building and adolescence, she expressed the need and importance for environmental buffers in order for young people to “persevere” or thrive. These buffers are factors, that can lead to the development of resiliency, that allow these young people to identify who they are as thinkers, individuals, evaluators and reflectors that would allow them many opportunities to rise above the adversities they face. Dr. Duffy also identified the main factors that she believed are integral foci of resiliency-building. These include strong, healthy relationships and supportive networks, a feeling of safety, an ability to be flexible and also, especially for adolescents, the deliberate integration of peer groups and opportunities to control and create their environment and their own individual processes.

The process of resiliency-building must therefore, never end, and continue to be cultivated within the young person to continue to meet the needs and challenges that he/she will encounter. Resilient, young people must play a role in how their resiliency and competencies are developed. Dr. Sharyn Zunz identifies six protective factors that young people can develop in order to counteract adversity:

- ✓ Developing a realistic ‘locus of control’ or appraisal of one’s environment
- ✓ Nurturing a skill or talent
- ✓ Encouraging the development of ‘fair fighting’ and good conflict resolution strategies
- ✓ Developing the ability to adaptively distance themselves from negative influences
- ✓ Promoting the development of mid/long term purpose or goal
- ✓ Being (or assisting in helping identify) a mentor, guide, role model coach or tutor

(Zunz, 2005)

To emphasize the importance of the pre-teen to teen years, that in many ways, mold who those young adults can and will be, it is how they determine to maneuver the many “pulls” they face daily, that will in affect, influence their emerging identities, independence, self-esteem and ultimately, pro-social behavior and health. What we do to encourage resiliency-building and how young people deal with the “pulls” in their lives will determine how malleable their inner “rubber-bands” (Zunz, 2005) remain. This malleability can also determine how developmentally sound their adult lives will be in terms of how effective they were in building identity, autonomy, sense of purpose and future and transference. In order for these qualities and/or competencies to be developed in our young people, these capacity-builders must be embedded within what we do. Therefore, learning environments must offer opportunities to develop and practice behaviors that are not only fundamental to the learning environment, but are also key elements of learning and living beyond structured experiences.

While offering young people opportunities to build their own resiliency, as well as offering a supportive environment that encourages capacity-building, youth serving agencies along with other learning institutions, must utilize strategies that allow for independent, knowledge-building, while at the same time fostering the development of dispositions and habits of mind that can transfer beyond the learning system. Young people must have ownership of their role or the process, must understand that they can be in control and that they are an important voice in the collaborative effort. In order to meet the needs of these young people, research has identified that youth development professionals must “not only identify risk and protective factors, but to what extent they elaborate on the ‘mechanisms’ or ‘processes’ involved in the development (or lack thereof) of resilience” (Davis, 1999, 7). The capacity-building in these young adults must include buffers that allow them to persist and strengthen as they move



through moments of hardship and anxiety. The development of young people must also include processes that allow them as learners and thinkers to be inquirers that are empowered to be guides on the path of their own learning.

## Chapter Three

### WHAT ROLE DO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS PLAY IN PROMOTING RESILIENCY-BUILDING?

In many ways, the role of youth professionals is to encourage the development of resiliency by supporting the development of flexibility and capacity-building. Researchers such as Werner and Smith state that resiliency offers individuals, “self-righting” capacities (Duffy, 1999, 3). These self-righting capacities are “strengths people, families, schools and communities call upon to promote health and healing” (Davis, 1991, 2). In addition, these “self-righting” capacities allow individuals the opportunity to overcome and work through the challenges they may face over the course of their lives. These “self-righting” capacities are the keys to our resilient natures and also integral mechanisms for human development. Therefore, in order for individuals in youth serving agencies or organizations to promote resiliency-building in young people, individuals must place human development at the center of their work.

Even though these “self-righting” capacities are within us, in some limited capacity from an early age, what allows them to develop, improve, expand and mature is not only the individual that possesses these capacities, but they are strongly connected to and embedded within influences in the environment. For these capacities to have the opportunity to develop, strengthen and be supported, the environment must offer the optimal conditions to allow for these “self-righting” capacities to develop in individuals. Thus, in order for resiliency to develop and to allow for change, it must be encouraged and supported in a nurturing environment that allows for “plasticity” (Davis, 1991, 2) and/or malleability that can be flexible enough to stretch with the needs and stressors that are present.

When optimal conditions exist in the lives of young people, and they are offered the supportive environments necessary for not only academic, but also human (socio-emotional) development, the resilient individual, namely the resilient young person, will exhibit key traits that are measures of resiliency. Furthermore, as Bernard states, these sources of resiliency must also include qualities of Social Competence, Problem Solving, Critical Consciousness, Autonomy and a Sense of Purpose (McDermott, 2001, 2). These *Qualities of Resilience* are also essential components of building a resilient community. Young people must have opportunities in which they feel encouraged towards these outcomes. In thinking about how to support and promote the development of resiliency outcomes in our young people, youth serving agencies must develop tools and resources in order for youth development professionals to support and encourage this resiliency-building. In addition, youth development professionals must also reflect on their role and how can they encourage the development of resiliency outcomes: Competency, Belonging, Usefulness, Potency and Optimism.

In addition to supporting resiliency outcomes, youth serving agencies should also provide many opportunities to help develop a sense of personal efficacy, that is, that young people believe in their own ways of developing and supporting themselves and can transition through moments of adversity with the knowledge that they can persist. This sense of personal efficacy is essential in developing resiliency outcomes because individuals must believe in, be confident in and empowered by their own process and reflective natures in order to persist and see through the adversity or challenge that they are facing. Self-efficacy is not only an integral component of sustaining the resilient nature, but also aids individuals in gauging their own reflective processes by reflecting on and determining their own strengths/confidence. While there are young people who can navigate their way through challenges and adversity on their own, or are comfortable

reaching out to people in their community to help them through these challenging times, there are still those young people who neither have the personal efficacy to support themselves, nor do they have resources or insight to reach out to others for support (i.e. community, schools, youth professionals). Youth development professionals must identify their role within the youth serving community that not only supports and reaches out to young people who have yet to develop their own efficacy, but also to those who have learned to be resilient. It is therefore important to support those who have realized their potential in developing “self-righting” capacities, and to continue to encourage and challenge those who are still struggling to define the buffers needed to persist. Resiliency is not static, and therefore throughout the lives of young people, there will be moments that test the plasticity of their resilience. Therefore, regardless of the strength of one’s resilient nature, there will be times in which each individual will be more resilient than at other times.

As young people are exposed to many of life’s stressors (i.e. family obligations, socioeconomic status, puberty, media, peer pressure), the true test of this resiliency is if they are able to work through and bounce back from momentary challenges or adversity. As researchers Werner and Smith state, those who have developed resiliency will have an increased ability to bounce back from life’s stressors. This ability to bounce back is attributed to the plasticity of resiliency due to the development of protective factors. Furthermore, Werner and Smith emphasize that “these protective buffers make a more profound impact on people’s lives than do specific risk factors or stressful life events.” (Henderson, 2007, 2) The role of youth development professionals must then be to ensure that the protective factors that are needed for the development of the resilient core are embedded in their everyday work with young people.

In order to further ensure that the protective factors are embedded within any of the experiences and guidance that we offer young people, youth development professionals must first understand their role and the impact their work can have on the development of resiliency-building. As I stated earlier, the role of youth development professionals is to encourage flexibility and capacity-building, it is also however, an opportunity to build perspective. In order to encourage resiliency-building in young people, professionals in youth serving agencies must not regurgitate static curricula with adult-focused goals. The expectation of those in youth work must be to meet the young people where they are, and to help them to move beyond and challenge who they are and who they want to become. Those in youth work must therefore, understand and incorporate opportunities that allow young people to identify and build capacities.

In building these capacities, the role of those in youth work is very unique. Youth professionals are, in many ways, the buffers between the school, family and community in helping young people realize what these capacities are and how they are transferable to other areas of their own lives. In helping to make the transfer of capacities a reality, those in youth work must develop and promote supportive structures that encourage positive outcomes that are crucial to perseverance and youth development. These outcomes include achievement/academic outcomes, social/emotional outcomes, prevention/problem-solving outcomes and health and wellness outcomes (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, 2-5). By developing outcomes that support the development of the whole young person, those in youth work are encouraging young people who are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally. Furthermore, the healthier the young people and adults are within the community, the healthier the community, allowing then for prosperity and future resiliency-building. In order to encourage and support the development

of healthy young people, youth serving agencies must develop intentional opportunities that promote relationship and capacity-building between youth serving professionals and the young people.

### **How Must Youth Serving Professionals View their Role with Youth?**

Youth serving professionals must ultimately view their role through a lens of support that not only identifies the needs and interests of the young people, but also works with them to try to build on and meet those needs and interests to help the young people make connections beyond the relationship. In order for the youth serving professionals to understand the scope of their work with young people they must view their connections to the young people through the strengths of a mentoring capacity. Although there is conflicting research that states that mentorships may or may not affect the resiliency-building in young people; researchers such as Dr. Jean Rhodes ask the questions “does mentoring compensate for weak parental bonds? Does mentoring promote resilience?” (Davis, 1991, 38). There are also those researchers who stress the importance of non-parental mentors in the development of resilient thought, and that through many longitudinal studies that focused on children of parents with mental illness and other family situations that were deemed “high risk,” that “without exception, all the children who thrived had at least one person that provided them consistent emotional support—a grandmother, an older sister, a teacher or neighbor” (Davis, 1999, 16).

In thinking about the role of a mentor in the lives of young people in the community and defining what this role means for not only the betterment of the lives of young people, but also the health of the community, I began reflecting on my own role within my youth serving agency, the role of my staff and also the impact my youth center has on its youth and the greater

community. Throughout my time within the *Critical and Creative Thinking Program*, and also as I have transitioned from a Program Director in charge of specific “aged” programs, to the Center Director of the Youth Center, overseeing all of our aged programs (i.e. pre-teen, middle school and teen programs), I am continuously redefining what it means to be a reflective practitioner. As a Director in charge of overseeing all programs within our facility, it is my responsibility to manage and support program and staff development, youth engagement and the overall quality of the program and youth center. In doing this, I continue to reflect on my own role and how I can modify my connection to the young people, as well as providing support to my staff to help them improve their connections to the youth and the community at large.

Through my experiences in relationship-building with young people, the role of a mentor and the basis of the mentoring relationship, in order to encourage the development of protective factors, must be flexible support and respect. In promoting the development of protective factors in young people, the relationship that is formulated must be developmental, that is, youth-focused (i.e. What are the interests of the young people? Who are they as learners and thinkers?), geared toward building connections (i.e. What learning links are the young people making? Do they see ways of transferring their knowledge?) and identifying and developing goals with each young person (i.e. Have the young people identified what their learning and interests mean to them and how they would like to expand them? Are they developing a sense of purpose?). Therefore, the role of the mentor is not to enter into the partnership with a preconceived notion of how this relationship should develop with adult-focused goals and expectations. It should however, be a process that both mentor and mentee view as an opportunity for growth and identifying and developing joint expectations.

## **Developing the Mentoring Relationship**

In identifying what this mentoring relationship should look like, one must understand that building a relationship is a process; “the word "mentor" comes from the Greek word for "steadfast" and "enduring" ([www.massmentor.org](http://www.massmentor.org)), and therefore youth development professionals must view the work of building these relationships within the notion that these relationships must endure if there are to have any impact on the young people. As part of this process, the mentorship that is created is formulated around the idea that this process of continual growth is at the heart of human development. Therefore, in thinking about this focus on human development, we must be intentional in how we encourage the development of protective factors in the lives of these young people. The role of developing protective factors and resiliency in young people can be a clear outcome in the successful development of a mentorship. We must clearly define the role of a mentor (i.e. what this experience is and what it means to be a non-parental adult in the life of a young person), what expectations both the mentor and mentee can and should have for one another (i.e. developing a consistent, supportive relationship that allows for open communication for both the mentor and mentee), and how the development of protective factors is embedded the process and the basis for developing the most successful mentoring relationships (i.e. How are resiliency outcomes thought about and planned into activities and one-on-one time? Do the mentees have the opportunity to think about their own competency-building?)

Although mentors may see their role as a support system for the identified needs of young people and that their relationships with these young people offers an immediate connection and contribution, what that connection can offer young people throughout their lives,



is an opportunity to persist in the face of adversity. Mentors not only offer young people an opportunity to develop a structured and supportive relationship, but they also offer them ways of developing their own personal efficacy in order to be empowered to contribute, identify connections to their community and to transfer learning and thinking to other areas of their lives. For many youth, mentoring relationships can be an opportunity to learn how to persevere through building resilient cores. Thus, the building and sustaining of these mentoring relationships can contribute to this resiliency-building.

### **Developing a Mentoring Mentality**

In identifying the important aspects of what it means to be a mentor and building this specific type of relationship with young people, youth serving agencies must ask and reflect on; What is the role of a non-parental adult in the life of a young person? How can a relationship with a coach, teacher, or youth work professional impact and encourage positive youth outcomes and protective factors in the lives of young people? How can mentoring relationships influence positive youth development? These questions are crucial to understanding the importance of building relationships with young people, and also the connection to how these relationships can foster the development of resiliency in youth.

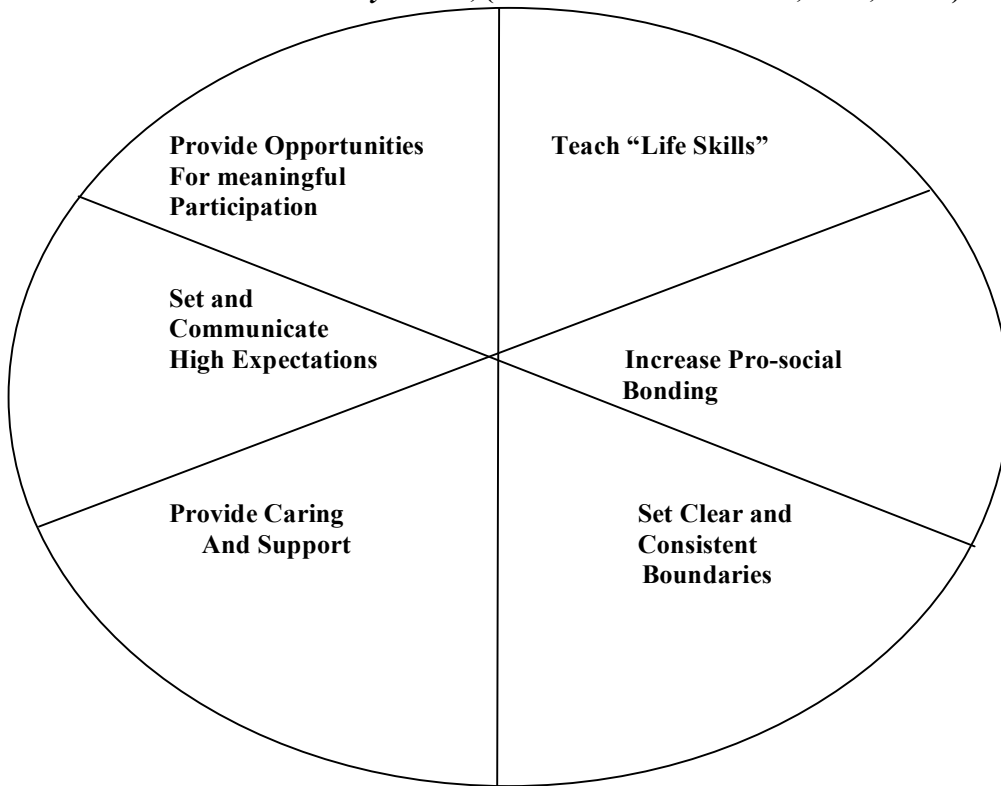
Although the development of resiliency is at the core of relationship-building, the development of buffers, (i.e. qualities or traits that allow for self-understanding or correction, that allow individuals an opportunity to “bounce back” from moments of adversity, hardship and/or transitions), also allow individuals an opportunity to find their niche within their community and beyond. In order for young people to understand the importance of and develop this community connection, individuals must first understand and/or be supported and encouraged to value the importance of the greater community to their own existence. In

developing resilient thought, the environment that exists or that can be developed can play a pivotal role in how young people view their connection to one another, their mentors and also their connections to the greater community. Connectedness is a key quality of resiliency-building in order to develop a sense of belonging, purpose and future. The connection to the community, whether as part of a youth center community or the community of the neighborhood, is essential to positive development and growth. Therefore, mentees need to be encouraged to understand and value their role within their community and also value the connections and resources that their community can offer. In order for young people to develop resilient thought and to understand their own role within the community, those in non-parental roles of encouragement, support and development, (i.e. mentors), must first understand the actions needed to support its development. Thus, what mentors need to develop first and foremost with young people, is the basis of the relationship with those same young people. In developing these mentoring relationships with young people, mentors must first understand that they must approach these relationships in the realm of Positive Youth Development (PYD), that is, “all youth possess strengths, such as the capacity to change their behavior, to develop new cognitive abilities, cultivate different interests, acquire new behavioral skills, and establish new social relationships” (Lerner et al., 2006, 3). PYD is an assets-based approach of working with young people that supports them both mentally and physically in an environment/culture that promotes development in a safe, positive space to allow for individual growth and relationship-building.

The role of relationship-building in developing the connection between mentor and mentee is not only crucial in building the support structure needed to ensure a healthy relationship, but it is also the basis for ensuring that essential, protective factors are in place in order for these young people to persevere outside of the mentoring relationship. In developing

these relationships around PYD, and the building of resilient thought, the interactions of the mentor with the mentee must be intentional and meet the needs of the young people with whom they are working. Therefore, in order to support resiliency-building, the mentoring relationship must work towards supporting key outcomes that ensure the development of “self-righting” capacities. In supporting the development of these “self-righting” capacities (i.e. Competency, Belonging, Usefulness, Potency and Optimism), mentors must first identify how they will develop their relationships in order to ensure that these capacities can and will be developed. One instrument that can be utilized to guide the development of “self-righting” capacities is the “*Resiliency Wheel*.” The Resiliency Wheel offers practitioners and mentors alike, the opportunity to utilize an approach that identifies how they can interact with young people, and also provides an awareness on how intentional they need to be in thinking about the needs of young people in building these relationships. Researchers such as Nan Henderson, state that youth serving professionals should build a *Resiliency Wheel* around each young person in order to ensure that each one is offered the supportive structures necessary to persevere.

**Table 3A: *The Resiliency Wheel*, (Henderson and Milstein, 1996, 21-31)**



In thinking about the use of the *Resiliency Wheel* in the realm of mentoring and building a Resiliency Wheel for each young person, mentors and youth serving agencies must think about this framework and the circles of support it offers young people:

**Table 3B: *Utilizing the Resiliency Wheel to Develop Supportive Structures***

<b>Increase Pro-social Bonding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What opportunities exist to develop individual and group relationships and socializing? How can mentees be encouraged to diversify their social networks?</li> </ul>
<b>Set Clear and Consistent Boundaries</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the mentees understand the parameters of the relationship?</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Caring and Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the mentees feel safe, supported and comfortable within the mentoring relationship? What else can be done in order to provide support and encouragement that grows with the needs of the mentees?</li> </ul>
<b>Set and Communicate High Expectations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have both the mentors and mentees communicated their expectations for this relationship? How will these expectations be maintained throughout the relationship?</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are mentees involved in activities or experiences that engage them in their own interests, involve them in building new ideas and interests and allow them to reflect on these experiences?</li> </ul>

By utilizing the Resiliency Wheel as an evaluative tool, mentors and youth serving agencies can gauge what youth outcomes and/or goals they want to develop in each of these areas and also reflect on how effective they are in making each of these areas important components of the mentoring process. Furthermore, young people will also benefit from the use of this tool to learn how to be a resource for themselves and others, just as the mentors are resources for them. In addition, the Resiliency Wheel can be utilized as a tool to think about and reflect on how to engage young people in a process that encourages and supports them (i.e. What type of expectations are being set by the mentor/mentee? Is the mentor modeling clear and consistent boundaries? What opportunities for participation are being offered to the mentee?) Mentors and their mentees can benefit tremendously from building an awareness of the utilization of the Resiliency Wheel, as well as thinking in terms of Positive Youth Development (PYD) in developing mentoring relationships. Also, by using the Positive Youth Development approach, which supports resiliency outcomes by building opportunities that promote “Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring and Contribution” (Lerner et al., 2006, 7), both mentors and mentees have opportunities and access to connect with individuals and institutions. They also have opportunities, support and the promise of building these adult/youth relationships. Furthermore, the PYD approach does not only aid in the development of life skills and resilient thought, but it also allows for developmental opportunities beyond the relationship. These developmental opportunities include connections that accentuate the important links of community, participation and leadership.

In thinking about relationship-building through the PYD approach, the role of a mentor in supporting the development of positive outcomes and protective factors manifests itself in multiple ways. In utilizing research in regards to the benefits and significance of mentoring, it is

evident that researchers have adopted more of a preventative approach when it comes to engaging young people in more formal, mentoring programs. Although research results are consistent with “the view that mentoring relationships facilitate positive gains in the health and well-being of developing youth” (Dubois and Silverthorn, 2005, 522), there is limited “systematic evaluation” focused on more informal, “natural” mentoring (i.e. those mentoring relationships that exist outside of formal mentoring programs such as those formed with a teacher, coach and/or youth worker). Although these natural mentoring relationships form more seamlessly and have a tendency to develop over an extended period of time, researchers state that evaluating the effectiveness of informal, mentoring relationships is limited unless the “risk status” of the young person is clearly defined. Therefore, since formal mentoring programs, which include programs such as “Big Brothers and Big Sisters,” have identified the risk status of their client pool, the evaluative significance of the mentoring relationship is much more clearly defined in the realm of statistical analysis. Researchers such as Dr. Jean Rhodes have identified that in evaluating the effectiveness of “natural” mentoring on resilience, natural mentoring connections or matches do not have clear statistical findings of their impact. Although they theoretically have a positive impact, analytically, the research is not conclusive and/or readily available, “despite findings indicating the importance of non-parental adults in the lives of youth, there is little research on these relationships, including those that occur in the context of youth mentoring” (Rhodes et al., 2008, 9). However, if youth development professionals are to view the development of resilient thought from a proactive/protective approach, youth serving agencies must also employ the same philosophy for utilizing mentoring practices.

In developing resiliency through a Positive Youth Development approach, and understanding that all youth have strengths, assets and a propensity for change, why is there not

research that identifies the strengths of mentoring from a “natural” approach (i.e. those mentoring relationships that occur naturally within a youth serving agency between small groups and/or individuals) which views and/or evaluates effectiveness through a protective approach rather than a preventative approach? Why is this shift in thinking not necessarily aligned with the research in resiliency-building? Although there are those situations and programs that must support and work with youth who may be deemed vulnerable and leaning toward “at-risk” or “high-risk” behavior (i.e. young people within and “aging out” of the foster care system), the benefits of viewing young people from an assets-based approach are much more powerful in developing personal efficacy and identifying the strengths and purpose of these young people. Even in the realm of the foster care system, legislation has passed that has identified the need for more long-term mentoring opportunities. Rather than waiting for a young person to “age-out” of the system, legislation was introduced in 2003, “that would help match more foster care youth with mentors--The Foster Care Mentoring Act” (Mentoring.org, 2009). The Act also provides “competitive state grants for foster care mentoring programs.” (Mentoring.org (<http://www.mentoring.org>), published by the National Mentoring Partnership, covers issues on youth mentoring.)

Although these formal mentoring programs do exist and have a strong impact on vulnerable, young people, the impact of the relationship of natural mentors is also effective. Even though these informal, mentoring relationships are not viewed as significant because they lack the evaluative connection to risk status (i.e. what elements of risk are prevalent in the lives of the young people that may deem them “at-risk” or “high-risk”), youth programs and researchers must view the role and impact of a mentor through a different lens. Therefore, the question that exists is how can informal, natural mentoring practices be incorporated in formal

programs in order to support the development of resiliency-building through PYD? In examining the work of my own youth center and how we engage and support the young people, the mentoring relationships that we develop and encourage are much different than formalized mentoring programs. Our program strives to offer enrichment, recreation and social opportunities that connect to the young people both communally and individually in order to help them to understand their own purpose and future. The basis of our programming is the development of protective factors through relationship-building. In developing all our programs, we always consider how to include the voice of the young people in what we offer. How engaged they are in the process. What future connections are these young people making? What difference can the youth center make in their lives, in the lives of their families and in the life of the community? The informal mentoring relationships that are created within the youth center are embedded in the work that the youth work professionals carry out each day. Although there are those individuals who understand this work intuitively, and naturally connect with young people in order to identify opportunities, resources and community connections, youth work professionals must be trained and encouraged to view their role not solely as a tutor, a specialist or a disciplinarian, they must be challenged to view their role as a skill-builder, as an assets manager, as an empowerment specialist and as a life coach.

The role of the youth work professional as a mentor in the setting of a youth center can have monumental effects on the lives of these young people because the mentoring relationships that are formed are not designed, but instead they develop naturally over the course of weeks, months and years. In many instances, these informal, mentoring relationships have strong staying power because they are developed during daily interactions that include, helping with homework assignments, having discussions about their day, cooking dinner together, talking



with parents and/or just being present and available when needed. Although youth serving agencies want the staff to come to the program with and/or develop their own expertise as part of the program, youth service providers must work to develop their staff professionally not only for their own sake and the sake of the program, but also for the sake of the young people with whom they work. Whatever experience offered to a young person is an opportunity to impact that young person, therefore, youth serving professionals must identify ways that both programs and staff can offer opportunities that impact them in ways that benefit them. Youth workers, as mentors, have a unique opportunity to connect with young people in ways in which schools and families sometimes cannot. How then, can youth serving agencies promote the role of the natural mentor and the importance of relationship-building in developing resilient thought?

## **Chapter Four**

### **CURRICULUM GUIDE**

#### **Preface: Supporting the Development of Relationship-building Through Mentoring**

In order to support the development of relationships through mentoring, youth serving agencies and professionals must work to establish a constituency of workers early in the process. The development of these constituencies must start prior to hiring, and must include a model of youth work and mentoring on which the organization is focused, a mission statement and a plan for how these individual youth workers/mentors fit within the philosophy of the program. In addition, those leaders who are charged with the development of youth serving programs must think about the process of developing mentors at the start of the staff development process. Therefore, youth service leaders must think about these potential mentors before they are hired and trained. These professionals must also think about what programming they want to support in the organizations before they assign individuals to these roles. In focusing on my own organization, there has been a shift in how we operate and engage young people and staff. My organization, Cambridge Youth Programs (CYP), is under the umbrella of the City of Cambridge's Department of Human Service Programs, and serves over 1200 young people throughout the city's five youth centers. The mission of CYP "is to offer diverse, high quality programs that promote leadership and youth development through enrichment activities, unique experiences, and opportunities to develop relationships with adults and peers. Our programs enable Cambridge youth to thrive and feel a sense of belonging, resulting in young adults who are ready for future employment, higher education, citizenship and adult life." (City of Cambridge, Department of Human Service Programs, [cambridgema.gov](http://cambridgema.gov)) It has been through the evolution of this Mission that CYP has shifted from a "drop-in" model for all youth, ages 9 to

19, to a structured, enrichment program that is developmentally appropriate for the ages of young people who are served (i.e. pre-teen, middle school and teen programming). It has been through the development of this program that young people have been provided many opportunities for self-exploration, while challenging them to achieve their potential.

Throughout this evolution from a “drop-in” to a more structured model, it was evident that in developing new and innovative programming that would engage young people not only in their learning, but also in the planning process, the organization needed staff who could support, develop and implement such programs. In addition, there needed to be a shift in thinking for the staff as well. This shift in thinking needed to include professional development and training to help staff organize and change programming from a loosely structured environment to one that involved program planning and time management. For many CYP staff who eventually did leave CYP, this shift in thinking was not well received. This process gave those in leadership positions an opportunity to develop richer programming based on a developmental philosophy. This philosophy is focused on youth development and offered intentional, age appropriate practices and strategies that would engage pre-teens, middle school-aged youth and teens towards positive youth outcomes. This new developmental process also helped leaders within the organization to develop clear guidelines and qualifications that all youth workers needed to possess to effectively run and implement these programs. With this shift in thinking, it was not enough that staff/youth workers had experience working with young people, it was now necessary that youth workers learned how to engage and motivate young people in new and innovative ways.

In thinking about this shift in programming, as well as youth worker outcomes, within my organization, CYP is once again shifting to not only linking the outcomes of the school day, but

also the ever-changing needs of all our young people. There was a time in CYP's history, when it became evident that it was not enough that our centers were just used as safe places for our young people. In response, the organization was challenged to develop programs that enriched the lives of the young people and would also offer tangible skills and connections to their community. Our organization is again entering a new phase in which it is once again evident that it is not enough to just offer young people enrichment and skill-building opportunities. We are now entering a time in which the school day must be extended to support and connect with both the family and community. It is a time in which young people must be ready to demonstrate competencies and dispositional learning that will allow them to transfer knowledge and be flexible in their thinking. It is also a time in which young people must learn to understand their own strengths and how they can move through and deal with adversity in order to persevere in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, this new shift in thinking and planning must encourage youth outcomes that involve and engage young people in their own development, learning and thinking. They must be invested in the process and have a voice in decision-making regarding their interests, school connections and areas within and beyond the youth serving agency with which they would like to be involved.

Furthermore, this shift must again involve staff outcomes that outline clear goals, expectations and desired involvement that allow for this type of programming to permeate the work of the youth centers. Staff must also be invested in designing how the philosophy will mold the work of the agency. They must develop themes and other ways of connecting young people with their own learning, and also identify new and innovative ways of supporting them. This support should be aligned not only with developmentally appropriate activities and interactions, but by also utilizing tools, such as the *Resiliency Wheel*, to evaluate the

effectiveness of relationship-building. In planning for this new shift, leaders in our organization must again plan for the development of the staff, as well as looking at current recruiting and hiring practices in order to develop a culture and community that can support the next shift in program development.

Literature supports that leaders in the field of youth work must evaluate how they are recruiting staff, what skills and/or educational experience is necessary for this work and the motivating factors for the people who choose this field. Also, the interview process for these positions must include information about the candidates that is relevant to youth work and how these candidates will interpret and carry out the goals of the program. In addition, when these youth workers are hired, leaders must clearly outline for themselves and their staff what professional development should look like, what the goals and outcomes of the professional development should be, how training/learning will be transferred and how youth work leaders/supervisors will help and support this transfer.

In preparing the staff for this programmatic shift, while also readying our young people for the competencies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there must be youth serving professionals who can support the development of these competencies on an individual basis. These 21<sup>st</sup> Century competencies include *Learning and Innovation Skills* and *Life and Career Skills*. By developing mastery in these areas, young people are increasingly able to persevere in a more complex world, both professionally and personally. Mastery in these areas builds a foundation of skills that include:

- ✓ Creativity and Innovation
- ✓ Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
- ✓ Communication and Collaboration
- ✓ Flexibility and Adaptability
- ✓ Initiative and Self-Direction
- ✓ Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- ✓ Productivity and Accountability
- ✓ Leadership and Responsibility

(Report and Recommendations of the Arizona Summit on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007, 3)

Mastery in these areas allows young people the opportunity to:

- ✓ Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge
- ✓ Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations , and create new knowledge
- ✓ Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively a members of our democratic society
- ✓ Pursue personal and aesthetic growth

(American Association of School Librarians, 2007, 3-6)

Therefore, those carrying out the work must view this shift in youth work as learning beyond the classroom and learning beyond the workshop. As part of this shift in thinking, learning is developed as part of a community, and as part of a community, relationship-building is an integral component of the process. In developing this shift in youth work, professionals, leaders and staff must also understand the shift that is required of them, that is, the importance of being an intentional mentor in the lives of young people. However, in order for this shift to occur and to build relationships with young people, youth work professionals must first begin by modeling this relationship with the staff. By encouraging staff to become natural mentors in the afterschool setting, those in leadership positions must first initiate mentoring relationships with the staff in order for this culture to develop. In order to identify and support youth outcomes

which include resiliency-building, there must also be staff outcomes that not only mirror the development of the youth, but also incorporate the development of the staff through “building community while attaining organizational goals” (Calhoun, 1994, 7). This focus on developing mentors must ultimately engage youth workers in a professional development model that encourages them to build the tools they need to positively impact the youth and their engagement and commitment to the program.

By encouraging this philosophical shift from youth worker to mentor, individuals are changing the mentality of out-of-school time, and also helping young people to realize their own shift in developing resilient outcomes across developmental ages. This shift for both youth workers and young people must begin with the development of the mentoring partnership and how each individual views their roles within the partnership. In order to support this philosophical change in programming, youth work professionals must encourage the development of a mentoring culture. They must view their role from the perspective of relationship-building as the basis of the process for Positive Youth Development. It is through this process, that youth serving professionals can impact growth, resiliency-building and the development of reflective practices in young people. In order for this shift in developmental thinking to occur, those in youth work must design and develop opportunities that are focused on building “competent communities” (Bernard, 1991, 18) and “social networks.” (Bernard, 1991, 19) These opportunities should be designed to not only develop and encourage relationship-building, but also to align and move natural mentoring in afterschool settings towards resilient outcomes. These opportunities allow young people to not only learn about themselves, but also to develop ways of interacting, accessing resources and making connections beyond family and friends. These connections make access to the community more seamless, and allow young

people more opportunities to build a sense of personal efficacy in order to foster a sense of purpose, belonging, resourcefulness, initiative and motivation in order to persist in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.

In thinking about how to align natural mentoring relationships and resiliency-building with the work of youth serving agencies, individuals must first understand and develop the connection between mentoring and resiliency. They must view the work of building relationships within Positive Youth Development through a protective approach that highlights the assets of young people and allows them opportunities for continuous growth. Therefore, prior to developing an assets-based approach in encouraging and supporting a mentoring relationship with young people, mentors must first understand what it means to foster these types of relationships (i.e. What are the characteristics of the mentoring relationship? How can this relationship be beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee?) In addition, mentors must be aware of and reflect on understanding that the connection of mentoring and resiliency is essential in supporting and encouraging young people to build “self-righting” capacities.

In order to highlight and align the connections of natural mentoring towards the development of resilient thought, the following curriculum guide outlines the ways that professionals in youth serving agencies can work with young people within a mentoring capacity. The guide also describes the ways in which mentors can connect with these young people/mentees in order to develop sound relationships that can influence their own resilient natures.



## **Mentoring Towards Resilient Thought: A Curriculum Guide**

The goal of this curriculum guide is to define and describe the role of the natural mentor, and outline the ways that professionals in youth serving agencies can work with young people within a mentoring capacity. This guide supports the work of youth serving agencies by bringing mentoring practices into organizations in order to develop sound relationships that can influence the development of resilient thought in young people.

In mentoring for resilient thought, mentors must utilize practices that connect cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes with opportunities that engage young people through meaningful participation. This guide focuses on both the cognitive and socio-emotional needs of three developmental stages: pre-teens (approximately, 9-11 year olds), middle school age (approximately, 12-13 year olds) and teens (14-18 year olds). It also focuses on different thinking strategies that can be used to engage and challenge the mentoring process and ensure that mentees build competencies in 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. Finally, the guide highlights ways to promote resilient thought throughout the process to ensure the development of protective factors. These protective factors are sources of resiliency that promote the development of “self-righting” capacities in the young people, which enable them to be flexible and adaptable in order to self-correct or rewire behavior in order to bounce back from situations that test the plasticity and/or malleability of the individual.

The guide is divided into three main themes and sections:

- Pre-teens                      Building a Community
- Middle School Age        Sense of Purpose and Belonging
- Teens                            Sense of Autonomy and Future

Each section highlights and focuses on a strengths/assets-based approach of planning and working with young people in a mentoring capacity. The content of each section includes both theoretical and practical ways of connecting with young people as mentees. Furthermore, in order to offer mentors and youth serving agencies concrete ways of connecting with their youth, this guide also provides examples to help mentors direct their own planning and become more effective, reflective practitioners, by engaging them in a more holistic process. The guide also focuses on *Guiding Principles* that shape the content of the curriculum, and serve as a reflective tool to allow mentors and youth serving agencies opportunities to gauge the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationships in mentoring for resilient thought. These “Guiding Principles” are designed to mold the mentor/mentee relationship by aligning the competencies with the climate, connectedness and meaningful engagement that is developed, supported and encouraged with each young person in mind.

Mentoring for resilient thought is a process of designing and supporting intentional opportunities with which youth serving professionals develop relationships with young people that support their individual growth, as well as the growth of competencies and skills that will support their perseverance. Mentoring towards resilient thought is not only an approach to working with young people that supports and structures their experiences through relationships that naturally occur in the afterschool or out-of-school setting, but it also allows youth development professionals to view and understand the impact of their work through a reflective lens. The process of mentoring towards resilient thought is not a process of showing young people how to “do” or be, it is a process that enables mentees to learn the best process for themselves with the guidance from their mentors who should act as advocates for the mentees and the experiential process.

Mentoring for resilient thought is designed to occur through natural, non-formal, unmatched settings that can offer young people fundamental connections and skill-building that seamlessly connects to their lives within the program and beyond. *Natural* mentoring in youth serving agencies is crucial in order to engage young people in relationship-building that influences the development of opportunities for individual leadership, engagement and active participation. As part of this mentoring process, it is important to instill in every young person that he/she has special strengths and abilities, and that the mentoring relationship and the program will support the young person beyond risk, that is, by supporting that young person through a protective approach rather than a preventative/problem-focused approach. By using natural mentoring practices, mentors have the ability to connect with young people/mentees by offering them opportunities not only within the program (i.e. enrichment programs, homework help, work-based program, guidance), but also by building relationships that can span a life-time and can move beyond the limitations of the program. This guide supports the idea that mentoring is self-directed learning, in which the mentor acts as an advocate rather than “doer,” and the lessons that can be gained from this type of support can encourage development and connections with families, schools and communities. This type of relationship-building fosters the development of competent, committed and productive citizens that are prepared to work and live in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.

**Table 4A: Guiding Principles**

<p><b>Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every youth worker views his/herself in the context of mentoring</li> <li>• Relationship-building is at the heart of the mentoring partnership</li> <li>• Relationship-building is focused on the strengths of the individual and of the relationship</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connectedness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentors and youth serving agencies must be committed to supporting and helping to develop the whole, young person</li> <li>• Both mentors and mentees have opportunities to communicate openly and supportively</li> <li>• Mentors will model the development of a culture that encourages resilient thought across developmental stages and life experiences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meaningful Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring toward resilient thought must be rooted in every aspect of the work with young people</li> <li>• Capacity-building and youth outcomes must be embedded in the process of support and development</li> <li>• Mentors will be involved in receiving both informal and formal feedback and support</li> <li>• Mentors and youth serving agencies must engage in reflective practices and foster opportunities that support the process of becoming reflective practitioners</li> </ul>

Along with *Guiding Principles* and the corresponding themes, this curriculum guide presents strategies for connecting the mentoring relationship with skill-building and resiliency outcomes. These strategies not only foster individual and group relationship-building, but also give natural mentors an opportunity to gauge the quality of their own work, as well as the quality of the overall program. In addition, as a part of connecting the mentoring relationship with that of resiliency outcomes, the outcomes that are supported are aligned with the competencies as part of “21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning and Teaching.” This curriculum guide fosters the development of critical and creative thinking in order to support the development of both youth and staff outcomes to promote capacity and skill-building. The development of these capacities is necessary to encourage the development of resilient thought.

## Section A: Developing Mentors

Mentors and youth service agencies must be diligent in supporting intentional opportunities that promote the development of “self-righting” capacities. The mentoring relationship must support and encourage a holistic approach to engaging young people in their own development. The following qualities/criteria are essential to mentor/mentee interactions, and whenever possible, need to be infused into this relationship. The following criteria can be used as a reflective tool to identify the areas of resiliency in young people.

**Table 4B: *Criteria to Identify Resiliency***

<b>Social Competence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can interact, communicate and collaborate with others. Can exhibit flexibility and adaptability.</li></ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can reason, analyze and extract information to make informed decisions. Is resourceful in seeking assistance from others.</li></ul>
<b>Critical Consciousness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is aware of reflective processing and the importance of perspective-building in building ideas and identity beyond the initial ideas of the “self.”</li></ul>
<b>Autonomy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is aware of one’s own identity and is able to think and act independently. Has own sense of self-efficacy and is able to react and work through situations.</li></ul>
<b>Sense of Purpose</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has a sense of own future and hope. Feels useful, motivated and connected.</li></ul>

Before mentors assume the role of a relationship-builder with young people, prior to infusing the qualities of resilience with skill and competency-building, it is important that the mentors and the youth serving agency focus on training mentors to reflect on the following questions:

- ✓ What is a positive role model?
- ✓ What does it mean to be a mentor?
- ✓ What are the expectations of the relationship for both the mentor and mentee?
- ✓ What do interactions look like between the mentor and mentee?
- ✓ How and when does the mentor set appropriate boundaries?
- ✓ How do the mentor and mentee maintain a positive and consistent relationship?

Once mentors understand the impact they can have on young people, and that the development of the mentoring relationship is an extensive process, these types of questions are crucial to the process of supporting, encouraging and sustaining these healthy relationships. Therefore, participating in this process takes commitment, consistency and also a sense of self-efficacy on the part of the mentor. Mentees must sense that their mentors possess the self-efficacy needed to develop viable relationships that will allow them to feel supported, and that the uniqueness of these relationships can influence other areas of their lives. Therefore, those assuming the roles of mentors within youth serving agencies must understand that they are mentoring towards resilient thought, and that it must be the focus in building these relationships.

### **Developing Relationships that Promote Resiliency**

Mentoring relationships must reflect three characteristics of Positive Youth Development (PYD): sustained youth/adult partnerships, opportunities for fostering youth leadership and also connecting with and focusing on skill-building activities (Lerner et al., 2006, 5). Along with these

characteristics, mentors must also focus on three specific areas (i.e. climate, connectedness and meaningful engagement), in order to ensure that the needs of the young people are central in the planning and reflection of mentee experiences.

The following table illustrates the connection of the key areas of quality programming, how these relate to the *Resiliency Wheel* and also what connections mentoring relationships can have to each of these areas.

**Table 4C: Connecting Program Attributes to Mentoring Towards Resilient Thought**

<b>Components of Quality Programming</b>	<b>Resiliency Wheel Attributes</b>	<b>Mentoring Connections</b>
Positive Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set and Communicate High Expectations</li> <li>• Set Clear and Consistent Boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities that allow the mentee to feel cared for and comfortable within the relationship.</li> <li>• Actively involve the mentee in making decisions and what the decision making process could look like within the relationship.</li> <li>• Make sure that what the mentor says and does are aligned.</li> </ul>
Building Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Caring and Support</li> <li>• Increase Pro-Social Bonding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities in the community so mentees feel that they have a voice.</li> <li>• Be respectful of the mentee’s privacy.</li> <li>• Help mentees realize that the skills they are building can be transferred to other areas of their lives.</li> <li>• Encourage mentees to “give back” to promote social responsibility in the community.</li> </ul>
Meaningful Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation</li> <li>• Teach Life Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support interests of the mentee without being overbearing.</li> <li>• Be intentional and on the lookout for “teachable moments.”</li> <li>• Help mentees understand that they will not always excel at everything: lessons are also learned from trial and error.</li> </ul>

Every interaction in youth centers and youth serving agencies must be formulated around relationship-building, and these relationships are not always formally created. In this environment, natural mentors must be very intentional, and it is up to these mentors to establish connections with the young people in a much more proactive way than the traditional, formal, matched, mentoring relationships. Furthermore, in developing these natural, mentoring relationships, and reflecting on how to support the mentor/mentee connection while moving young people towards developing resilient thought, mentors must identify the following:

- ✓ How to create a welcoming environment.
- ✓ How are the young people involved in the relationship, programming, and future ideas?
- ✓ What expectations can and should be set?
- ✓ What connections are/can the mentee make beyond the program?
- ✓ How is the mentor/mentee connected to the community? What further connections can be made?
- ✓ How is learning and thinking transferred?
- ✓ How is the mentor listening, reacting, engaging?
- ✓ What modeling techniques are being employed?
- ✓ When is this relationship not mentoring?

Along with intensive training, natural mentors must understand what mentoring is and also what qualities do not exemplify the mentor/mentee relationship. The following table identifies the important role mentors play in the life of a mentee in order to build successful and supportive connections.

**Table 4D: *What Mentoring Is and Is Not***



<b>Mentoring Is</b>	<b>Mentoring Is Not</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A partnership</li> <li>• Consistent and committed support</li> <li>• Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Caring and positive role models</li> <li>• Helping the mentee “find” his/her own voice</li> <li>• Identifying and building on strengths of the mentee (assets-based approach)</li> <li>• Offering resources</li> <li>• Advocating for the mentee</li> <li>• Making connections beyond the immediate world of the mentee</li> <li>• Supporting the development of life-skills (both cognitive and socio-emotional)</li> <li>• Enhancing the world of the mentee (holistic approach)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adult-focused connection</li> <li>• Wanting to “fix” someone</li> <li>• Being all things to the mentee</li> <li>• Providing just the answers</li> <li>• Always speaking for the mentee</li> <li>• Designing goals and expectations in the relationship without including the mentee in the process</li> <li>• Highlighting the challenges and/or risks the mentee might face (deficiency-based approach)</li> <li>• Compartmentalizing the different areas of the mentee’s life</li> </ul>

Understanding the supportive role of a natural mentor is essential in developing a mentor/mentee relationship that is able to grow and progress. Mentors must recognize the importance of their intentional connections to the young people in order to effectively mentor towards resilient thought. As Bonnie Bernard believes, “we must promote resilience through our words, actions and environment we provide, and that to face adversities, children draw from three sources of resilience, I Have, I Am, and I Can” (McDermott, 2001, 3). These three sources of resiliency, serve as “self-righting” capacities in order to allow individuals and/or mentees the opportunity to face adversity with a core of resiliency that can adapt and flex with the needs of the individual. In developing these intentional relationships, mentors must utilize tools that highlight the development and also the use of resiliency.

The following chart aligns Bernard’s idea of “I Have, I Am and I Can” with supportive structures that mentors can use in gauging the reflective qualities of the relationships that are being developed.

**Table 4E: *Qualities of Mentoring Relationships***

<b>Sources of Resilience: Mentees</b>	<b>Mentor Support</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Have</b> Trust, Structure, Autonomy and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the mentees trust the mentors and those around them?</li> <li>• Is there an understanding of the boundaries/limits that the mentor is modeling?</li> <li>• Is the mentor an advocate and encouraging mentees to learn on their own?</li> <li>• Do mentees know how to reach out for support?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Am</b> Loving, Caring, Trustworthy, Proud, Responsible and Adaptable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the mentee feel cared for and supported?</li> <li>• Is the mentee involved in and understands the importance of “giving back?”</li> <li>• Does the mentee take pride in his/her own work?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can</b> Make Decisions, Problem-solve, Communicate, Reach Out, Locate Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the mentee face problems and is willing/able to search for solutions?</li> <li>• Does the mentee reach out to others?</li> <li>• Does the mentee share feelings and self-regulate emotions?</li> </ul>

In developing these reflective opportunities that highlight sources of resilience, those in youth serving agencies must ensure that the work of mentors supports the development of qualities that promote this self-correction. Mentors must be aware of the impact their words, actions and the culture/environment have on the capacities that are being encouraged in young people/mentees. In addition, mentors must also be aware of the culture that is being created and supported in order to enhance the climate, connectedness and the engagement of the mentee. Sources of resilience serve as “self-righting” capacities that enable individuals to draw on these

internal strengths to persevere when facing hardship. Mentors, then, must ensure that in building these ongoing connections and relationships, young people can consistently identify and demonstrate “I Have, I Am and I Can.”

The role of mentor is to create a culture that enhances the life of the mentees in order to allow for the development of certain dispositions that will enable them to persevere. Resiliency-building is a “life-span process” (Henderson, 2002, 11), and as part of this process, mentors must encourage both cognitive and socio-emotional skill-building in order to effectively mentor towards resilient thought. The development of the mentee must include all facets of his/her life in order to support the development of the whole person, “self-esteem is not enough; one needs competency skills as well” (McDermott, 2001, 4). This holistic philosophy of development is becoming more prevalent even at the level of classroom-based instruction. Nationwide, school districts, along with a connection to youth serving agencies and out-of school-time (OST) programs, are implementing a new model for dispositional growth, core learning and resiliency-building. This new approach is “Teaching and Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

([www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org))

This critical and creative thinking infused model encourages youth outcomes to reflect learning that prepares young people to succeed not only in the work place, but also to persevere in life by connecting this learning to the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes” which include: Global Awareness, Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy, Civic Literacy and Health Literacy. In addition, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model also encourages learning beyond and blended with core subjects and themes by encouraging skills that include, *Learning and Innovation Skills* and *Life and Career Skills*. By developing mastery in these areas, young

people are increasingly able to persevere in a more complex world, both professionally and personally. Mastery in these areas builds a foundation of skills that include the following:

- ✓ Creativity and Innovation
- ✓ Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
- ✓ Communication and Collaboration
- ✓ Flexibility and Adaptability
- ✓ Initiative and Self-Direction
- ✓ Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- ✓ Productivity and Accountability
- ✓ Leadership and Responsibility

(Report and Recommendations of the Arizona Summit on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007, 3)

As part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century mentality, the work of youth serving agencies must be viewed as an extension of the work of the school day. Therefore, the learning that is encouraged during the school day can and should be reinforced in work-based programs, internships and after school enrichment programs. Each of these types of programs can seamlessly connect the skill-building components of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative with that of the goals of the youth-based programs, which in many cases, are already embedded in this work.

Mentors must guide their mentees to understand the importance of these skills sets when encouraging resilient thought for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In addition, by supporting competency and capacity-building, the mentor/mentee relationship must convey the idea that “your strengths are more powerful than your risks” (Henderson, 2002, 4). The utilization of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century approach to learning and sustainability encourages not only an instructional approach that stresses “rigor and relevance,” but also encourages youth outcomes that focus on the resiliency of young people as part of the process. As mentors with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century focus, competency-building must not only include socio-emotional capacities, but it must also include and bridge cognitive capacities. Mentors must reflect on their own resiliency-building and evaluate their own process, what strengths and characteristics they possess and what areas could they change, modify, improve and finally model. As part of this strengths-based, self-evaluation, Henderson developed a list of

“Resiliency Builders” that can be utilized by mentors to not only gauge their own self-righting capacities, but also used to gauge other characteristics that one could add to an already existing repertoire. The list includes characteristics such as:

- ✓ Humor
- ✓ Inner Direction
- ✓ Perceptiveness
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Positive View of Personal Future
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Love of Learning
- ✓ Self-motivation
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Self-worth
- ✓ Spirituality
- ✓ Perseverance

(Henderson, 2002, 16)

The development of capacities and competencies are not only important for relationship-building, but also for developing a culture that exemplifies a strengths or assets-based approach for learning, thinking and ultimately living. Mentors must also gauge their own level of investment and commitment, and reflect on their commitment to the process through the course of the relationship. The following table illustrates the guidelines mentors can use to measure their investment in these relationships, while also gaining information about how they can modify and improve certain aspects of the relationship and move it forward.

**Table 4F: Guidelines for Mentor Relationships**  
(Modified from the Missouri Mentoring Framework)

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Meet Standard</b>	<b>Above Standard</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Increase Pro-Social Bonding (I Am)</b>	Mentor/mentee connect around common interests at the youth center	Mentor learns about and makes connections with family to gain a better understanding of how to bond with mentee	Mentor links activities of youth center, family connections and school to demonstrate resource sharing and cross-connections
<b>Set Clear and Consistent Boundaries (I Can, I Have)</b>	Mentor/mentee discuss appropriate connections and boundaries	Mentor models appropriate boundaries and is consistent with involving mentee in process	Mentor and mentee understand the limits of each and discuss new situations that may challenge these boundaries as they arise
<b>Provide Caring and Support (I Am, I Have)</b>	Mentor has open dialogue with mentee about what he/she needs to feel supported	Mentor is active in connecting mentee with resources in the community and facing problems with mentee to help with his/her needs	Mentor follows through and supports the needs of the mentor and is consistently available to listen and/or problem-solve
<b>Set and Communicate High Expectations (I Have, I Can)</b>	Mentor involves mentee in setting expectations for both relationship and personal expectations he/she may have	Mentor continuously infuses conversation and activities with expectations	Mentor connects expectations, both relationship-based and personal, to other areas of the mentee's life
<b>Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation (I Can, I Have, I Am)</b>	Mentor actively involves mentee in making decisions	Mentor structures opportunities for mentee to explore his/her own interests	Mentor identifies opportunities connected to mentee's interests within the community in order for the mentee to develop a vested interest in the community and understands the importance of "giving back"

## **Section B: Connections to Young People: Building Relationships and Working within a Mentoring Capacity:**

This part of the guide will be divided into three main themes and sections:

- Pre-teens                      Building a Community
- Middle School Age        Sense of Purpose and Belonging
- Teens                            Sense of Autonomy and Future

Each section identifies the developmental stages that typically epitomize young people within each stage and will describe youth outcomes that will scaffold their learning in order to persist through future development. In identifying the characteristics of each developmental stage, the book, *Yardsticks*, (Wood, 2007), referenced in the bibliography, was utilized as the main resource. The section also connects the themes of learning to not only resiliency outcomes, but also intentionally embeds connections mentors can make between relationship-building, critical and creative thinking infused lessons and skill-building of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Frameworks. This guide also offers recommendations to help mentors direct their own planning and become more effective, reflective practitioners.

## **Building a Community** **Pre-teens (approximately 9-11 year olds)**

### **Developmental Characteristics:**

As pre-teens, these young people are becoming more aware. They are becoming more coordinated, both physically and mentally, and therefore need more challenges and physical and mental activities. They enjoy both connections to their families and peer groups, and at the same time, starting to conceptualize an individualistic idea of who they are. They are beginning to view parents and other adults as “people” and are becoming aware of their fallible natures. The pre-teen group is becoming concerned with fairness and is also becoming more consciously critical of others and themselves. This concern with fairness also leads to a heightened level of frustration in working with others, however, this age is also still quick to forgive.

### **Theme: Building a Community**

As a whole, the pre-teens are beginning to formulate the idea of the “bigger world” (Wood, 2007, 111). They are also learning to organize and classify the interest they may possess and are identifying the emergence of an awareness and connection to people beyond their family. It is also an age that is typically comfortable working as a cooperative group and also beginning to become problem solvers. As a mentor, who is working with a pre-teen population, relationship-building and subsequent activities must focus on what it means to develop a community and also a unique culture that is specifically theirs’ and built on their own interests, needs and styles of learning. Pre-teen mentees not only have an emerging idea of cooperate work, they are also competitive, therefore, in some capacity, want to be involved. Mentors must harness this cooperative thinking/competitive drive and challenge mentees to think about how they would like to develop their involvement with both the mentor and also other mentees. Due



to the level of enjoyment pre-teen mentees gain from being involved, mentors must identify and develop opportunities that enable the mentees to play a role in not only relationship-building with the mentors, but also developing bigger ideas of the community (which also includes the community of the youth serving agency). Mentors must encourage mentees to think about their emerging personal interests and how they can relate to others in the community. As a part of the community, the mentor must reflect on what the mentee can contribute and also feel proud to be a contributing member. Mentors must build on the idea of cooperative learning and also what it means to be an individual within the cooperative context to not only build skills and competencies such as perspective-building, flexibility and adaptability, but to also identify each mentees' niche within the relationship and community.

In developing this community, mentors must also model the structure and support of the community by encouraging and using a positive, rich language to promote opportunities of reflection, self-redirection and to avoid the "age of negativity" that could permeate this critically aware group. Mentors must encourage a use of language that supports the culture and the individuals in the community. Mentors must also model the basic support and structure of the culture, tapping into this group's emerging need to reach out beyond the immediate family, while also giving them the ability to design what this culture looks like, its place in the pre-teen mentees' lives and also the expectations and how this culture can support growth. In addition, since the pre-teen mentees are searching out ways of belonging to the larger community, this age is an appropriate time to introduce the importance of expanding community to allow mentees to see connections that can be made with families, schools and community. Mentors can introduce a theme of community service that can help foster connections beyond the family and youth serving agency. This connection again builds not only perspective-building, but also initial

opportunities to develop transfer and connectedness. Refer to APPENDIX 1A for a table that depicts the relationship of the theme of the Pre-teen guide with that of the “Qualities of Resiliency,” and how they relate to and can connect with building a mentoring relationship with 21<sup>st</sup> Century infused skills and ideas. Each remaining section of the guide will also have a corresponding chart in APPENDIX A identifying these connections.

In order to encourage these areas of social competence, sense of purpose and belonging and critical consciousness, in building a community, mentors must work towards developing a safe and comfortable environment that encourages mentees to learn about their own voice, their decision-making abilities, how their decisions can and should affect the “bigger world” and how they view their place and value of this role within the greater scheme. Pre-teens and their mentors must develop relationships that encourage community in order to build perspective, encourage connectedness, identify and strengthen identity and instill a sense of hopefulness and optimism. This early stage of mentoring and building community is a building block of which all other development can and should be built upon because “relationships and emotional interactions also teach communication and thinking” (McDermott, 2001, 6).

Mentors can work to build and encourage these relationships with pre-teens by:

- ✓ Working with mentees to think about the community and what it can/should look like
- ✓ Learning about and supporting their interests and incorporating them into the relationship/group work
- ✓ Offering individual time that focuses attention on the needs/interests of the mentee
- ✓ Identifying opportunities that connect the interests of the mentee with other areas of the community
- ✓ Setting realistic goals with the mentees
- ✓ Modeling appropriate social behavior which includes inclusiveness, tolerance and open-mindedness

- ✓ Developing a individualized “check-in” system that identifies mentors individual attention towards the mentee
- ✓ Facilitating a process that encourages all individuals to play an active role in the community (whether in pairs or group mentoring opportunities)
- ✓ Offering them opportunities to be “in charge” of specific tasks
- ✓ Helping them to reflect on their experiences as part of the relationship, group and as part of a working team

In developing strategies that allow pre-teen mentees to excel within the mentor relationship, the youth outcomes that are encouraged will be the building blocks to help scaffold learning for both the middle school and teen programs. Furthermore, each component of the curriculum scaffolds learning for the next component of youth outcomes.

## **Sense of Purpose and Belonging**

### **Middle School Age (approximately 12 and 13 year olds):**

#### **Developmental Characteristics:**

As middle school aged youth, these young people are becoming more individualistic. The focus is more on their own needs, likes and dislikes and they are creating stronger ties to peer groups. Girls are developing strong bonds and closer friendships with individual girls, while boys are still comfortable engaging in group friendships. They have a stronger self-concept of their own emerging identity and are sensitive to its development and also the development of their own intellectual ideas. They are less willing to therefore take big learning risks and are hesitant to take on intellectual challenges. They are however, willing to challenge authority and adult figures in their lives. The middle school aged young person is self-conscious and critical and wants to emerge as an individual, however, they still want and need a support structure to feel safe.

#### **Theme: Sense of Purpose and Belonging**

As a larger group, the middle school aged youth are actively trying to break away from parental constraints in order to develop and/or “find” their own identity and also how they fit within their peer group. Their focus is on the present and near future and how they belong within those short-term goals/areas. The role of a mentor in the life of a middle school mentee is to demonstrate that they belong and that they matter. Although middle school mentees are trying to leave the constraints of the traditional family unit behind, they will look for other adults to mirror the support structure they may have experienced at home, or in some cases have not yet experienced. Mentors of middle school mentees must understand that they are struggling to develop their identity and because of this struggle, many may have difficulties understanding

how they belong and what their role is in the larger community. Mentors must structure relationships that allow the mentees to feel safe and supported and encourage the exploration of identity and interests. Mentors must also allow for opportunities that engage young people in developing competencies, while also developing own interests and intellectual abilities. The middle school mentees must be encouraged and supported to search out their own paths of socio-emotional and academic capabilities while being motivated to constantly challenge their own ideas and self-imposed limitations. Mentors must then encourage opportunities for mentees to explore their own interests, reflect on their own learning and individual processes and how they are developing within the process. In addition, mentees must be encouraged to see the connections of their interests with that of the mentoring relationship, peer group and the larger community.

Mentors must also develop opportunities that encourage mentees to become decision-makers and problem-solvers within their community so that they understand the value of their connection to the community. Middle school mentees should also be encouraged to not only take on decision-making responsibilities, but they must also begin taking on roles of leadership. These roles of leadership not only encourage a sense of belonging and purpose, they also encourage the importance of perspective-building and that their point of view and the views of others matter. Mentees should also encourage the use of expansive language to articulate needs and form thoughts beyond superficial ideas. The use of a “language of thinking” challenges them to think beyond their own thoughts by using words that encourage open-ended thinking: assume, define, discover and explain (Tishman et al., 1995, 11-12). Mentors should also encourage intentional reflective practices that support their own thinking about themselves and the role of the community in fostering this thinking. Middle school mentees must be challenged

to not only think beyond themselves in creating a stronger identity, but they must also be challenged to think beyond their peer group and the community. They must be challenged to think critically in this way in order to develop a better sense of their role and purpose in world to not only make contributions to the community, but to also persevere within the community (APPENDIX 2A).

In order to encourage each of the Qualities of Resilience in the middle school-aged mentees to support a sense of purpose and belonging, mentors must create and encourage intentional opportunities for these young people to develop a better understanding of who they are in order to “find” their identity. The middle school mentor must not only enable mentees to use their voice, but must also help them to use it in an appropriate and constructive manner. In addition, mentors should facilitate experiences that allow mentees to strengthen their voice, thoughts and ideas in order to build perspective and to also encourage a sense of self-efficacy. Middle school mentees must be empowered by their own knowledge and thinking and they must also learn that their path is ultimately up to them, and it will take their own perseverance and motivation to channel what is needed to support this journey. The middle school mentors and their mentees must build relationships that support planning, resourcefulness, critical and creative thinking, communication and adaptability. The middle school mentor/mentee relationship must ready young people to take on the role of productive, young adults and what it means to be motivated by your own thoughts, interests and perseverance.

Mentors can work to build and encourage these relationships with middle school mentees by:

- ✓ Focusing relationship-building on the strengths and interests of those involved in the process

- ✓ Allowing mentees to use their voice in the process of relationship-building and planning (i.e. ownership of the process)
- ✓ Connecting interests to leadership opportunities within the group and the larger community
- ✓ Offering individual time that focuses not only on the needs/interest of the mentee but also the connections to competency-building these interest may possess
- ✓ Identifying and adhering to short and long term goal setting
- ✓ Identifying roles/positions of each member of the community
- ✓ Intentionally connecting mentees with their community (i.e. community members and outside agencies)
- ✓ Working with mentees to develop a individualized “check-in” system that identifies the importance of the mentoring relationship for both mentor and mentee
- ✓ Working with mentees to develop ongoing reflective practices to comment on their own experiences as part of the relationship, the group and as part of a working team

By developing the middle school mentee, the mentoring relationship that is developed is fundamental in offering supportive opportunities and structures that will give the mentee the tools to be able to explore and understand their own identity and how it relates to who they are and who they will be as teens and as young adults. By building opportunities to encourage a sense of purpose and belonging, mentors are empowering middle school mentees to “find” themselves and to be flexible and adaptable to learn more about themselves through interactions and outside experiences.

## **Sense of Autonomy and Future Teens (14-18 year olds)**

### **Developmental Characteristics:**

Developmentally, teens rely more on their own ideas and opinions. They are taking more responsibility for their actions and their work, and are much more reflective about how their acts affect others. They are very independent, have a strong connection to their peer group and intermingle smoothly with the other gender. Teens are conscious and critical of thoughts and ideas and sometimes move between unrealistically high expectations and poor self-concepts. They are also developing both abstract and concrete ideas about their identity and also connecting those ideas to the development of their own sense of community and what one needs to persevere as part of that community. They understand and sometimes struggle with an increase of responsibilities and social expectations that are both their own and also put upon them by others. Although they are actively searching out a firmer idea of identity and they are moving away from familial ties, they are still looking to role models to aid in the development of their own internal structure and self-concept.

### **Theme: Sense of Autonomy and Future:**

Overall, the teen group is looking to develop concrete opportunities to develop their own interests and how these interests can connect to future opportunities and/or life skill-building. Mentors have the opportunity to work with these young people to help them understand who they are and who they can become. Mentors should design and facilitate opportunities that allow teen mentees to lead. Teen mentees must not only look to the support of the mentors and peers in their lives, but they should also learn to trust and rely on themselves when making decisions and learn from themselves when they make mistakes. Mentors must facilitate processes that encourage dispositions that foster reflective practices that become embedded in the process of



the mentees' critical and creative thinking strategies. As mentors for teen mentees, the process of establishing these young people as reflective practitioners is an integral component in developing identity, independence, long-term goal setting and perseverance. Teen mentors must then facilitate experiences that allow the mentees opportunities to solve problems, act as planners and find productive ways of resolving conflict. Mentors must instill and model strategies for thinking and reflecting, as well as supporting these mentees through the process of utilizing these strategies.

In order for teens to develop a sense of autonomy and future, the mentor must encourage the development of a relationship that has clear expectations, an understanding of one's role in the relationship and how this relationship can progress with the needs and interests of both the mentor and mentee involved in the process. Throughout the process of developing these relationships with teen mentees, mentors must relinquish a large amount of control in order to empower the mentees to take ownership of their own process. However, as a "guide on the side," teen mentees must still feel supported and cared for through the initial structure of the mentor/mentee relationship. Although teen mentees may seem focused on their relationships with their peer groups, they are still looking for the support and acceptance of role models in their lives. In addition to being a regular part of the lives of the mentees as role models, teen mentors must also be realistic with their mentees for which they have and do not have control in their lives. Teen mentees must be encouraged to develop appraisal strategies in order to assess how they approach, attack and diffuse situations in their lives. They must also know how to advocate for themselves in order to attain the adequate resources needed for persistence. Teen mentors must not solely "do" for their mentees. The role of the mentee (especially for the teen mentee) is to advocate for them and facilitate experiences for them. In order for these young

adults to persevere, mentors must facilitate experiences and opportunities that allow them to express their competencies and to also have these competencies recognized by others. Teen mentors and their mentees must build a relationship and a culture that will persevere with the mentee long after the mentoring relationship is over.

In order to encourage each of the *Qualities of Resilience* in teen mentees to support a sense of autonomy and future, mentors must encourage and model a strong sense of self-efficacy in order to encourage these young adults to see that the strength and support they need is not only through external relationships and role models. The same strength, however, can be found within them as part of their ability to reflect, gauge, analyze, make decisions and self-correct. Mentors must advocate for their teen mentees, but must also challenge them to look inwardly in order to develop their own sense of efficacy, independence and future (APPENDIX 3A).

Mentors can work to build and encourage these relationships with teen mentees by:

- ✓ Allowing peer/teen leadership to lead the process of relationship-building and developing the community
- ✓ Focusing relationship-building on the goals, strengths and interests of those involved in the process
- ✓ Allowing the voice of the mentees to lead the process of relationship-building and planning (i.e. ownership of the process)
- ✓ Supporting the motivation of the teen mentees as a main focus of community
- ✓ Designing opportunities to connect and transfer areas of interest and motivation to other areas of their lives (i.e. school, family, work)
- ✓ Connecting interests to leadership opportunities within the group and the larger community
- ✓ Offering opportunities to encourage mentees to explore independent interests and connect them back to the work of the group/relationship
- ✓ Helping mentees set priorities

- ✓ Intentionally connecting mentees with their community (i.e. community members and outside agencies)
- ✓ Working with mentees to develop a individualized “check-in” system that identifies the importance of the mentoring relationship for both mentor and mentee
- ✓ Encouraging and helping mentees to develop their own ongoing reflective practices to comment on their own personal experiences as well as experiences connected to the relationship, group and as part of a working team

In order to encourage and support the teen mentor towards developing a sense of autonomy and future, mentors must realize that the identity of the young adult will influence the identity of the mature adult. How this process is structured and supported will in many ways determine the strength and perseverance of this identity and how flexible and adaptable it is in the face of adversity and change. The teen mentor/mentee relationship is, in many ways, one of the most important structured relationships that the mentee will encounter prior to becoming an adult. The structure of this relationship will determine what outcomes are supported and how the mentees are able to balance the support and structure of their own lives. By building opportunities that encourage a sense autonomy and future, mentors are empowering teen mentees to strengthen their identity while also giving themselves permission to change, modify and improve themselves to adapt and reflect the future they choose and the experiences that allow them to strengthen their own independence and personal efficacy.

If mentors have a strong sense of who these young people are and how best to meet their needs and support their interests, the relationship-building that is an integral aspect of encouraging resiliency-building becomes a much more seamless process. The connections to each of the age groups mentioned must be intentional and meet the young people/mentees where they are socially, emotionally and academically. The work of the natural mentor in a youth serving agency must be to weave together these aspects of young people’s lives in order for the

young people to see and understand the connections of their own lives. Mentors must view their position as a multifaceted role that connects the work of the youth serving agency/community with that of the mentee's family, school and future connections that have yet to be made. By building connections with young people within a mentoring capacity that are developmentally appropriate, mentors are encouraging relationships that express to the young people that who they are, who they want to be and what they can do is important to the mentor, not only as a part of a program, but also as a part of their own lives. Mentors must therefore, build these relationships carefully and intentionally and must also utilize tools to not only build these relationships, but also to develop quality programs with which these relationships are embedded.

## **What Tools Can Be Developed to Enhance Program Quality and Relationship-building?**

Quality mentoring relationships must be deliberate in how they encourage relationship-building and also reflect on these relationships throughout the process. It is not enough that the mentor identifies how the relationship is developing, but the mentor must also understand why, and how to support the growth of the relationship. Mentors must intentionally identify how they are going to consistently encourage supportive structures that not only act as a foundation to the relationship but also foster patterns of thinking to cultivate “cognitive resourcefulness” (Tishman et al, 1999, 69). The process of developing these relationships must include opportunities for building connectedness and meaningful participation, which includes mentors identifying how the following characteristics fit within the mentoring process. The following sequence identifies some key areas and questions that mentors must think about critically when developing and assessing the quality of relationships and also how these relationships are aligned with the youth outcomes that are expected as part of these relationships.

**Table 4G: Key Questions in Building Effective Communities and Mentoring Relationships**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Developing a Language and Culture that Belongs to the Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What opportunities are being offered to develop the tone, culture and learning of not only the group but also individuals who are part of the group?</li> <li>○ How are expectations and boundaries discussed and developed?</li> <li>○ What expectations and support structures are being modeled?</li> <li>○ What opportunities are present to build an inclusive environment?</li> <li>○ What cooperative thinking practices are being demonstrated, modeled and utilized?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support Offered</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What connections to support tools and resources are being offered?</li> <li>○ How are talents and interests being connected to the larger community?</li> <li>○ How is the support system of the relationship/group being sustained?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fostering Thinking Dispositions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the main skills being emphasized?</li> <li>○ How are these thinking skills/strategies emphasized?</li> <li>○ What questions are the mentees asking?</li> <li>○ What questions do the mentors hope to elicit?</li> <li>○ Are original and innovative ideas supported and encouraged to develop?</li> <li>○ Do the mentees have opportunities to generate new ideas?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Developing Opportunities for Individual Leadership, Engagement and Active Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What decision-making power do the mentees have?</li> <li>○ What skills do they need to be decision-makers?</li> <li>○ Do the mentees have the opportunity to ask, follow their own interests and explore their own ideas?</li> <li>○ Do the mentees have the opportunity to work both autonomously and also in peer groups that “think” and share together?</li> <li>○ How do mentees view their own involvement?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Encouraging Reflective Practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What opportunities exist for mentees to think and share with mentors and/or one another?</li> <li>○ Are there opportunities for individual and group reflection/assessment of work and skill-building and also who the mentees are within the work?</li> <li>○ Is the environment nurturing and supportive in order to allow for open dialogue?</li> <li>○ Do the mentees understand ways of transferring their own knowledge-building?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

As reflective practitioners, mentors should think about these questions when designing opportunities to build community, developing curricula and connecting mentees to the community. In building effective communities and relationships, these key questions need to be

embedded within the mentor’s repertoire in order to offer consistent and effective support to encourage skill-building and relationships that focus on the development of resilient thought. In aligning the development of resilient thought with the critical and creative thinking concepts of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, mentors and youth serving agencies must promote and support the development of key thinking skills by outlining what this learning should look like and how it relates to the overall process of relationship and community-building. The following chart identifies some examples of the connections of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning and how those can be aligned with thinking strategies to connect young people to their own development of resilient thought.

**Table 4H: *Connecting Thinking Strategies to Qualities of Resilience: Table 4H***

<b>Thinking Dispositions</b>	<b>Thinking Strategies</b>	<b>Connections to Qualities of Resilience</b>
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare and contrast</li> <li>• Classifying</li> <li>• Investigate assumptions</li> <li>• Understanding and detecting biases</li> <li>• Developing individual claims</li> <li>• Investigating claims</li> <li>• Developing “solution strategies”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Consciousness</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> </ul>
Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing perspective</li> <li>• Understanding connections of parts to whole relationship</li> <li>• Developing strategies to modify and/or improve thinking</li> <li>• Developing opportunities to support original and innovative ideas</li> <li>• Supporting fluid and flexible thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Competence</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> </ul>
Analytical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing parts of the whole</li> <li>• Analyzing relationships</li> <li>• Developing criteria</li> <li>• Developing assessment practices</li> <li>• Synthesizing information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Critical Consciousness</li> <li>• Purpose</li> </ul>

By identifying links between dispositions, thinking strategies and *Qualities of Resilience*, mentors and programs alike can formulate a better understanding of how to develop quality programs that connect that which is learned from the relationship to the development of resilient thought. Mentors must utilize strategies that not only help the mentee become an active participant in the process, but they must also help the mentor build supportive structures that frames the work. Mentors must develop a framework with which to support and build their work with individual mentees. (Examples of developmental tools that can be utilized for planning mentor/mentee programming can be found in APPENDIX B).

By creating tools that mentors can utilize when developing programming for mentees, youth serving agencies aid in the development of structured, supportive relationships that are focused on youth outcomes. The use of tools, such as the *Program Overview* and the *Weekly Program Plan* (APPENDIX 1-4B), will help to develop an intentional structure to design the scope and sequence of the work. This process is also a model that can be modified to be utilized as a tool with mentees to aid them in their own programmatic planning as well.

### **Using Assessment Practices to Reflect on the Process**

In addition to building supportive structures that develop mentoring opportunities towards resilient thought, youth serving agencies must also focus on effectively evaluating the ability of the program to offer these services. Both mentors and their youth service agencies must actively assess both the programmatic and individual impact on those who are being mentored and supported. Therefore, those in youth serving agencies must look at program quality through the lens of staff/mentor support and participation, meaningful engagement of youth/mentees, building mentee competencies and the development of dispositions that support and encourage resiliency. The assessment should not be used as an indicator of what is, or is not



working. It is, however, a tool that can and should be used to highlight what is working well and what needs to be changed, modified and improved. The assessment process should then be a system of ongoing support and reflective opportunities that not only measures positive youth development, connectedness and engagement, but also involves staff to reflect on their own engagement and how they can support and challenge both themselves and the mentees.

As part of mentoring towards resilient thought and evaluating the effectiveness of this process, both individual mentors and their youth serving agencies must assess the quality of their work, their commitment to the process and also their commitment to modifying their own techniques in order to make the process more meaningful. The methods of assessing and evaluating resiliency-building in schools as researchers, such as Richard Sagor (1996, 38-43), Nan Henderson and Mike Milstein (1996, 21-58) have developed around resiliency assessments and inventories, can be modified to focus on the work of youth serving agencies in order to identify, gauge and assess the level and effectiveness of mentoring towards resiliency-building in young people. In developing this *Mentoring Resiliency Inventory* (APPENDIX 1-2C), the following questions are the underlying ideas of the inventory: What strategies could be utilized to form thinking communities, and therefore the critical and creative thinking individual? What changes could then be made to daily routines in order to support the development and connection of a thinking culture and resilient young people?

As a part of the *Mentoring Resiliency Inventory*, individuals within the youth serving agency must brainstorm and examine the organizational practices that they feel make up their program, and also how these practices are aligned with the characteristics of the *Resiliency Wheel*:

- ✓ Increase Pro-social Bonding
- ✓ Set Clear and Consistent Boundaries
- ✓ Provide Caring and Support
- ✓ Set and Communicate High Expectations
- ✓ Teach “Life Skills”
- ✓ Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Engagement

Individual mentors and agencies must use the assessment to gauge the following: Are programs youth-led? Are the staff involved? Is there professional development to support positive youth development? Is there meaningful youth participation? Is there authentic assessment? Are there opportunities to engage in service-learning? Once the agency/individuals have identified the organizational practices, they would then identify how these organizational practices are connected to the *Guiding Principles* of this curriculum guide, that is, *Climate, Connectedness and Meaningful Engagement*. Once the two columns are completed, the agency/individuals would then identify what Qualities of Resiliency were reinforced by each of the organizational practices (i.e. Social Competence, Problem Solving, Critical Consciousness, Autonomy, and a Sense of Purpose ). As the mentors and agency assess the work of the program, they identify strengths, weaknesses and areas that need improvement. They would gauge this work by assigning a number to each category (“1” would be a part of our program, but rarely utilized, whereas “5” would be something that is embedded in the daily program). This assessment could then be modified into a reflective tool for the staff and program to gauge the work of particular programs within the agency and used to develop a rubric for staff and supervisors to assess and evaluate their own work within mentoring towards resilient thought.

This rubric (APPENDIX 3C) should then be used by both the staff and youth agency leaders to support, assess and evaluate the work that is being accomplished, areas of the program that need improvement and also individual performance within the program. This rubric can be used to identify the effectiveness of programming throughout the developmental process and also while developing mentors and mentees as reflective practitioners.

By utilizing both the *Mentoring Resiliency Inventory* and *Staff Rubric*, youth serving agencies and mentors have an opportunity to gauge and assess the work that the young people are involved with and measure their commitment and “buy in” to the philosophy. By developing tools that can be utilized and embedded in programming, youth serving agencies can assess program effectiveness, identify changes or improvements needed and how thinking strategies that are being developed could lead to capacity-building and eventually foster resiliency.

### **Utilizing the Curriculum Guide**

The development of this *Curriculum Guide* offers both mentors and the youth serving agencies practical ways of connecting with young people in a mentoring capacity, while encouraging and embedding the skills and capacities these young people need to persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century way of thinking and living. The focus of this guide is to recommend practical connections to both theoretical and concrete applications of mentoring young people towards resilient thought. By beginning at an early age and scaffolding this resilient thinking throughout developmental stages and experiences, mentors have an opportunity to support the development of strategies that can encourage the development of the whole child. This development of resilient thought fosters persistence in young people when facing many of life’s hardships and challenges. In addition, the guide supports the idea that in order to mentor young people towards

resilient thought, those within a mentoring capacity must also understand, model and be guided through the process of mentoring as well.

This guide offers the foundation of developmental thought for designing practical ways to support and mentor young people as well as their mentors towards understanding and encouraging resilient thought. The work of developing relationships and opportunities through climate, connectedness and meaningful engagement is contingent upon the directed learning, interests and ideas that both mentors and mentees bring to the mentoring partnership. The development of resilient thought through mentoring must be intentional, long-term and expansive (i.e. to include all aspects of the mentee's life). This curriculum guide offers mentors and their youth serving agencies the tools they need to not only scaffold the development of competencies, and ultimately resiliency in young people, but also an opportunity to gauge their own commitment to the process and assess the quality of the mentoring relationship. The work of mentoring towards resilient thought is a multifaceted, intentional process that must be guided and encouraged by all who assume a role in the process.

As committed, natural mentors in youth service agencies, those who are structuring and supporting this process must understand the influence that they can have as mentors and as relationship-builders, within and beyond the program. The impact a mentor can have on the process of encouraging resilient thought can be profound. By developing intentional opportunities to support and encourage this process, mentors can play a pivotal role in whether a young person can declare "I Am, I Can, and I Have." When a young person has been empowered to internalize and declare these words, the mentors' role is to continue to reflect and develop other opportunities to support and foster resilient thought in other aspects of that young person's life.

## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

**“Perhaps the most important single cause of a person’s success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what he believes about himself.”**

**Arthur W. Combs, *Perceiving, Behaving and Becoming***

#### **My Experience**

Throughout my studies and journey within the *Critical and Creative Thinking Program*, I have realized and understood that my own personal growth has truly been at the heart of the experience. I have gained many new perspectives that continually challenge me to think in original and innovative ways. In addition, I have also gained a stronger appreciation for what it means to be flexible and fluid not only for my work but also who I am and how I navigate the many facets of my life. Due to these experiences, I have, in many ways, been challenged, energized, surprised and humbled by all that I have learned. I have learned about myself as a learner and a thinker and appreciate and relate to the many thinkers and learners whose perspectives have impacted my own habits of mind. The *Critical and Creative Thinking Program* not only fostered in me an insatiable desire to learn, think and create, but also offered opportunities and encouraged me to develop and reflect on my own abilities to persevere as a critical thinker and as an innovator. The program and process allowed me to carve my own path and supported me throughout the process. This program challenged me to identify who I was in the process, what this process meant to me and also how I planned to utilize it for my own growth. In many ways, the process of Critical and Creative Thinking was a long-term exercise in developing and reflecting on my own resilient thought. Developing and reflecting on this resilient thought has encouraged me to identify stronger and more intentional ways of becoming a reflective practitioner, not only for my work, but also for my own personal growth. Identifying

who I was in my own thought processes and learning was an integral component of persevering throughout the program, projects and processes, especially when faced with many of life's "pulls" and stressors that emerged along the way. What allowed me to be resilient is the confidence in my own process, reflection on past experience and knowing that the support I needed was ready and available.

The experiences of the *Critical and Creative Thinking Program* have not only encouraged me to view my own learning and thinking in inventive ways, but it has also encouraged me to bridge a seamless connection between my own thinking and the internal process that encourages and drives my thinking. This intentional process has allowed me to become more aware of myself and how I relate to and move forward with individuals, relationships and experiences that mold my life. Without this strong understanding of who I am in the process, my own resiliency would not have been as strong. In addition, without the support and structure of the program and individuals who understood and encouraged this internal process, the impact of this knowledge-building may not have been as significant. Therefore, because of my own reflective experience in the program and the strong connections to my professional life, the research I conducted for my Synthesis, which resulted in a Curriculum Guide, *Mentoring Towards Resilient Thought*, was an important focus for me. This Curriculum Guide offers essential and intentional opportunities and experiences for young people to be involved in new and innovative ways of thinking, interacting and participating in mentoring relationships. Based on my own experience within the CCT Program and also my journey throughout the development of my Synthesis, I became more aware of and reflected on my own resilient core. It is through this introspective experience that I realized the importance and impact that this process could also have on young people.

## **Impact of Developing the Curriculum Guide, Mentoring Towards Resilient Thought**

Reflecting on my own experience, I questioned how to bring this process alive for the young people with whom I work. As youth service providers, it is important to ask how we offer support, and structure reflective opportunities that encourage skill and competency-building. In addition, we should also ask how we engage young people to persist beyond our program within their community, family and academic arena. Just as importantly, we must also question how we help them to understand and be empowered by their own internal process of learning, thinking and persevering. The Curriculum Guide will have an impact on not only how young people are engaged in the process, but also how those who are developing these relationships view the work of encouraging and supporting these young people. The work of those who will become the mentors who will develop programs that will support and engage young people, will have a monumental impact on how young people persist, and most importantly, how they view themselves. As I have stated throughout this Synthesis, the role of a mentor is not to “be” or “do” for the mentee. Instead, the role of the mentor is to develop intentional opportunities in which mentees learn about their role in the process and the power of their own voice. Engaging young people in this type of supportive process will encourage them to understand and focus on the supportive structures they already have or can develop within themselves.

In order to encourage this process of structuring supportive opportunities that elicit the voice, ideas and interests of the young people, the Curriculum Guide offers youth serving professionals the opportunity to connect with young people in developmentally appropriate ways that encourage and scaffolds competency-building throughout their commitment to the program. Youth serving professionals, as natural mentors in afterschool settings, have an opportunity to connect with and impact young people in ways in which other adults may not be able or are

accustomed. Programs in which young people spend upwards of 20 hours per week with adult mentors can help mold and prepare these young people for life experiences beyond the program. Although researchers state that the impact of mentoring, and specifically natural mentoring, does not have conclusive results or enough research to identify the overall impact of these relationships, the importance of a positive, committed, supportive non-parental adult in the life of a young person can have a significant effect on the perseverance, self-efficacy and competency-building of that young person. The development of a positive, mentoring relationship can exemplify for both the mentor and the mentee, the importance of the relationship, the importance of who the individuals are within the relationship and the needs and supportive structures that are encouraged and developed are for the sake of the relationship/individuals. The basis of the mentoring relationship is not only to engage the young person in experiences that encourage growth, but also for the young person to reflect on his/her abilities to declare “I Am, I Can, and I Have.” The importance of developing young people as active participants in their own knowledge-building, not only as thinkers, but also as survivors, is an essential component in developing young people who have the abilities and dispositions to persist and grow through each phase of their lives.

It is important for youth serving agencies, youth development professionals and also the young people who are engaged in programming, to be aware and understand the impact of building relationships. Although resiliency-building through the promotion of protective factors and qualities of resilience does not guarantee that a young person will be and remain resilient, youth serving agencies must understand the unique role they play in the development of the young person. If these young people are given an opportunity to develop fundamental dispositions and habits of mind and know who they are as learners and thinkers through practical



and real-life processes, the lessons they have gained will become a part of who they are and how they interact with the world around them. Youth serving agencies not only have an opportunity, but also a responsibility to engage and encourage young people to become invested, life-long learners and thinkers within their community.

### **Future Connections**

As the development of the resilient, healthy young person can affect the health of the community (i.e. by developing supportive structures that engage the mentees, who could then conversely impact the community by offering the same impactful connections), youth serving agencies must also view the work of fostering resilient thought beyond the foundation that has been developed as part of this Curriculum Guide. The development of resilient thought is based not only in competency-building, but also in life-altering experiences. Therefore, those in youth serving agencies must also think about how this work to develop the whole young person in a mentoring capacity is supported in the face of real-life situations that mold the young people beyond interests or ideas. Beyond developing certain competencies, the work of this Curriculum Guide can be expanded to include working with young people when dealing crisis and/or trauma.

Mentors and their youth service providers must think about how to help those young people, who are fairly resilient, persist in face of devastating experiences. In addition, mentors and agencies alike must also support mentees when the family support has stopped or has become unable to continue. The process of working with young people in a mentoring capacity is not a linear experience. Although the guide offers practical ways of building relationships and supportive structures, there are always those experiences that cannot be planned for or anticipated.

Mentors and youth serving agencies must also explore ways of supporting young people to maintain resilient thought through dire moments that not only test the “plasticity” of their resilient cores but also those that force them to question their own moral and ethical ideals. Although the role of a mentor is to not take on a didactic role, the mentor must however still offer supportive structures that sustain the young person through these moments of extreme adversity. In developing mentoring relationships that support the development of resilient thought, mentors and youth professionals must understand that the relationship is at the heart of the process that enables young people to persevere when they cannot see or understand how they belong, what their purpose is, who they are in the process and where this process can take them.

Mentoring towards resilient thought must not be viewed as an addition to the work, but it must be viewed as the core of the work in order to ready the next generation of resilient thinkers and creators. The work of mentors and youth serving agencies must be to develop programs, philosophies and youth professionals who understand that the development of resilient thought in young people is the development of resilient thought of the community and also that of future generations. Mentoring towards resilient thought not only allows young people an opportunity to experience support in building competencies that will influence their own perseverance, but it also allows them opportunities to understand and reflect on their own personal growth, and how it can accentuate their abilities to understand how and why they are resilient. Even though the capacity to be resilient is innate, the capacity to learn and understand the importance of this innate ability must be intentional and fostered. Therefore, the experience of building and sustaining resilient thought must be embedded in the work with young people in order for them to reflect on their own process, their abilities and their own ultimate importance.

***“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it.” (Helen Keller)***

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Mass Mentoring, [www.massmentors.org](http://www.massmentors.org)

National Mentoring Partnership, [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, [www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org)

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Building a Mentoring Relationship with Qualities of Resilience and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infused Skills**

**APPENDIX 1A**

**Building a Community**  
Qualities of Resiliency and Connections to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning

<b>Characteristics of Theme</b>	<b>Connection to Qualities of Resiliency</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Ways of Infusing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning into Mentoring Relationships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a culture</li> <li>• Setting/modeling structure</li> <li>• Modeling and setting expectations together</li> <li>• Developing intentional opportunities for relationship-building, both individually (w/ mentor) and communally (w/ peer group)</li> <li>• Identifying how each partner in the community contributes</li> <li>• Identifying how individual interests relate to the group and how they are supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Competence</li> <li>• Sense of Purpose and Belonging</li> <li>• Critical Consciousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Collaborative Skills</li> <li>• Social and Cross-cultural Skills</li> <li>• Flexibility and Accountability</li> <li>• Initiative and Self-Direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of how the group/pair will work together               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating “Shared Agreements” and Expectations of what this relationship is all about</li> <li>○ What are appropriate ways of talking to one another and eliciting positive responses from each other</li> <li>○ Discussing differences, similarities, and strengths and areas that need strengthening</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What is the focus/direction of the mentor/mentee relationship:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Learning about setting goals, both individual and group-focused, with the mentees</li> <li>○ Identifying responsibility and delegating tasks to individuals in the group/pair</li> <li>○ Ongoing support in regards to individual needs, interests and tasks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflective Practices of the Mentor/Mentee relationship:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing opportunities to become and refine abilities as a reflective practitioner: +/^ of work, relationship, engagement</li> <li>○ Identifying ways of improving relationship and growing with the needs of the relationship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 2A**

**Sense of Purpose and Belonging**  
Qualities of Resiliency and Connections to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning

<b>Characteristics of Theme</b>	<b>Connection to Qualities of Resiliency</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Ways of Infusing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning into Mentoring Relationships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing and encouraging a safe and comfortable environment for young people to share and learn who they are</li> <li>• Encouraging strategies that focus on strengths</li> <li>• Identifying and supporting what is important to them</li> <li>• Introducing strategies that encourage long and short-term goal setting</li> <li>• Identifying connections in the community to their special interests</li> <li>• Facilitating opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles</li> <li>• Encouraging a process of decision-making and problem solving that empowers the young people to extend their thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Competence</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Critical Consciousness</li> <li>• Purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and adaptability</li> <li>• Leadership and responsibility</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of how the group/pair will work together               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating “Shared Agreements” and Expectations of what this relationship is all about</li> <li>○ What type of inclusive culture is being created</li> <li>○ Discussing the assets and resources the group possesses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How the mentor/mentee partnership can be developed               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the long-term and short term goals of the mentees?</li> <li>○ How can these goals be supported by the mentee and the peer group?</li> <li>○ Connecting mentee to members/organizations in the community to support their interests</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What leadership roles/abilities can the mentee develop:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specialization of interests within a leadership capacity</li> <li>○ Encouraging a process of consensus</li> <li>○ Identifying responsibility and delegating tasks to individuals in the group/pair</li> <li>○ On-going support in regards to individual needs, interests and tasks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflective Practices of the Mentor/Mentee relationship:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing opportunities to become and refine abilities as reflective practitioner: +/^ of work, relationship, engagement</li> <li>○ Identifying ways of improving relationship and growing with the needs of the relationship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**APPENDIX 3A**

**Sense of Autonomy and Future  
Qualities of Resiliency and Connections to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning**

<b>Characteristics of Theme</b>	<b>Connection to Qualities of Resiliency</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Ways of Infusing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning into Mentoring Relationships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a community firmly designed with the ideas of the mentees</li> <li>• Developing a process that values both individual and group identity</li> <li>• Developing opportunities for peer leadership</li> <li>• Developing and encouraging strong ties to community connections</li> <li>• Connecting individual interests to the greater community</li> <li>• Identifying and supporting what motivates mentees and how to encourage motivation in other areas of their lives</li> <li>• Utilizing reflective practices for both individual development and also communal support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Competence</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Critical Consciousness</li> <li>• Purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative and self-direction</li> <li>• Flexibility and adaptability</li> <li>• Leadership and responsibility</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Productivity and Accountability</li> <li>• Innovation and Creativity</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of how the group/pair will work together               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating “Shared Agreements” and expectations of what this relationship is all about</li> <li>○ Discuss the assets and resources the group possesses</li> <li>○ Discuss what goals should steer the work of the group/pair</li> <li>○ Discuss how can these goals be supported by the mentee and the peer group</li> <li>○ Connecting mentee to members/organizations in the community to support their interests</li> <li>○ Discuss what connections the mentee wants to make to the larger community</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What leadership roles/abilities can the mentee develop:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specialization of interests within a leadership capacity</li> <li>○ Encouraging a process of consensus and communication</li> <li>○ Identifying responsibility and delegating tasks to individuals in the group/pair</li> <li>○ Identifying the importance of independent work and reflection</li> <li>○ Ongoing support in regards to individual needs, interests and tasks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflective Practices of the Mentor/Mentee relationship:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss how the mentees want to develop as reflective practitioners</li> <li>○ Discuss how the role of the reflective practitioner transfers to other areas of mentees’ lives</li> <li>○ Identifying ways of improving relationship and growing with the needs of the relationship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B**

**Developmental Tools for Planning  
Mentor/Mentee Programming**

**Title and Theme of Program:** Youth Planners: Theme Community Planning and Social Responsibility

**Overall Goal and Summary of Program:** The goal of Youth Planners is for the young people to learn how to plan events for the community, make connections with the community, and gain skills and competencies that can not only be utilized throughout the program, but can also be transferred to other areas of their lives. In addition, the youth will build skills and competencies both individually and as part of the group that will include: community organizing and planning, public relations, marketing, organization and time management, peer leadership and social responsibility. The program will utilize an assets-based approach of working with one another as part of a cooperative team in not only planning events but also researching and investigating the community to identify events and/or community connections the young people can develop.

**Youth Outcomes Expected:** Development of Collaboration Skills  
 Development of Problem Solving and Decision-making Skills  
 Development of Leadership Skills  
 Development of Social Responsibility, Accountability and Responsibility

**What Type of Thinking Encouraged:**

- Analytical:** Developing Criteria (Planning So Socially Responsible Events)
- Critical:** Investigating assumptions and developing solution strategies (in planning for the community)
- Creative:** Developing new and/or modified ideas for planning, understanding the connections of parts to the whole (the connection of young people to the needs of the community)

**Skill-building Encouraged:**

- Life/Career Skills:** Community/social responsibility, cooperative thinking and working, professional experience (i.e. field of community and event planning)
- Critical Thinking and Problem-solving:** Decision-making as part of a group (i.e. consensus), individual task completion (i.e. initiative and motivation), development of reflective thought
- Creativity and Innovation:** Encouraging “Outside-the-box” thinking, opportunities to modify ideas

**How Will Expectations and Boundaries be Created and Reinforced?** The group will discuss both individual and group goals and expectations of the group. In addition, the group will also discuss how each member views the work of the group, what each can add to the work and discuss how best to develop a working environment that will support these ideas, views and goals. The group will also discuss the importance of boundaries and what these should look like for the group. The discussion will end with the development of “Shared Agreements” that the group will develop and revisit throughout the program.

**How will Youth Have a Voice in the Planning/Program?** The work of the program is youth focused, therefore the structure and support will be modeled by the facilitator however, the pace, projects and development of the projects will depend on the ideas and views of the young people. It is the ideas of the young people that will move the work of the group.

**What Reflective Practices Will be Used to Gauge Ownership of Process, Skill-building and Transfer?** The young people will be continuously reflecting on the experience of the group and each member through collective discussions, writing, public speaking and the development of a resume and portfolio that highlights the work of each member throughout the program. The group will also reflect on their work as planners, how effective they are and what areas need to modify and/or improve for subsequent events or making community connections.

**Title: Youth Planners**

**Goal:** The goal of the first six weeks of Youth Planners is for the young people to learn how to plan events for the community, make connections with the community, and gain skills and competencies that can not only be utilized throughout the program, but can also be transferred to other areas of their lives.

**Themes and Weekly Summaries****Week 1: Theme: Building Youth Planners**

**Description:** The group will discuss the nature of the work their goals and ideas for the upcoming program and how they envision themselves being involved in the process. The group will develop Shared Agreements to guide the work and also to help set the structure of the Youth Planners Culture.

**Week 2: Theme: Getting to Know Your Community**

**Description:** The group will start thinking about their community: what are strengths and what are areas that Youth Planners could make a difference. The Youth Planners will work in collaborative teams to discuss and decide what areas of the community that they would like to focus on and do more research. This research will then be brought back to the group for a larger discussion of what type of involvement the group should have in the community.

**Week 3: Theme: Planning for the Community**

**Description:** After the group has discussed how they would like to connect to the community, they will then decide what project they would like to develop, who will work on which project, what roles each person will have and also develop a timeline. Week 3 will also be utilized for informal one-on-one check-ins with each member of the team to gauge involvement, “buy-in” and the beginning of transfer of skill-building.

**Week 4: Theme: Working in Teams**

**Description:** After the group has developed the focus of the work, individual roles and a timeline of the work. Smaller groups will begin learning about their new cooperative experience: What does it mean to be a part of a working team? What does each member bring to the team? What are they excited about as part of the team? In addition, each team will discuss how they will develop their own process in order to develop their community event.

**Week 5: Theme: Developing the Event**

**Description:** Each team will focus on the development of their event (i.e. flow, venue, participants, outreach and PR materials and other outside logistics). The teams will develop their own Project Summaries that will describe the event, the supplies needs and staff needs and responsibilities.

**Week 6: Theme: Presenting the Event**

**Description:** After the initial development of the event, each team will present their event to the larger group for constructive feedback and assessment. The group will discuss the motivation for the event, the breakdown/flow of the event, the needs the group still has and also the role the larger group will play in the event.

**Future Planning Connections:**

- Developing Strengths of the Community a smaller teams
- Developing Marketing Strategies
- Connecting with the Community
- Fundraising
- Reflecting on the planning experience
- Evaluating community events

**APPENDIX 3B**

**Program Plan Overview**

**Title and Theme of Program:**

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**Overall Goal and Summary of Program:**

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**Youth Outcomes Expected:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**What Type of Thinking Encouraged:**

**Analytical:**

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**Critical:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Creative:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Skill-building Encouraged:**

**Life/Career Skills:**

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**Critical Thinking and Problem-solving:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Creativity and Innovation:**

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**How Will Expectations and Boundaries be Created and Reinforced?**

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**How will Youth Have a Voice in the Planning/Program?**

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**What Reflective Practices Will be Used to Gauge Ownership of Process, Skill-building and Transfer?**

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**APPENDIX 4B**

**Weekly Program Plan**

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Themes and Weekly Summaries**

**Week 1: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Week 2: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Week 3: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Week 4: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Week 5: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Week 6: Theme:**  
**Description:**

**Future Planning Connections:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Assessment and Reflection Tools**

**APPENDIX 1C      *Mentoring Towards Building Resilient Thought***  
***Inventory for Mentors and Youth Serving Agencies (Example)***

<b>Organization/ Instructional Practices</b> (Connected to the Resiliency Wheel)	<b>Connections to Guiding Principles of Curriculum Guide:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate</li> <li>• Connectedness</li> <li>• Meaningful Engagement</li> </ul>	<b>Qualities of Resiliency Reinforced</b>	<b>Rate the Effectiveness of Relationship-building and Programs Offered (1-5)</b> <b>(1, needs improvement 5, embedded in our daily program)</b>	
			<b>Rate (1-5)</b>	<b>What improvements can be made?</b>
Skills Developed and Mastered: Teaching Life Skills and Encouraging Competency-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a thinking language and guidelines, intentionality</li> <li>• Meets/confronts challenges, motivation, independence, goal setting, prioritizing, intentionality</li> <li>• Development of competencies along with a sense of purpose and future</li> </ul>	Social and Critical Competence, Autonomy	3	More involvement of participants in developing program, on-going reflection throughout program
Opportunities for meaningful participation including youth-led programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent opportunities for mentee input and program development</li> <li>• Opportunities that support Higher-ordered thinking</li> <li>• Reflect and assess participation intentionality</li> </ul>	Sense of Purpose, Problem Solving, Autonomy	5	No apparent improvements needed at this time, will re-evaluate as needed
Providing Pro-social bonding, Caring and Support for groups and individuals programming (i.e. mentee caseloads, advisee groups, one-on-one connections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for the development of relationships</li> <li>• Development of an inclusive community</li> <li>• Focus of opportunities through a strengths-based approach for building/fostering motivation</li> </ul>	Sense of Purpose and Belonging	4	Develop checklist of mentor/mentee relationship guidelines, develop opportunities for advisee groups to build meaningful participation (i.e. events, activities, incentive programs)
Authentic Assessments (Staff and Youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizing metacognitive practices for reflection and evaluation</li> <li>• Developed opportunities to support the reflective practitioner (mentor and mentee)</li> <li>• Utilization of strategic planning processes to develop quality programming</li> </ul>	Problem Solving	3	Develop evaluation/rubric with staff and involve staff in the program evaluation process
Professional Development for Staff to offer positive youth development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a thinking culture with staff around developmental levels, needs and expectations of mentees</li> <li>• Mentor connections with individuals/group</li> <li>• Embedding youth outcomes in programming</li> </ul>	Social and Critical Consciousness	2	Offer on-going trainings series, one-on-one check ins and reflective tools to develop staff as “natural mentors”
Setting and Communicating High Programmatic Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on and assess participation-moving beyond own comfort, intentionality</li> <li>• Setting structure and developing new strategies and action plans together</li> <li>• Opportunities for original and innovative work</li> </ul>	Problem Solving, Sense of Purpose, and Autonomy	4	



**APPENDIX 2C**

***Mentoring Towards Building Resilient Thought  
Inventory for Mentors and Youth Serving Agencies***

<b>Organization/ Instructional Practices</b> (Connected to the Resiliency Wheel)	<b>Connections to Guiding Principles of Curriculum Guide:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate</li> <li>• Connectedness</li> <li>• Meaningful Engagement</li> </ul>	<b>Qualities of Resiliency Reinforced</b>	<b>Rate the Effectiveness of Relationship-building and Programs Offered (1-5) (1, needs improvement 5, embedded in our daily program)</b>	
			<b>Rate (1-5)</b>	<b>What improvements can be made?</b>

**APPENDIX 3C**

**Staff Rubric for Gauging Program Success  
Developing Reflective Practitioners**

On a scale of 1-5, (5 being the best and 1 being the less desired outcome), how would you rate yourself in the following areas?  
Please provide specific examples for each category.

	<b>Modeling Positive Behavior</b>	<b>Actively Promoting Youth Mastery of Skills</b>	<b>Listening Attentively to Participants (youth)</b>	<b>Frequently Providing Feedback and Guidance During Activities</b>	<b>Establishing Clear Expectations for Mature and Respectful Peer Interactions</b>
<b>Quality of Program</b>					
<b>Consistency in Behavior</b>					
<b>Reflection/Assessment Practices</b>					
<b>Ownership of the Process</b>					