



# FOUR THINGS TO AVOID IN MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS FOR BLACK YOUTH

Content developed from a review of literature providing a summary of existing studies related to mentorship with Black youth.

## ✘ Taking a deficits-based approach.

As mentors often belong to privileged groups, and youth often come from marginalized communities, taking a deficits-based approach that focuses exclusively on lack and dysfunction can exacerbate existing inequalities.<sup>1</sup>

## ✘ High volunteer turnover.

Benefits to youth can be jeopardized when relationships with volunteer mentors end prematurely. Not having systematic standards for training and supporting volunteer mentors will likely create difficulties in retaining mentors.<sup>3</sup> Implement supports to prevent losing volunteers.

## ✘ Insufficient screening of mentors.

While programs may face pressure to recruit a large number of mentors, it's important to recognize that poorly screened mentors may actually be detrimental to youth.<sup>2</sup>

## ✘ Putting skills training before relationship building.

While mentors often have valuable advice and social capital to offer mentees, developing a strong relationship should be their first priority.<sup>4</sup>

### Learn more

Check out these resources about the importance of strengths-based approaches on the eXchange.

Webinar: [Reframing Need: Asset-Driven Youth Program and Community Development](#)

Factsheet: [Strength-Based Mentoring: Nurturing the Social Capacity of Children and Youth to Thrive](#)

Check out these resources about the importance of creating supportive, long-term relationships on the eXchange.

Report: [Don't Quit On Me: What Young People Who Left School Say About the Power of Relationships](#)

Research Summary: [Positive Youth Development and Physical Activity/ Sport Interventions: Mechanisms Leading to Sustained Impact](#)

### Learn more

Check out these resources about the importance of mentor competency on the eXchange.

Research Summary: [Youth Mentoring – Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?](#)

Toolkit: [A Toolkit for Program Coordinators](#)

Check out these resources about the importance of relationship building on the eXchange.

Blog: [“Beyonce is My Mother” – Getting to Know One Another is Key to Mentorship](#)

Report: [Indigenizing Youth Work: Towards a New Relationship](#)

## References

Albright, J.N., Hurd, N.M., & Hussain, S.B. (2017). Applying a social justice lens to youth mentoring: A review of the literature and recommendations for practice. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 59, 363-381. (#1, #4)

Rhodes, J., & Lowe, S. R. (2008). Youth mentoring and resilience: Implications for practice. *Child Care in Practice*, 14(1), 9-17. (#3)

DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(2), 57-91. (#2)