

Mentoring Adjudicated and Gang-Involved Youth Webinar Transcript

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Presenter: Dennis Talbert, TCAM Expert Mentoring Advisor

Ivy Jones Turner: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the TCAM webinar: *Mentoring Youth Engaged in the Juvenile Justice System*. Thank you for joining us.

Today's webinar will provide guidance for you and your mentoring program staff on issues of both training staff and training mentors on working with adjudicated youth and youth engaged in gangs. We'll be focusing on how mentoring program staff can be most effective in working to support these populations through mentoring, as well as how mentoring program staff can work with partners and mentors to effectively support mentees on several key challenging issues these youth face, which we'll briefly address.

During today's webinar we'll identify strategies useful for program staff and mentors to use mentoring as an effective intervention tool for youth who are both adjudicated or gang involved. We'll review several strategies that mentoring program staff can incorporate into your staff training, your program design, as well as your mentee and mentor training to help develop strong mentor-mentee relationships, and achieve your program goals. If you'd like more information specific to gang involved youth or some of the other issues we'll address such as mental health, please be sure to access the additional resources we'll identify at the end of the webinar.

Today's webinar is being facilitated by our senior consultant Dennis Talbert. Many of you have met Dennis over the last several years working with us here at TCAM. As many of you already know Dennis is a very experienced leader in working with both high-risk youth and high-need youth populations. Much of this work Dennis has led in the Detroit community, as well as nationally. And as part of Dennis's work, he has led a number of faith-based and secular service agencies providing mentoring and youth development programs for both at-risk and high-risk youth. In particular I'd like to note

one of the outstanding examples of some of the experience that Dennis has brought this work has been that in the community of Detroit, Dennis has led not only the engagement of faith-based organizations in working with high-risk and high-need youth, but particularly targeting youth in communities in which the high school graduation rates are far below 40%. In addition Dennis has developed a number of youth development programs not only for youth that are in many of the high-risk or high-need youth service programs, but also capacity building programs and capacity building services for the staff of such programs.

Today's webinar will have an opportunity for you to both hear from Dennis about some of his work and about some of the work we've been doing with the National Consortium of Mentoring Practitioners, which is an advisory group to TCAM that Dennis has co-led. Members of this group represent leading practitioners in the mentoring field running mentoring programs, as well as others who've been involved with managing or directing state mentoring partnerships and policy makers and advocates for mentoring or youth development groups. We'll have an opportunity today to hear more about the discussions and work of the National Consortium of Mentoring Practitioners, and their work in developing these resources.

At this point, what I'd like to do is just highlight our learning objectives for today's conversation. As I've mentioned we're going to really focus on describing a number of the common challenges and issues that mentoring programs face in working with adjudicated and gang involved youth. We'll have an opportunity for you to hear some of the innovative strategies that have been used by a number of mentoring programs to support mentees and mentors working with youth who are involved with the juvenile justice system. And then we'll also identify a number of resources that will be helpful for developing and implementing your staff training, as well as your mentor training.

Again, we will not be delving very deeply into the specific issues of gang involvement of youth, but we will have a number of resources that you can access at the end of this webinar.

And so at this point what I'd like to do is turn it over to Dennis. Dennis?

Dennis Talbert: Thank you Ivy, and greetings everyone. What a privilege it is to serve you today through this webinar.

I don't know if you're like me when I was involved in direct services. I always felt like I was the Lone Ranger. Because the population that you and I have been charged to

service, kids who are in the adjudicated system or gang involved, they are extraordinarily needy. That's probably the best way for me to describe it. So as Ivy said our focus is really on training and providing support ideas for your staff as well as your mentors. And I think that there are probably two key words that I would use for today. One is "Innovation", and the other one is "Resources". You're not in this work alone. You will not have to feel like I did twenty years ago as The Lone Ranger. So our goal and our objective is to help you with the resources and innovative ideas that will help you to do your work.

Now as I've said earlier, our population, the population that you and I are serving is the most vulnerable and challenged group of young people in our society. And what creates this atmosphere for us is one, they are academic underachievers. And when we say underachievers, we're talking about oftentimes, kids who don't read. Just, I think it was two nights ago I was looking at television and it was amazing to me. Many of you will know the name, I think it was Mary J. Blige. She admitted that she does not read. And then when challenged by someone who academically scored her, she reads at a third grade level. So these are some of the challenges that we're faced with. We're faced with young people who look like they could be 16 or 17, but they are focusing and functioning at a level that is far below where they should be.

They have limited or no adult support. Oftentimes our students or the young people we've committed ourselves to they have no adult support. And the adult support they have is not positive adult support. What's interesting; let me put this point here. I've really never met a parent who doesn't want best for their child. The problem that I have seen fall into two categories. One, either the parent doesn't know what to do in order to help their child do better. Or there're some cultural or value issues that conflict with what we and society would say this is how we would approach this particular issue in terms of their positive youth development. Their personal experiences are often wrought with violence and other kinds of issues that really impede their ability to do well. Because their involvement is, they live in a violent society. They have the culture of violence and crime. They have mental health challenges. And all these things by the way we're going to try to dive into individually.

They have mental health challenges. And it's not that they're, as we would say back in the day, they're "crazy" individuals. It's that they have mental health challenges that create traumatic situations in their lives that keep them from being able to function properly and make good decisions.

They have delayed formative and cognitive social development.

And of course they've been sexually and physically abused. And this, by the way, not only applies to the young ladies, but also to our young men. We see a significant number of young men who are now experiencing sexual abuse as children.

So when you pull all these together, you really confound some factors that connect the youth to appropriate services. And what's interesting is, we hear, those of us at the ground level, we hear the cries of the parents, and they go unheard. "I need help with my child". You can hear it at an early age of at the elementary or and middle school ages. "I need help with my child. I need help with my child." But where does that parent go for help? Who will hear that parent? They have limited access to the mental health services. Because they recognize their child or children have been exposed to the kinds of circumstances that they should have never been exposed to. But where do they go to get them the proper counseling? At least in the area where I live of Detroit where there used to be counselors in every school, now there is one counselor who serves ten schools. Well, one professional counselor serving a thousand students will not get our students the kind of professional help that they primarily need. There are budget restrictions. In the state of Michigan for mental health, two governors ago, they wiped out all the mental health facilities and all the mental health funds. So where does this parent go for help? Where do we go for help? And these are the kinds of issues that we need to be aware of as practitioners in the mentoring field, specifically working with adjudicated kids. Because our kids are unique. They are unique.

Our goal is to provide you with the training and support necessary in order to help you, not only to prepare your mentees, but more importantly to prepare your staff and you mentors to face the challenges during the course of their relationship.

As a program practitioner I'm not expected to know everything, but I am expected to be, kind-of, the resource depot. That I can provide support for the individuals that I have in my service group.

The second thing is to include positive youth development activities and positive youth development thought and critical thinking as we prepare our youth for long term successes.

For instance. Many of you are fully aware of the 40 Developmental Assets. You can begin looking at our children in the categories of the 40 Developmental Assets. We want to prepare our staff, to get them the kind of training they need in order to be able to support our matches. Remember our focus is on our staff within our mentoring agencies and how do we get them prepared for the challenges that they will face.

One of the things that we used to do in our group, we used to have monthly group support for the mentors. We called it an in-service, and made it a fun activity for the mentors so that they could hear some of the challenges that the other mentors faced, and the staff could provide support in that area. Or we'd bring professionals in to provide support in that area. So keep in mind that it's all about innovation, it's all about our staff being able to meet the needs of the mentor relationship. That's our objective.

So educating the mentors of the challenge that they will face in training. The traditional training module that mentors receive in mentoring programs, are not effective for the population that we're serving. They have to get the basic training, and then some. And so how do we make sure that they get that "and then some" training? How do we prepare them to look at and to understand the challenges of our youth. The mentor is just focusing on the mentee-mentor relationship, but that our staff are focusing on the other issues that our mentees are in need of.

One of the areas that I want to share with you is a program that we implemented, called "Mentoring Plus". In the Mentoring Plus model, our goal, because we looked at the young people who were in our system, and we said 'Man, their needs are so significant that one mentor could not meet their needs.' So we began to break them up into categories. We saw that the greatest categories of need were 1) their academic needs, 2) their non-school hours, or leisure hour needs, 3) employment needs, and 4) some of their social or "felt need" needs. So we needed to have in a mentoring relationship, one person to address each one of those areas; not for one mentor to try to deal with all five of these areas. And so we created this four-on-one concept of "Mentoring Plus". And that is where we get four mentors to deal with one student, one mentee. So one person would be assigned the task of working on their academic issues. Again because remember the population that we're serving, they are extremely needy and their needs are so significant that they would drain the traditional mentoring relationship. So we have one person who would look at the academic needs. And person would look at the leisure time needs. And another person would address their employment needs. Particularly for kids who are adjudicated, many have been adjudicated related to some kind of economic issues, and so they need employment. Readiness skills. And then we have to help find them jobs. Not only do we need to help them find jobs, we have to help them stay employed. And so the person who is addressing just that employment issue

And our kids have "felt needs". And sometimes those felt needs are any number of factors, from 'I have a specific gift or a specific skill and I want to take that skill to the next level'. For instance, many of our kids are creative, and they have art skills. How do

you help them develop those skills so that they can see their progress and their growth in that process.

So we'll talk a little bit more about Mentoring Plus. Again the idea is to think innovatively as we approach youth who are adjudicated or gang involved.

So what are the key prevention strategies for mentors? One is significantly to increase their recreation or leisure-time activities. We know that many kids get in trouble during the hours of three to seven. So it's extremely important that we help them develop some kind of leisure time activity or leisure time plan.

Secondly they need life skills. I heard there was a gentleman on the phone who focuses his attention on life skills or life coaching. How do we get them the life skills they need in order to go to the next level in their lives? Because many of them have, whether they're males – they've become fathers; females, they have become mothers or they are engaged in those kinds of activities that will ultimately lead to them becoming a father or mother.

This thing of Community Service opportunities, from my perspective it's extremely important. The reason why I think it's important is that it gives the student a sense of feeling significant. It's not just giving them something to do with their time; it is helping them to become significant in society. Most of our kids who've been involved in the adjudicated system may have been marginalized. But we can turn around in a mentoring program, and help them feel that sense of community, that sense of significance through some kind of community service activity.

The next line, with this whole idea of supporting school engagement or academic achievement. I'd like to introduce you to a new resource that many of you are aware of. It's called Kahn Academy.com. It is a godsend for those of us. It's absolutely free. It's based on the student's individual level. And the wonderful thing about it is, it's nonjudgmental. So the student can go online, he or she can register accordingly and they can go right in. If they're at a second grade level, they can go in at a second grade level and they can pace their way all the way through college. In most of the language arts programs, as well as math and science. It's an incredible tool that you can make available to your young people.

And then support them in terms of youth employment. As I said earlier, many of our kids in urban as well as rural communities end up in our facilities and our juvenile justice system because they're involved in issues that relate to economics. How do we help these kids develop employment skills and how do we find them employment? Let me just say this. I've had the privilege of meeting with a number of you privately, and I know that some of you are doing this. and the wonderful thing about what you're

doing is that you're putting your agency's reputation on the line by saying, if you will hire this person, we will vouch for them.

I know that some of you are doing this in the wonderful thing about which are doing is that you're putting your agency's reputation on the line by saying if you would hire this person we will vouch for them.

Because that's what is often needed for that employer. That employer is looking to have that relationship that says, you know your mentoring program - this is what we say to them- we have provided them with employment readiness skills, they know to work on time, they know how they should look, they know how they should talk, they understand the ethics of work, etc. On the flip side of that, you turn around and say we give them the certificate saying that they have that this training, then we put our organizational reputation on the line by saying we will vouch for that young person.

And then there's the area of having fun. And I don't know that the issue is fun, as it's about building a relationship. And you put the having fun acknowledgment part of the relationship together. Because how do you help that young person to build that relationship [inaudible] build those kinds of relationships. Because often times it's as simple as expanding that young person's community and world scope. For example, taking them to a restaurant they've never been to, or taking them to an event that they've never been to, or taking them to a university and giving them the chance to walk on a university campus. All of those things will change the world scope and the community view that young person has.

Ivy: Dennis, we have a couple of comments in the chat box that I'd like to make sure that we address. One of which was the website for the school engagement group that you mentioned. Could you please give us that again?

Dennis: Yes. It's Khan Academy.com. (spelled aloud). This website is absolutely free. This is a young guy who is from the Louisiana area. The website really began out of his own desire to provide tutorial support for his family members. It emerged into this system that has been totally financed and been endowed by the Microsoft organization and Steve Jobs.

Ivy: So it's a good example of building on first the skills and strength that young people have, although it might be using alternative ways of instruction.

Dennis: Absolutely. So actually the wonderful thing about Khan Academy is that it fits the person, really where their level is. And the beauty is that it's not judgmental. For instance, if the student is having problems with multiplication tables. So say it will display 6+6, and then you type in what you think the answer is, and you put in 38. The

comes back with 'Let's try it again. That's not the right answer, but let's try it again'. And it will keep you on that pace until you get it right. And in addition to that, if after the second time you get it wrong it says 'Let me show you how you arrive at the answer'.

Ivy: There were just the number of great examples in terms of how, it's using both social media as well as online instruction to really engage young people.

Dennis: Absolutely, absolutely. Definitely using online instruction. And now just for the final comment unless you, you have some additional questions on Khan Academy. Khan Academy is now being used at educational institutions, and being tested now in the west, as a primary educational mode for Second Chance schools.

Ivy : Thanks. Thanks very much. And another comment that we have is from Rebecca and this is for Dennis as well as everyone on the line. Just in terms of hearing some of the strategies that have been most helpful in engaging staff and mentors through training and ensuring that there's better understanding of some of what's happening. Is that correct Rebecca?

Dennis: Another great question. I was going to talk about it a little bit later, but this is a great place to enter. There are a couple of things we did. We called monthly meetings and we made them a fun time, food, activities, etc. We even gave the mentors who had private businesses an opportunity to have a table. We made it an hour and a half. We would take 45 minutes of that event and have an in-service. The in-service was designed on three levels. 1- give the mentors an opportunity to share what was going on within their particular relationship and also 2- to bring in an expert in the specific field. For instance, we will talk about mental health a little later on. We would bring in a mental health person to talk about the violence and trauma on a kid and how do you deal with that. We made it in such a way that there was fun and activities. We didn't have it at the offices we did it at a local social club. We promoted it as a networking opportunity more so than as a mentoring in-service. So they came. We had tables around – so say that Mickey Smith had a real estate firm and someone else might be selling insurance. We would have these tables around so that they could display their goods. 3rd element was that we would use this as an opportunity for mentors to invite other potential mentors to be involved in our mentoring program.

(silence)

Dennis: How do we work toward increasing adult involvement in the mentee in the lives of their friends? As a professional in this area, I want to make it clear to our mentors that you are assigned to that particular person. I would not try to take on the mentees' friends. I think for an adjudicated and gang-involved kid that's just too much. That

becomes the strategies of the staff in terms of building staff engagement. For instance, in a small community in Louisiana we implemented a strategy that when the kid would go into lock-up the mentoring staff would then go to the community where that kid is, try to build a relationship with each one of the kids that we know that were in his sphere of influence and within has family so that when he returned 12 months or 24 months from there either those people were already in a mentoring relationship or they were in some kind of positive youth program at [inaudible], if that makes sense. Now again when we start talking about this population we are not talking about any regular old mentoring program. It is a wonderful thing to think that your primary job is to recruit, to train, to match and to monitor. But for this population that is not your primary job. You have to go beyond that in order to be able to see success. When a kid is released from an adjudicated facility – say he has been away for 24 months, when he gets back to his friends his initial thought – he/she really wants to do better. The problem is once they get back into their sphere of influence, if we don't impact the people who are in their community, there is a strong probability this kid will be drawn back into what he/she was involved with earlier.

Are there any questions? Dr. Jones-Turner? (prophecy, Dr.?)

Ivy: I think those are more comments that I was adding to reflect some of the conversation that you were talking about.

Dennis: It's really important for our staff to really engage in that area, it's really important for our staff to be monitoring the relationship and monitoring the progress of this activity. It's really, really important.

Considerations for Programs Serving Adjudicated and Gang involvement. Safety not only for the young person but safety for the adults. If that young person is coming out of a gang or that young person is coming out of a gang engaged community what do you say to that mentor that would pull up in the neighborhood and pick up this kid? We have to make sure that we are guaranteeing their safety. In some cases we have to provide a safe place where they can work together or they can meet.

Support assistance. We are more than a mentoring program. That support assistance not only includes what we are going to provide the young person – but more importantly what we are going to provide for the friend in need. In order to be effective with the adjudicated and gang engaged kid we have to impact their sphere of influence.

Skills and social emotional learning. We know that kids that come out of these environments or these kinds of relationships, it provides for our program staff will have to work with them to help them build the kinds of skills for social and emotional

learning. We cannot depend on the mentor to do that. It becomes a skill set that we need to provide and training for our mentors.

Engagement and challenging. Our program is Re-integrating Success through Empowerment-RISE – we have something called RISE points.

Our RISE points – we gave our students incentives for engaging and coming to the mentee relationship. They got points for being in on time, points for their engagement, points for their follow-up, so if there were follow-up – we never used the term homework we used the term follow-up so if the follow-up assignment was that they would to spend 3 hours this week on Khan Academy or 3 hours with an individual tutor they would get points for being able to do that. So how do they redeem those points – at the every quarter – they could redeem their points. Redeemable points often led to a food day or an amusement park. We'd take a bus of kids to Cedar Point in Ohio or we would take them to another event that they really wanted to be involved in or concert tickets that they wanted to attend and be a part of. Or it led to an iPod, bicycles all kinds of things. How do we get these dollars? We have to raise these dollars from outside of our grant dollars in order to support those RISE points. We really saw that this was effective, because the kids want to these incentives. When I was a kid my parents gave me incentives for getting A's. Kids want these incentives. And if we make the incentives significant enough they will work hard at achieving them.

Professional Help. It's not the mentor's task to provide family support or professional help. It's the mentor's agency responsibility to do that. We have to provide that resource depot that I referred to earlier.

Program Design. All of you should be well into your grant and doing wonderful things. I just to highlight a few items in this slide.

One of the things is the ongoing staff training or in-service that we talked about earlier. For us in the area of in-service it is important for us to know your children, know the population that you are looking to serve, so we insisted that once in a while we would here from someone on the judicial staff. Someone who is actively involved with them, either as a case manager. To help us understand about the population we serve. Hear from the parents, the cry of the parents when they talk about the frustration that they experienced and what they did. What did I do wrong? With my limited resources this is what I tried to do but it didn't work out. To hear the parents share their frustration and what they have been involved in. And talking to young people – I think it is extraordinarily important to hear from the young people. Our program was called Empower High-Risk something – I can't remember, this was several years ago. As one of our in-services this kid said – I'll never forget this- "I'm

tired of being called high-risk” In-service is over and we cleaned up and put things away. I said tomorrow we are changing our name. That’s how we came up with a more positive message in terms of the program. Then the kids were more inclined to be now engaged but happily engaged because they are no longer being labeled a high-risk. So we changed our program to RISE mentoring program that stood for Re-integrating Success through Empowerment.

Another one is an idea for an innovative thought is an asset approach. We introduced this concept several years ago at the National Re-entry conference; I don’t know if any of you attended. But the idea of every kid has someone in their background at some point in their life that they really love. It could be that teacher. They could be 15 but they really appreciated that 3rd grade teacher because he/she was so significant in their lives. Or it could be someone down the block or a member of their family. You’ve been pulling out your hair trying to find someone to be that person’s mentor. Well here’s an opportunity to look at the assets of that individual and say ‘who was significant in your life?’ That person could turn out to be their aunt. Write that aunt a note or figure out how to get in contact with that aunt. Say to this aunt, ‘Listen, here’s what we have going. And this person has identified. Would you be willing to be this person’s mentor?’ It takes a lot of stress off of us as agency providers. Particularly if we know what we are doing.

And then finally I just want to point out, provide support to your group.

Actually there’s one more point that I think is a critical point. And that is, build a close working relationship with your juvenile justice authority. Work as hard as you possibly can so that you can be part of the treatment plan and you could have access to the treatment plan that the juvenile justice system has set up for this student once they have been released from the system.

Alright. So we’ve covered a lot of information in a short period of time. I feel like I’m trying to give you what I would give someone else over several days. So let’s go with any questions. I’m going to ask Ms. Turner if she would guide us through this process. But I’m available to answer any questions and have any dialog.

Ivy: So we're going to open up the phone lines now for any questions. Feel free to go on a speaker or to use the chat box. And I did see that Mary Midyette is typing. Mary do you want to go on and ask your question?

Mary Midyette: I decided to pick up the phone instead. Can you hear me? Fantastic. One of the questions that I had, is with our youth in foster care. Something you said kind of struck me, and maybe were not handling this quite right as we should. But we are trying our mentors not to become too involved with the team working with the mentees – their

case manager, the social worker. And the mentees tend to see them as, you know, maybe part of the system. And the mentee's have told us, 'we just want someone in our lives who's not paid to be there.' So we kind of try to have our mentors stand aside from that. Have you had any problems with that, and if so how did you work through it? How do you train your mentors to kind of handle that?

Dennis: Right. And so I understand the issues from both sides of the fence. But I think it's important to separate the mentor from the system. Because for kids who are in foster care, that's all they've been involved with, is system engaged people. And for once, we want to connect them with someone who will connect with them on a relational basis, who will love them and support them just because they are who they are.

Mary: Exactly.

Dennis: So the role then becomes that of the staff of the mentoring program to stay in contact with the foster care agency or foster care worker, and find out what's going on. Again going back to the statement I made earlier, which is, extremely important that the staff stay engaged with either the juvenile justice system, or the foster care system. So then you can find out what's going on. And if necessary you have to make those decisions as a staff, these are things that you pass on to your mentors. For instance, if you know that this student has not been going to school on time, or has not been going to school, that's a key piece of information that you want to pass on to the mentor as a means for encouraging them to go to school. But you also might, based on your relationship with the student, because when you're talking about high-risk kids, the staff should have a relationship of engagement also. How you develop a strategy, and a part of that strategy might very well be points, if you decide to adopt a point system to encourage them. 'So you know what, if you are faithful in going to school – this is May, so there are 45 days left. If you're faithful, this is what will happen, this is what we'll do for you.'

Ivy: So a great example, I think, of really clarifying both for young people verbally, as well as ensuring that those kind of additional supports and the knowledge is really a managed by your program staff.

Mary: Exactly. That makes perfect sense.

Ivy: It looks like Sarah was typing in a question as well. Sarah or James did you have a question, or a comment?

James: Yeah I do. Dennis, this is James Irvin in Ohio. When you had the slide up about key prevention strategies for staff, and you were talking about developing job skills. One thing that I do with my guys in juvenile detention center is that before we get into any

kind of job skills thing, I do is a small Myers-Briggs personality test with the guys. And I think it helps them appreciate themselves number one, but number two, it gives them an opportunity of where they have some personal strengths and, would be successful in jobs and interviewing when they fill out the applications and are called in for an interview. They have more strength from within because they know what their personality style is all about. And I help them with words and how to use words. So that's just a comment that I have to that I want to add to that part of your slide.

Dennis: Yes I, actually I am very familiar with the Myers-Briggs, and I think it's an incredible evaluation tool or instrument. But let me help you go a step further. And this is something that I discovered just in terms of my engaging young people. And that is, it seems that every kid has some very special gifts and talents that are not included, this goes beyond personality. And so helping them to make a list of these special gifts and talents (coughed, excuse me) that they have, that they didn't get from any kind of training, you know, from any kind of background. And have them make a list of those gifts. And what they'll discover is there are some connecting dots to that. For instance, they may be great communicators. So that means they would be good in the areas of sales. And so that helps them begin to think through 'what kind of profession will you pursue?' Because unfortunately there are a billion professions out there that our kids are not exposed to, and so many times the professions that are before them, are ones that they know absolutely nothing about. For instance, some of them have these incredible personalities and they would do great in the area of hospitality. So helping them be able to really connect those dots. So actually Myers-Briggs has two or three exams, one tool that does help them to get to that point of understanding their gifts and talents in that area.

James: I totally agree with you.

Dennis: Thank you. Again, helping the kids to know, what are your strengths. We could never stress that enough. So what you're doing with the Myers-Briggs, helping them to see their strengths, which is just absolutely major. In many cases, once they take the Myers-Briggs exam, and they see that they have a strength on it, it's like their lights come on. And now you can begin to point them to some areas that you know that they will be very, very good at.

Ivy: And I think a related question, from Sarah finding out a little bit more of the strategies to prepare or train youth for the mentoring relationship. Are there any insights that you'd like to share on that? And it looks like Sarah is also typing in some additional information, so Dennis if you want to go on and start. And as Sarah types in more we'll incorporate that.

Dennis: Right. So I'm not certain where to begin, I feel like we're on speed dial with this training. But at some point in this training we should be talking about how we try to meet the kid and build a relationship with the kid, particularly those who are adjudicated, before they have been released from the facility. I think that's an extraordinarily important. One, when they are in an adjudicated facility their hearts and minds, are open to new visitors and new relationships. This is why it's so important for you to how the relationship with the juvenile justice partner, and to have a juvenile justice partner that you can go into the lock-up facility, and even at some point take your mentors into the facility. And they build that kind of relationship, so then they can engage in activities, and they see that as part of the overall treatment plan for that young person. So I want to start there. The second thing is it's important to know, we talk about knowing the person, so I talk about knowing the culture of young people. But it's also important to know something about that young person. We talked about their gifts and talents, but what about their felt needs? What do they like to do? And what is their element of interest? And so, if you know that their element of interest is sports or if their element of interest is clothing, or their element of interest is music, then how do you find someone that would be their mentor, that would help them connect in that area. Because that's the connecting point. I call it a 'felt need connecting point'. It's the felt need connecting point.

Lauren: This is Lauren, I'm with Sarah and the question is, we understand building the relationships with other support services, and we understand building the relationship and the rapport with the mentee. More of our question was do you do different activities, do you do a training for the mentees to prepare them better for their mentor?

Dennis: OK, thank you. Yes, absolutely. I think there has to be. First of all, they need to understand. Most of them don't have an understanding of what that relationship is going to be; 'What does it mean for me to have a mentor? Is that going to be my new dad? Is that my sugar daddy? What does that mean?' So I think you have to start out by "here's what you can expect to get from a mentee-mentor relationship." And why you want them to have a relationship with the mentor. What is expected of your mentor? What can that mentor do for you? What are the expected outcomes?" So when you begin to as a program set down some goals and objectives, "here are the goals and objectives that you and I have come up with, that you have **helped** develop. These are not just objectives that the program has developed, but these are goals and objectives that you and I have worked together on developing." So one is, "well I want to complete my high school diploma or a want to get a GED." "I want to do X, Y and Z." "I want to do something else." So these are the things that are important, and so you lay out for them, "This is what our mentoring relationship can do for you." And so all of

those are elements within the training; what to expect of a mentor, what is a mentor, how this relationship will help you.

Ivy: And I'll note, Sarah, and I think that was Rebecca, TCAM is actually going to be launching an online training for program staff on developing an initial training, and thinking about ongoing training for youth. And as Dennis has noted, some of the key factors will be thinking about or incorporating personal or individual goals of young people, and how that can be linked very clearly for them in that initial training. Although we might call it 'orientation', or we might call that time together initially by many programs 'orientation', there are a number of those key kinds of activities that can be incorporated in terms of helping a young person understand what types of behaviors will be helpful for developing the relationship. But also understanding how to ask for help. Or how to build on the support, or utilize the resources and supports that are being made available. So hopefully that will be helpful to you.

Dennis: And also, just to point out a tool that was already out there on the TCAM website, and that is training for a mentor. It's a very basic training on what is a mentor. And that is interactive, right? (inaudible)

Ivy: (inaudible) Yes, that is the TCAM Online Mentor Training Series, which I noted earlier, and it is interactive for volunteer mentors in your program, yes.

Dennis, why don't we move on to the next section and really speak a little bit more about one of the key issues and challenges faced by a number of youth in the juvenile justice system, that being the issue of trauma and mental health.

Dennis: OK. Excellent. And let me also say there will be a time for Q&A following my presentation. And Ivy, let me just say, it may be that I've been bumped off-line. I'm not certain. Can you move the next slide?

Ivy: Yes, I'll take care of that.

Dennis: I said earlier, and I've been saying throughout the presentation, our young people are unique. And to me, that uniqueness is part of the excitement for me as a program provider. Because it says to me, that I have to think beyond the box. That I have to think differently about how I provide services to this population. And one of the unique challenges that they have, is that they have trauma and traumatic stress and they have mental health disorders. And they're not mental health disorders that they cannot overcome, just that they need coping skills, and professional assistance in this area.

And I'll use this as an example. Several years ago, a friend of mine was in the process of writing one of the books and has a home on an island in the British Virgin Islands.

And I went to visit with them, and I was there for three weeks. And every day I would get up and lock the door. And they would get up **unlock** the door. And I would get up and lock the door and the screen. And they would unlock the door. And what I realized is, because I live in the city of Detroit, and I live in the heart of one of the roughest neighborhoods in the community, is that I don't really know what it means to have peace. I didn't know what it means to have peace. And so our kids don't know what it means to be stress-free. And so how do we help them in that area? (And next slide Ivy. Thank you.)

Want to point out these adverse childhood experiences that they have, and they have them repeatedly. Verbal and emotional abuse. Physical and sexual abuse. They see their parents being ripped on regularly. They come from a household of substance abuse. They come from a household with mental illness.

Want to point out these adverse childhood experiences that they have, and they have them repeatedly. Verbal and emotional abuse. Physical and sexual abuse. They have domestic, they see their parents being ripped on regularly. They come from a household of substance abuse. They come from issues of mental illness in their household. Or separation. This doesn't make a difference what your social or economic strata is. It affects all kids. Separation and divorce, or death. Incarcerated members of their household, or just straight community violence. These things significantly have a dramatic impact on our kids. And it's really linked to their behavior, their day to day behavior. And so, for many of them, they take on issues of depression, take on issues of their own personal security, their guilt and their shame. And they mask it by being involved in violent behaviors. And so as you see on your screen 50-70% of our young people in our juvenile justice system suffer from mental health issues. And so if you remember at the very top, we hear parents crying out, and crying out for help. I can tell you story, after story, after story about parents who would take their kids to the local police precinct, looking for help for their kid, but they couldn't get the help. Until the child commits some kind of crime.

So we're serving this extraordinarily unique population. And we cannot discount their special needs. Again, our role as providers is to make sure that our agency becomes that depot of resources that we can connect our young people to. Next slide.

So our kids need help. Part of that help is to be able to make sure that we have the public health, mental health, and substance abuse systems that we're in partnership with. I can't begin to tell you how important collaboration is with these kinds of organizations for the population that we are serving. Substance abuse counselors. Mental-health counselors. Public health officials. Or public health counselors. These are the kinds of agencies that we want to connect with, that can provide the necessary

resources that we can tap into, that our kids can take advantage of. Particularly in urban communities where they are removing the financial infrastructure for our kids. The most vulnerable population of kids don't have access to mental health assistance. Here is another resource. Many universities have MSW programs – Masters in Social Work programs. All of those young people have to do a practicum. Your mentor agency could become the agency where they do the practicum, and you get an MSW student who will serve your agency for a year, because most practicums have to do a minimum of six months to a year. And they will serve your kids. So they could serve two or three kids in your agency providing counseling, at no charge to you. Under the supervision of a Masters in Social Work, or under the supervision of the staff of the University. So again, it's making sure that we connect them to the right resources.

I don't want to run down the list of problems that we know that they have. We know that substance abuse is big. We know that they have anxiety disorders. All kinds of phobias, all kinds of eating disorders. Depression, bipolar. All of these things impact the lives of our kids. Our kids need this extended level of help. So it's very important that we understand that population. And so in looking at the impact of mental health issues on adjudicated and gang involved youth, they have problem-solving difficulties. They have emotional and interpersonal difficulties; they don't make friends well. They have academic difficulties. And they are delayed meeting their developmental task stages. And again these are often brought on by the cycle of violence, which are traumatic experiences. And there is a line which we've heard that hurting people, hurt people. Keep this in mind that this is the population that we are serving. How did we get here? I don't want to spend a lot of time on how we got here, but the impact of the drugs that we took in during the 80s and 90s that significantly impacted our kids, and now we see it in ADHD and ADD.

It's important that our staff understand specific issue related to mental health. And find the evidence-based treatment programs that can support what you're engaged in. So we are going to mention four of them, and I will encourage you to go online to look at them. You can print out information that you can share with your staff for them. And it's kind-of like the lights coming on -- "oh that's what's going on with this kid", "oh that's what's going on with this kid". Now it becomes important for you to connect the issues with the professional who can help that student overcome. Like I've said, these are not issues that the kids cannot overcome, it just need the coping skills in order to move forward.

The first one is Functional Family Therapy. This is a family driven intervention that focuses on assessing and promoting youth protective factors. These therapy sessions really include the entire family to address the specific goals for effective communication and changes in their behavior. So there're some family issues -- we

don't communicate with each inside the family. How do we build these functioning family so that we do have a good form of communication that exists within the family setting? And Ivy has put on the comment section a website where you can go to where you can secure some more details on it.

The Multi-Systemic Therapy. This is an intensive family-based treatment program that focuses on changing the youth's behavior, and supports changes to adult response to the youth's behavior.

Aggressive-Replacement Therapy. An intensive short term family oriented therapy to reduce the aggressive behavior by addressing youth's ability to self-manage and improve their social skills. How do we give them the coping skills that we talked about earlier to deal with their anger management and all the other things that they're engaged with. I was speaking somewhere and I looked out into the audience I noticed that nobody was smiling. And as I looked at the kids who were taking their picture with me afterwards, nobody smiled. And I thought wait a minute, you wanted to take a picture, but you don't want to smile for the camera? What is the problem? Because we've created an environment where the kids are just naturally angry about any number of things that have happened in their lives.

So the final one is the Family Integration Therapy. And it is a short-term, family oriented therapy designed to promote better family functioning and youth's self-management skills. And by the way, for all of these family therapies, it doesn't make a difference what the composition of the family is. It could be the grandmother. It could be the aunt who happens to be the caregiver. It could be the single mother as caregiver. Again in these therapy sessions they're going to have an opportunity to drill down on these issues.

Let's go to the poll. We have a poll for you. (silence) Do the juvenile justice agencies you work with share information about youth's mental health status or findings from youth mental health assessments with your program? And we see that you're going right ahead here. And most of them are coming back to say no. I hear Ivy saying something here?

Ivy: Yeah. Many of your partners, whether they are juvenile justice or foster care agencies will conduct some type of initial assessment and screening with the young person as they come into the system, and then maybe do some ongoing assessments. And as Dennis has noted it looks like most of you do not get access or information on those. They are a couple of folks who do. For those of you who do, can you share maybe some of the strategies which you have used in order to access that information? Or what type of information has been shared with you? I believe Sundiata is probably one of those who has access to that information. Mary and those of you with your staff

probably have also, working with foster care youth. Mary how have you been able to access that information in terms of mental health or other screening and assessment results from your partners?

Mary: It's a requirement for us to accept the child into our program. Since we are a volunteer mentoring program, the youth in foster care, or in the juvenile system, their needs are too great for our mentors. Or they may need more of a therapeutic mentor. And so it's part of our assessment process to require it and Social Services does provide it.

Dennis: That's excellent. You have a great relationship with your juvenile justice and social service provider.

Mary: We do.

Dennis: And they trust you as a part of their treatment plan.

Mary: They do.

Dennis: What community are you in?

Mary: We're in South Hampton Roads Virginia, and we cover the cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach.

Dennis: OK Excellent. Anyone else who wanted to share?

Sundiata Aya: This is Sundiata. Greetings everyone. We also collect the information as far as mental health status, and findings, and assessments from our partners, juvenile court and Department of Juvenile Justice as we screen the young people to determine the level that they're entering the program and what the prevention issues are. We haven't had any problem getting that kind of information. It's been very helpful for us to figure out how to help the young person as well.

Dennis: And what community are you in?

Sundiata: I'm in Cobb County, the Atlanta metro area in Georgia.

Dennis: And your grant is also through and connected with the juvenile justice system isn't it? It's through the same social service agency? Can you explain that to us?

Sundiata: Yes we have two partners, the departments of Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Court. They're partnered with us on the ground, so that partnership has been important to us being able to help to provide more of a wrap-around kind of approach for our young people. With the probation officers – we work with adjudicated youth, so the probation officers have been very helpful at providing certain referrals that can help to

address some of the family counseling needs, the case management, therapeutic counseling needs as well, and so on.

Dennis: Thank you Sundiata. It's very important for us to figure out, for those of you who said no, how did you build the kind of relationship with your agencies so that information is shared. Is it because you do not ask for it, or is it because it is privileged information? For those of you who said no, can you give us some kind of response so we can perhaps give you a strategy for getting it. I don't have the data to see who said no, so anyone who said no do you want to share with us just why you don't get it?

Ivy: Well as you think about that, we'll go on. (silence) you can type into the chat. You'll have an opportunity to type into the chat any questions or challenges that you had in terms of accessing that information. And really thinking about how to then incorporate it into case management support, or some of the wraparound supports that mentoring is able to connect the young person with.

Dennis: Excellent. And again, just really important at some point when you call afterwards, for those of you who don't get this information, we want to help you get strategy going so you can get this information, plus more from your juvenile justice provider or from your social service agency if you're in the foster care system.

The value of Mentoring Plus. Again, we talked about this concept of four-on-one. It really instills a sense of hope and optimism in the young people. But what it really does on the other end, is to take the pressure off of one mentor. Now this one mentor doesn't feel like 'Man! This kid's life is totally connected to me. I don't have to try to meet all of his needs or her needs. It helps the young person set and achieve personal goals. Because remember, the context of the Mentor Plus, is that each person, there are four mentors on one individual student, and each person, each mentor has an element of responsibility. So my responsibility might be employment. So I am going to look at how can I get this kid employment ready? And so the time that I spend with him, the time that I talk with him, helps me to focus my attention on just the employment readiness, and getting him ready for employment. It helps the young person connect in relationships with institutions. And finally it's staying and providing support during a crisis in that person's life. And this is a really important because in a crisis, there are the four mentors. In fact we say, every other month we want the four of you to meet with the youth. Go out and do something with that young person. Have some kind of experience. Maybe it's that you did nothing more than go to the ice cream place to get some ice cream. But spend some time with him. Let him know that they have more than (silence). Let them see that they have a new community. Because that's what our kids need. Our kids need in many cases, a new positive, caring, adult community in their lives.

Supporting adjudicated and gang-involved youth with mental-health issues.

Supporting adjudicated and gang-involved youth with mental-health issues. Again, identify referrals. Find a system who can assist you in this area. You are not scheduled or slated to be all things to all people. You are the resource depot. And in the resource depot, you are the go-to person. Because if I came to you as a mentor, and I said to you, 'I think this may be an issue with this kid', your staff would be able to say to me, 'refer them here, and we'll take that off of your hands'.

Secondly, it's important that with your staff understand fully all the elements associated with mental health issues. And again a part of that is just knowing the population. Knowing the various elements, the various stress levels, the very trauma levels that brings the kid to the point at which he or she is engaged in criminal behavior, or is depressed or whatever the circumstances that are leading him to be in your systems.

And then case management. I can't stress how important it is at an agency level that you do case management. Take the responsibility from the mentor and place it in the agency's responsibility. Next slide please.

So you want to have strong relationships with the juvenile justice departments. You want to connect the young people with social and emotional developmental resources. And you want to firm the assets and the strengths of the young people by supporting their efforts in the workplace and their career exploration. Go to the next slide. And we a running out of time.

You want to continue in this area in terms of understanding the common emotional and behavioral reactions of young people. You want to recognize the power of positive and supportive personal relationships. And to understand how they are role fits into the bigger picture of a youth treatment plan. And we're talking about you role and their role being that of the mentor. Next slide.

And here are some ideas for monitoring. You all know the importance of monitoring these kind of relationships, instituting mentoring program design to support your young people and support their issues. Next Slide. Ivy, I'm going to turn that back over to you. And here's a great quote, "We have a responsibility to our program recipients; they've had so many losses in their lives and for us to come in for a year or two or three and give them hope, only to have the program go away, we've just caused another loss and a further loss of hope in their lives." And I think this is an important point. Because on one of these site visits that I made, when we got there, the program had already shut down because they had already spent the allotment that had been given to them by OJJDP. Far in advance. So they spent in the first year and a half what

they were supposed to get for 3 years. They had already shut the program down, without even informing the young people that the program had been shut down. So if you're in a situation like that, let's shut our programs down in order and make sure that we do so loving the kids, knowing that these kids need the support. And transfer the mentoring relationships to another program in that community. Whether it's an established program like Big Brothers/Big Sisters, or a smaller program, like some faith-based organization. But transfer that program. Don't close your program out because you've lost funding without making sure that you transfer these relationships to a supportive system that will be able to keep it going for years to come. Thank you.

Ivy: Sure. Thanks Dennis. I think one of the things that I'd like to really reiterate for the group, but I know we have a number of folks who will probably have to leave in the next few minutes just in terms of additional meetings. But we'd really like to just highlight and reiterate, that mentoring with the supports and the preparation for your program (silence) assisting young people who may be adjudicated or gang involved, as well as those from other systems who may be experiencing some very similar challenges. You've heard a number of examples during today's webinar. Both in terms of highlighting some resources that are available, as well as noting additional questions and strategies that have been used. I know for a number of you, you've noted in the chat (silence) the use of a multiple mentor to one youth strategy and approach. We can talk a little bit further about that, as well as I'd encourage you to take a look at some of the TCAM resources, particularly those for the second chance or juvenile justice populations. That's a topic that we've addressed with them in a number of calls.

What you'll see on your screen right now are a number of resources and websites that address both working with adjudicated and gang involved youth, as well as being attentive to and incorporating an understanding of mental health and trauma, and how that affects young people. Many of you are aware that at this point both SAMHSA as well as OJJDP and a number of other federal agencies are really emphasizing and identifying the importance of a trauma-centered, or trauma focused approaches to our interventions. And acknowledging that many young people and others have been affected by trauma and other mental health challenges. So you can access a number of the resources that are on the screen as well as on the TCAM website in terms of learning more about these issues.

And just in terms of being respectful and honest with your time, we'd like to just reiterate that this webinar today was really highlighted and identified by members of the National Consortium of Mentoring Practitioners. Dennis Talbert is one of the co-chairs. This advisory group includes the following members who helped to contribute to, and identify that mental health is a major issue, not just for adjudicated and foster care youth populations, but also for a number of youth populations. And incorporating

or identifying some of the strategies that each of these members have used in terms of addressing those issues with youth populations that they serve.

We hope that from today's webinar you understood a number of the challenges both encountered by some of our youth who may be in the adjudicated, gang involved, or foster care population. But also you've understood better how mentoring can be a support, particularly when it's 'Mentoring Plus', and the idea of mentoring with, and integrated as part of, the wraparound services and additional supports provided to a young person.

We will be making the resources and a recording of today's webinar available on the TCAM website. A follow-up announcement to the group with the link to the recording and additional resources will be provided. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thanks so much everyone for joining us today.

Dennis: Thank you again, Ivy and everyone. And as you can see my contact information on the screen (313-615-1727), you can call at any time or reach me via email.

Ivy: Thanks everyone. Take care.

[END]