



Youth Voice

LENS Meeting

11/19/24

Welcome

- Define Youth Voice
- Equip Youth to Honor their Power?
 - Youth-Led Advocacy Guide
 - Youth Advisory Group
- TMP Training Tools
 - Making the Most of Mentoring
 - Becoming a Better Mentor Guide



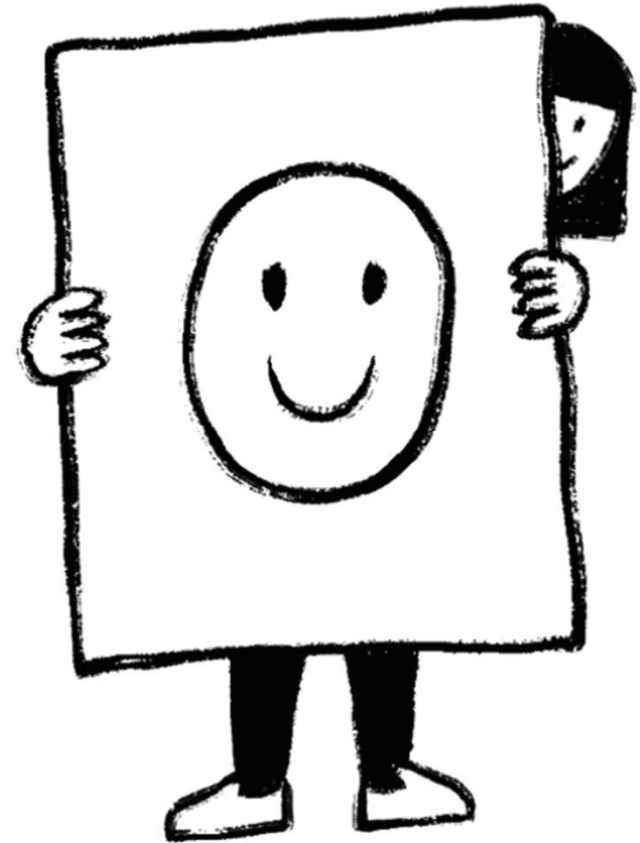


What is Youth Voice



Youth Voice

- What words do you recognize or are familiar with the meaning of?



Youth Voice Podcast Rewind

- Young people have a lot to say, and mentors have a responsibility to hear their voices and elevate their perspectives.
- Offer *Unconditional Positive Regard*
- Respect youth choice and be open to learning from your mentee.
- Trust is earned over time and established by sharing power.





YOUTH-LED ADVOACY GUIDE

11/19/24

Adelaide Moschler



YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY GUIDE



MENTORING.ORG/ RESOURCE/ YOUTH-LED-ADVOCACY- GUIDE



Youth-Led Advocacy Guide

- Power, Relationships, and Mentoring
- Youth Power and Advocacy
- Youth Advocacy in Action
- How Adults Can Support Youth Advocacy



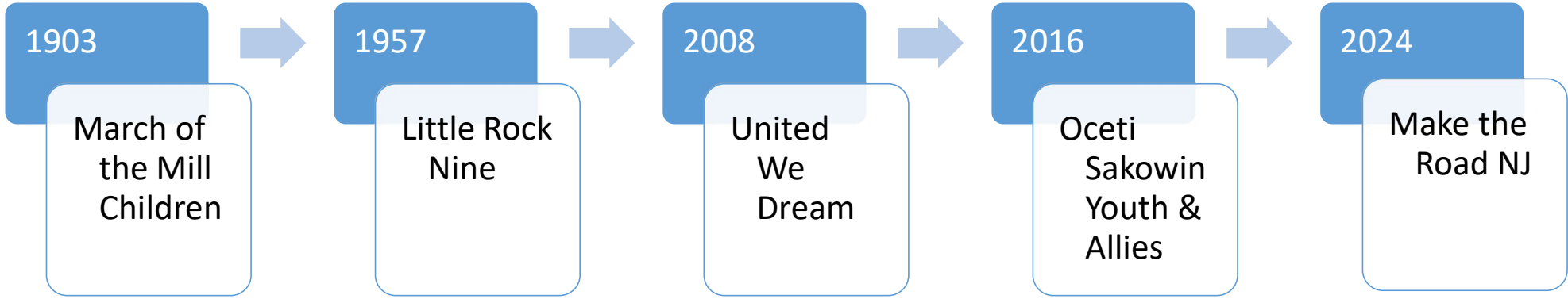
Power, Relationships, and Mentoring

- Young people are the creative forces needed to transform our society
- Young people are communicating the support they need everyday
- Adults can champion youth power and help amplify the impact of youth advocates
- Mentoring mindset helps adults prioritize youth power

Youth Power and Advocacy

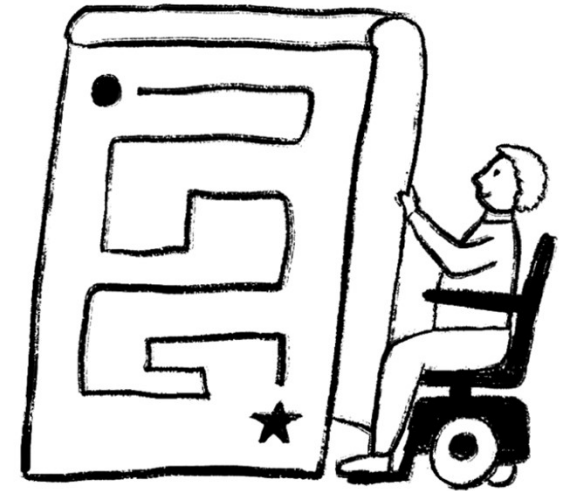
- Purpose of youth advocacy is to create a less biased society
- Youth advocacy includes challenging power imbalances and imagining more equitable futures
- Youth advocacy means youth propel society towards justice and a better world for everyone – especially the most marginalized
- We will rise together when young people are lifted up
- Mentors supporting young people play a key role in:
 - Centering youth voices and helping them build their power
 - Forming their identities

History of Youth-Led Advocacy



Youth Advocacy in Action

- Identify the problem
- Take action
 - Contact elected officials
 - Set up a meeting with the official or their staff
 - Prepare for the meeting
- Build a coalition and organize your community



A photograph of two Black women sitting on the floor, facing each other and talking. They are both wearing pink t-shirts and blue jeans. The background is a teal wall with a geometric pattern of overlapping triangles. The text is overlaid on the image in white.

“Self care is about creating and maintaining practices that help you sustain your energy and spirit in whatever life path you choose.”

ArtReach’s Self Care Toolkit



How Adults Can Support Youth Advocacy

- Self-reflection
- Help a young person identify a problem and assist them in researching the problem
- Practice a mentoring mindset and view young people with unconditional positive regard
- Engage in or facilitate discussions that prompt reflection and boost young people's trust in their own abilities
- Provide youth with social capital, information, and resources to bring their visions to life



MENTOR
INDEPENDENCE
REGION

UNLOCKING YOUTH PERSPECTIVES:

Fresh Insights on
Modern Relationships



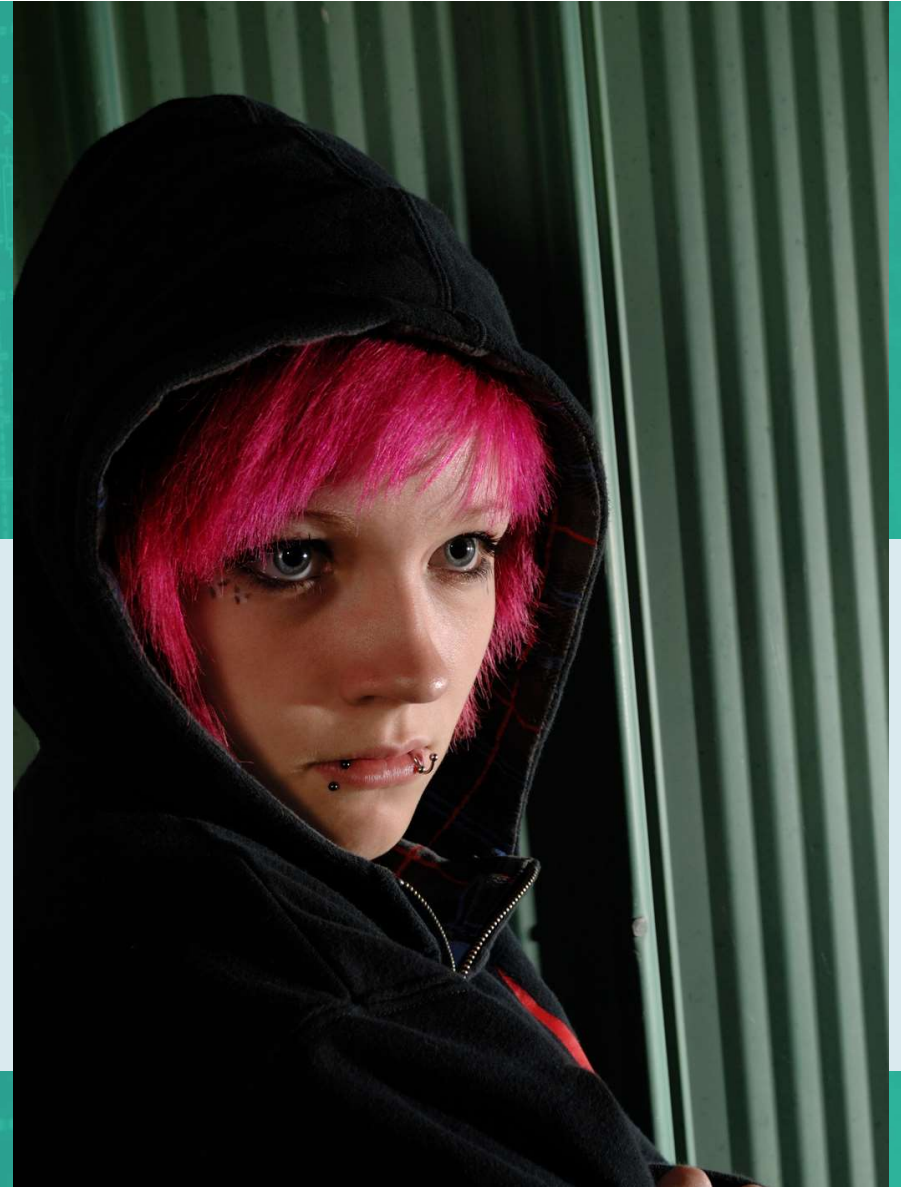


AGENDA

- 1 PROBLEM STATEMENT
- 2 OBJECTIVE
- 3 METHODOLOGY
- 4 INITIAL FINDINGS
- 5 RESPONSE
- 6 NEXT STEPS

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Young people are reporting lower levels of connection and mentorship for the first time in decades
- The Loneliness epidemic was exacerbated by the pandemic; kids have more technology but are more isolated than ever
- Pre-pandemic methods of mentorship and programming need to evolve



OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this project is to hear what young people think about mentoring and supportive adult relationships. MIR sees mentoring as adult-youth relationships grounded in love and caring with a common purpose and eye to the future. MIR wants to know what youth have, want, and need from their relationships with adults in order to thrive. MIR sees young people as experts who know best about their lives and what they want from mentoring relationships, and we want to talk directly with young people to understand the impact of positive mentoring relationships on young people's lives.

ACCESS

Do young people have access to one or more caring and supportive relationships with adults outside the home?

QUALITY

How do young people perceive their relationships with adults? What is working and not working in those relationships? What is required for good relationships to exist?

NEEDS

What things do they need and desire in mentorship? What can adults to do show up better for young people?



We
can't do
this
alone.

METHODOLOGY

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)
YPAR is a research method that involves young people
in social change.



We convened a Youth Advisory Group with young Philadelphians aged 18-24 to partner with us throughout the entire project. We received guidance from YPAR Expert Dr Goessling.



FOCUS GROUPS

We conducted focus groups with 72 young people in seven focus groups across the city.



**INFLUENCE
PROGRAMMING**

We will share learnings, iterate, and publish a report. We will convene stakeholders, partner and create learning experiences built on our findings.

MENTORING DONE RIGHT

"Adults could be more supportive to young people just by listening and trying to understand how they feel, what they're going through, and what they're doing."

"Sometimes you just want someone to just listen, I guess, rather than giving an opinion back."

"If it's not coming from a genuine place, it's just like they just want to be in your business."



MUTUALITY

Mutuality in the relationship including boundaries, guidance and genuine care, respect, and reliability. Mentors and mentees can learn from each other, offering mutual support and encouragement in various aspects of life, including academic and personal growth.



UNBIASED PERSPECTIVE

Providing an unbiased opinion, and listening without fixing. Respecting their autonomy to make their own decisions, while providing guidance alongside.



ENCOURAGEMENT AND OPENING DOORS

Mentors should be encouraging and provide constructive feedback, helping mentees grow and succeed in their endeavors.

MENTORING DONE WRONG

"Adults want you to act mature and be grown, but they don't want you to act mature and grown. They want you to act like you have some sense, but when you do, they think that you're trying to act too grown."

"You want me to just take what your point of view is and run with it. But if I run with it, imma fall."

"They don't see you as a human, but rather a child."

LACK OF LISTENING; UNWANTED ADVICE

Adults sometimes impose their own opinions and solutions without fully understanding the mentees' perspectives. Young people often receive unsolicited advice or opinions from mentors, which can feel intrusive and unwelcome. Mentees may feel that their autonomy is being undermined by mentors who do not respect their ability to make their own decisions

JUDGEMENTAL AND INVALIDATING

Some mentors may inadvertently make mentees feel small or inadequate by not respecting their views and experiences. Young people mention feeling pressured to meet the expectations and standards set by adults, which can be stifling.

FAILURE TO RELATE

Mentors sometimes struggle to relate to the experiences and challenges faced by young people, particularly when there are generational or cultural gaps. This disconnect can lead to advice that feels irrelevant or unhelpful to the mentees' specific situations.

TRUST

THINGS THAT BUILD TRUST

Dependability
Genuine interest and care
Mutual respect and understanding
Gradual build of trust, consistent positive interactions

TRUST YIELDS

Emotional Safety
Protection
Comfort in sharing

THINGS THAT DEGRADE TRUST

Risk of disappointment
Bad past experiences.

"My advisory teacher is a teacher that I can always go to. Because whenever I need something I know he's there to just listen to students, or he just wants to help in every way possible."

"I think what's kind of like scary for me is like, depending on somebody and then they disappointed me. Like, because that's inevitable. Like everybody's gonna disappoint you at one point."

"I don't trust people. So like if I talk to you, it's just that I see something in you that I can trust. But if I don't talk to you, I don't trust you enough because I read people a lot."

ADULTISM

""They want us to not make any mistakes. But that's how we're supposed to learn at the same time is to make our own mistakes."

"My mom used to tell me this thing when we had an argument: 'I was alive before you. I know more than you will ever know.'"

"Young kids can't have any stress, or depression or anxiety, or things like that, just because we're young, and we do not have the responsibilities of an adult."

"We just want adults to listen. Not always have, like, like to speak. You don't always have to have your opinion, vote for how we feel, and actually take in how you feel."

"I feel like a lot of mentors of people that have that type of knowledge, they don't really try to reach out to some young adults, because they think that they're incompetent, or they won't listen anyway."

"What they want for you is not always what you want for yourself."

OTHER FINDINGS

Thoughts on the value of a same-race mentor vs someone of a different race varied. Overall, a same race mentor was seen as a comfort but not critical.

“Sometimes it gives like, like, like someone with like a warm, comfort type of jawn. Like, like, like you're actually there for you kind of thing. They're like, they know what you went through and they grew up the same way as you.”

MENTORSHIP IS A FLUID CONCEPT

The concept of “mentors being exclusively from outside the home” doesn’t resonate for young people. Especially in the Black community, mentors are uncles, cousins, and brothers.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IMPACT MENTORING

Folks who seem to have really good relationships with parents are looking for mentors who present them with different connections, identities, and challenges. Folks who didn't were looking for emotional support.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PRETENDING TO RESPECT ADULTS UNTIL IT’S EARNED

Young people are pretending to respect adults, but we must make effort to earn their respect just like anyone else – respect is not automatically given

WHAT YAG SAID

What parts are most important from your perspectives that adults and programs act on?

- **Boundaries** are critical to mentoring relationships
- **Respect** goes both ways – must be reciprocal
 - Relationship agreements/norms should be explicitly established at the beginning of the mentoring relationship (to prevent misunderstandings of “disrespectful” interactions)
- **Mentors need support** – regular check-ins and counseling
- **Youth are ready for hard conversations** with adults, but adults are not
 - Adults are not willing to be vulnerable

WHAT YAG SAID

Why aren't kids asking adults/mentors for help?

- **Shame**, embarrassment
 - Don't want people to know I'm struggling
 - Negative stigma associated with needing help
 - Want to be independent
- **Scared**, lack confidence
- **Don't trust adults** to care, to actually help, to be capable of helping
 - May weaponize my vulnerability against me
 - Because an adult is not a good person to get help from
- Don't want to be **burden**
- Don't want to **stand out**
- It's easier to ask peers

WHAT YAG SAID

What was it like to be a part of this project?

What advice would you give adults and youth engaging in a project like this?

- Feels like I have a **purpose** in life
- I made an **impact** and never thought I would
- I liked **community bonding** with other group members
 - Felt **supportive** and **validating**

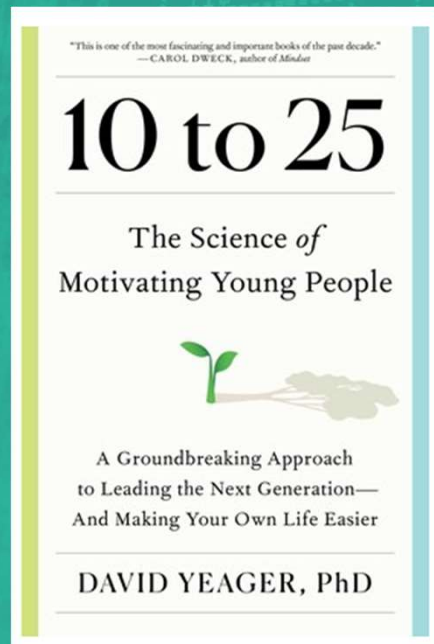
Adults

- Be **open-minded** about opinions or critiques others might have
- Don't show fear when it comes to conversations about **race, gender, and equality**

Youth

- Stay **open-minded**
- **Speak freely**
- Be ok with being **uncomfortable**
- Change won't come for you by keeping your experience to yourself

PRACTICAL TIPS



- Youth are motivated by status and respect from peers and adults
- They are awash with testosterone, but use their frontal lobe well
- Mentor Mindset = High demand, high support

Tips:

- 1 - Ask, Don't Tell
- 2 - Honor their status, don't invoke yours
- 3 - Validate and explain, don't diminish
- 4 - Presume Agency

Mentor Mindset Practices

- Transparency
- Questioning
- Stress
- Purpose
- Belonging

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

- Do you see the young people in your program in this data?
- What is surprising in the data?
- How do we as programs respond to this truth (assuming we're telling the truth) in a way that supports young people better?
- What changes do we need to make?



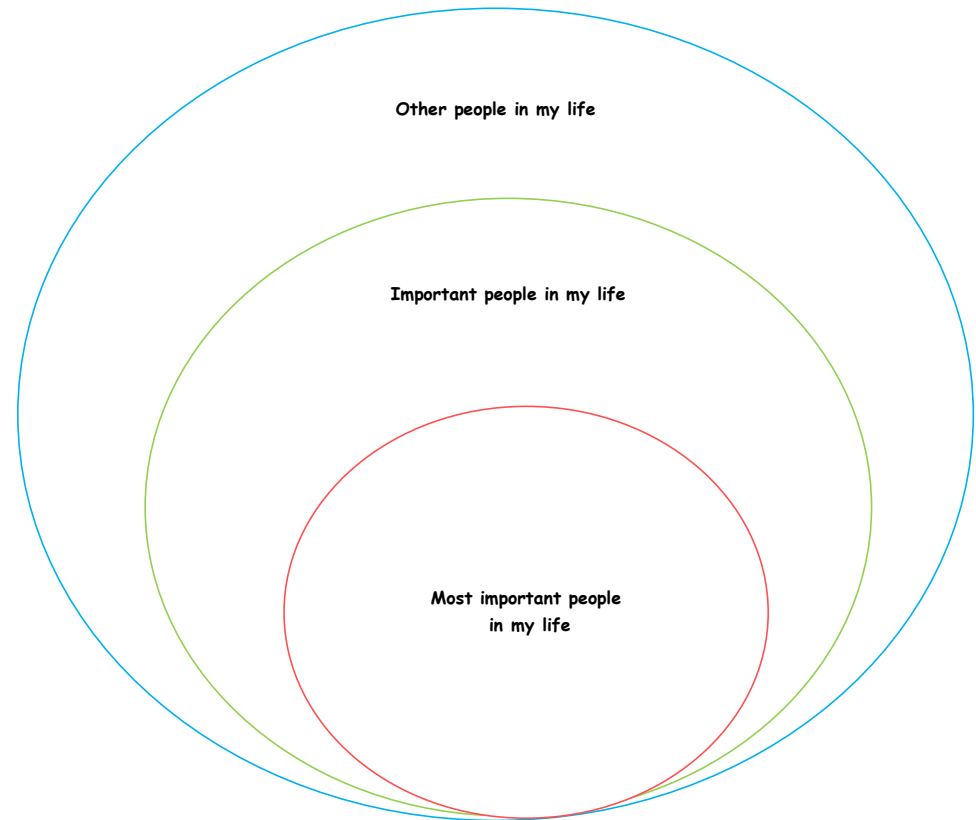


TMP Trainings



Making the Most of Mentoring

- Discuss the Power of Mentors
- SMART Goal Planning
- Discuss Social Capital
- How to Take Initiative



Becoming a Better Mentor

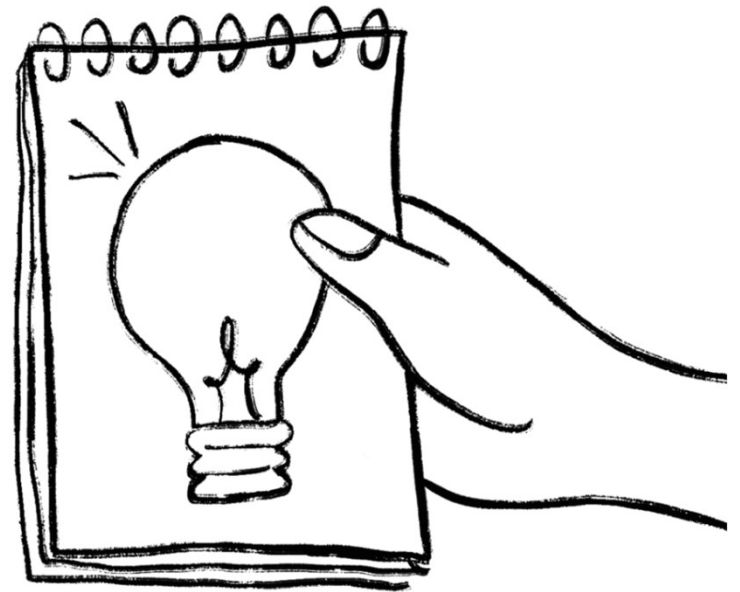
MENTOR's *Becoming a Better Mentor: Strategies to Be There for Young People* is a free resource written by experts in the field to benefit any adult looking to support young people. Full of real-world advice and evidence-based strategies, it provides mentors with tangible strategies to “be there” for young people in their various life journeys and teaches them about the core skills, key principles, and critical practices of mentoring, such as:

- mindsets and attitudes that lay the foundation for a strong mentoring relationship;
- basic information about youth development and typical mentoring relationship cycles; and
- critical skills and competencies to grow and refine to meet the needs of youth.



What are you doing?

- Please share how you are uplifting Youth Voice



Support the Mentoring Movement

Enjoy the Holiday Season – Take Care of Yourself

Save the Date: January 15, 2025, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Additional Learning Materials

- Getting started
- Weekly Tips
- Child Development
- Diversity Communications
- Building Healthy Relationships

Join the Conversation Online

Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @MentoringPGH

