

Impact of Incarceration on Children and Families

Handout 1A: Developmental Relationships

Having a high quality, caring relationship with a mentor, a development relationship, can serve as a protective factor for a youth facing the challenges of parental incarceration. Below are five characteristics of a developmental relationship. For each note one thing that a mentor might do.

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- Expressing Care Being present and paying attention to youth when you are with them; being warm and expressing positive feelings toward youth; investing time and energy to do things for and with the youth; showing interest in what is important to the youth and what they care about; being dependable – someone the youth can trust and count on.
 - Challenging Growth Inspiring youth to see the future possibilities; having expectations that the youth live up to their full potential; recognizing thoughts and abilities while encouraging the youth to strengthen them; holding the youth accountable for appropriate boundaries and rules.
 - Providing Support Encouraging efforts and achievements; guiding youth through practical assistance and feedback; modeling appropriate behaviors, reactions, and responses to situations and emotions.
 - Sharing Power Giving youth opportunity to identify their feelings and letting them know that many feelings such as fear, anger, sadness, and anxiety are normal; respecting youth’s opinions and considering them when making decisions; understanding and responding to a youth’s needs, interests, and abilities; and collaborating with you to accomplish goals and solve problems.
 - Expanding Possibilities Providing the opportunities youth need to explore their environment, learn, and grow while feeling safe, supported, and nurtured; exposing youth to new ideas, experiences and places; helping youth work through barriers and introducing growth opportunities.
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Handout 1B: Case Study

As you read the scenario below, think back to what you learned in training about the qualities of a developmental relationship.

Donald

Donald (mentee) is a 14- year old, bi-racial male living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with his mother, grandmother, and two young sisters (Tania who is 10 and Celia who is 4). The family moved in with maternal grandmother approximately 3 years ago when Celia's father went to prison. The family had been living with Miguel, who is Celia's father, for several years and the Donald was very close to him and upset when Miguel went to prison.

Since Miguel left the family things have not gone well. Mara, Donald's mother, works part time as a housekeeper and does not make enough money for their family to have their own home so they moved into grandmother's home. With the move to grandma's home, Donald Changed school, lost his friends, and could no longer be in the neighborhood Boy's and Girl's Club program. The neighborhood of the family currently lives in is rundown and is overrun with drug dealers, crime, and violence. The family tries not to be on the street in the evenings.

Donald would like to visit Miguel in prison, but his mother has told him they do not have the money for the bus trip to the prison. When Miguel was first placed in prison, he was in a facility close to Philadelphia but over the 3 years of incarceration he has been moved to four facilities and he is currently about 120 miles from the city. This is a difficult time for Donald, and he appears to be struggling at school and at home. His grades have fallen, and he is constantly fighting with his two younger sisters.

How could the qualities of a developmental relationship" be helpful for Donald?

What could you, as their mentor, do to convey these qualities?

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Handout 1C: Mentor Assessment

1. **Is it difficult to determine what a “typical” child of incarcerated parents would look like since the circumstances are unique and difficult to generalize? True or False**

2. **Youth with incarcerated parents and their families will often experience:**
 - a) Financial issues, relationship problems, violence
 - b) Loss, financial challenges, stress
 - c) Repeated incarceration of other family members
 - d) All of the above
 - e) None of the above

3. **Mentoring can be an effective intervention into the lives of children of incarcerated parents because of the potential for a positive adult relationship? True or false?**

4. **Increasingly, incarcerated parents are being held in facilities far from home which make visitation difficult. True or false?**

5. **Many children with incarcerated parents have had school problems such as poor grades, antisocial and delinquent behavior, and an increased likelihood of developing mental health problems. True or false?**

6. **What are the ways a mentor can positively impact their mentee?**
 - a) Express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, expand possibilities
 - b) Express care, solve problems, make healthy decisions for mentee
 - c) Provide stability, housing, clothing, transportation, and financial support

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Handout 1C: Mentor Assessment (Answer Key)

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