

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



**Table of Contents**

|                            |  |           |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>        |  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Section One</b>         | Mentoring Youth with Barriers                | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Section Two</b>         | Boundaries                                   | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Section Three</b>       | Session Content                              | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Section Four</b>        | Mentoring Guidelines and Helpful Information | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Contact Information</b> |  | <b>23</b> |

# Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



## Introduction

Welcome to the Virginia Career Works- Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service. The purpose of this handbook is to prepare you to successfully mentor a youth with barriers to employment. A successful mentorship is one in which both mentee and mentor have a trust-based relationship and are willing to learn from the experiences of the other. Throughout this handbook we will cover the following topics:

- What is the role of a Career Mentor?
- A guide for planning mentoring sessions.
- Understanding barriers your mentee may have and how to use an understanding of these barriers to have a successful mentorship.
- Implementing boundaries within a mentor-relationship.

...and a few other housekeeping items!

If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to Youth Program staff. Thank you for being a part of the journey of a Virginia Career Works youth participant!

### What is the Virginia Career Works Youth Program?

The Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program is operated by HumanKind, a non-profit serving children and families since 1903. Youth Program funding is delivered through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA is a landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.

The VCW Central Region Youth Program serves juniors and seniors in high school and out-of-school youth through age 24. Services provided include career navigation, supportive services, soft skills training, career mentoring, basic career services, work-based learning, financial literacy training, tutoring, leadership development services, occupational skills training, and more, to prepare participants to be work ready.

The primary goal of the delivery of the WIOA Youth 14 Program Elements by Virginia Career Works (VCW) Central Region is to **inform, support, train and connect** all program participants so that they may enter the program with barriers to earning a livable wage and exit as high-demand employees in Region 2000. The VCW Youth career mentoring service will support this goal by providing career mentoring with a specific focus on creating matches within industry sectors.

# Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



## What is a Career Mentor?

A Career Mentor is a working or retired professional matched with a youth program participant who is exploring or already working within the similar career pathway of the mentor. **The purpose of a Career Mentor is to increase the depth in which VCW youth participants can explore and grow within a specific career path.** Career Mentors mobilize young professionals to become high-demand employees in this region and beyond by sharing insight and expertise related to a specific occupation or career pathway. Because of this, all mentor-matches are made based on shared or similar occupations and career pathways. A Career Mentor meets once monthly with the mentee with questions in mind such as these:

- “What materials can I suggest to inform my mentee of the most up to date information on our industry?”
- “What certifications, trainings or credentials can I suggest to encourage the development of crucial skills?”
- “What types of internships could I suggest for experience, connections and stand out on a resume?”
- “Who can I connect my mentee with to begin developing a professional network?”
- “What can I share about my own personal experiences in this career pathway?”

The crucial key to being a successful career mentor is to use the time with your mentee to share the knowledge and wisdom you have gained during the time spent journeying through your career path. You have already worked so hard and learned so much along the way. We are so excited to pair you with a mentee who is eager to learn from your experiences. Thank you for your willingness to share all you have learned.



## Section 1: Mentoring Youth with Barriers

A successful mentorship is one in which both mentee and mentor trust one another and are willing to learn from the experiences of the other. Mentoring youth with barriers may provide some challenges in communication and understanding that could impact forming a meaningful relationship.

This section will explore some factors involved in engaging youth with barriers. The purpose of this section is to empower you to take an informed and mindful approach to your mentor-relationship. As a Career Mentor with less of a focus on holistic mentoring, we recognize understanding and engaging with your mentee as a whole person is still important.

The more opportunities available to understand one another, the more capacity we have to do better when it comes to forming meaningful relationships.

Let's start by defining barriers. Youth who are eligible for WIOA may have any of the following barriers through which they are eligible to receive WIOA services through the VCW Youth Program:

- Low income
- Basic skills deficient in math or reading
- Homeless/runaway
- In or aged out of foster care
- Pregnant/parenting
- Justice-involved
- Living with a disability
- English language learner
- School dropout or requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment.

“Do the best you can  
until you know better.  
Then when you know better,  
do better.”

*Maya Angelou*

The different barriers our program participants are experiencing are varied. Some participants may have one of these barriers, others may be experiencing several. By the time you are matched with a mentee, this individual may no longer be experiencing the barrier that made them eligible for the Youth Program.

It is likely any mentor will be paired with a mentee who has or is experiencing poverty. This is because so many participants are enrolled based on experiencing the low-income barrier. All youth who are paired with a mentor will be seeking information to assist with making significant life decisions. Considering this, it is important to provide potential mentors with information regarding the ways your economic environments can have an impact on decision-making.

We will not be disclosing any mentee enrollment information, eligibility criteria, or anything other than what the mentee includes in the connection. Not all program participants are low-income and no one person will fit perfectly into a particular framework, including you. We encourage you not to come into

Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



the mentor-relationship trying to predict or detect barriers. It is our priority to prepare you for mentoring youth with barriers, in general, and to prepare you with tools and resources in advance to utilize as needed.

**Mental Models and Hidden Rules of Social and Economic Class**

The content used in this section is directly from the Aha Process! Bridges out of Poverty material. The full resource can be found at this link: <http://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Study-Guide-Bridges-Out-of-Poverty.pdf>

*The Aha Process! Bridges out of Poverty material provides a framework for understanding how the economic realities of poverty, middle class, and wealth impact individuals, communities, systems, and structures. To positively impact the education and lives of individuals in poverty, we must explore the ways we think and behave. The Bridges out of Poverty information covered in this section offers a structure to help us assess the mindsets and world views we hold as individuals, institutions, and communities. It helps us define and visualize the experiences in economic-class environments to increase our understanding.*

When we judge ourselves against how others are doing, we are positioning ourselves on the ladder of social class. Economic class is different; **it's about how stable our life is.** Looking at economic class in a nonjudgmental framework allows us to respect one another and evaluate the resources and choices available to us that may not be available to others. This work is based on the premise that everyone should have the resources to envision and develop a positive future story.

**Tyranny of the Moment**

People living in poverty throughout the world, including the United States, are typically wrapped in the immediacy of trying to solve problems for today. It is the nature of life in poverty; tomorrow may not be a "given." In fact, even having a sustainable today may not be possible. This experience has been described as living in the "tyranny of the moment." The longer and deeper this moment-driven experience, the less likely it is that individuals will have access to or think in terms of "future story."

Many people live without the opportunity to make a difference in their communities. **The community is often reluctant to value the experience and contributions of those in poverty. For the individual in poverty, that sense of powerlessness often makes it hard to get much traction to make necessary personal changes.** Bridges out of Poverty work focuses on how a person can get to the point of having a future story through creating choices and developing his or her own power.

Mental Models and Hidden Rules are two tools created by and used in The Aha Process! Bridges out of Poverty material. These tools provide a framework for understanding how the economic realities of poverty, middle class, and wealth impact individuals, communities, systems, and structures. **Bridges out of Poverty teaches that we must be able to understand the hidden rules of another person and be able to suspend our mental models to successfully dialogue.**

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



The purpose of including the Bridges out of Poverty resources in this handbook is to increase the capacity to which mentors and mentees can have meaningful dialogue even if the frameworks are different.

NOTE: The rest of this module can be found at this link and most of the following information in this module can be found in the Bridges Out of Poverty book, Chapter 3.

<http://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Study-Guide-Bridges-Out-of-Poverty.pdf>

**Hidden Rules of Economic Class**

Hidden Rules are the unspoken cues or habits of a group that let you know if you do or do not belong. There are an unlimited number of hidden rules within different groups of people. **Here are some examples of subcategories and hidden rules:**

|                        | Poverty  | Middle   | Wealth   |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Food</b>            | Key Question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.                           | Key Question: Did you like it? Quality important.  | Key Question: Was it presented well? Presentation important.                                       |
| <b>Personality</b>     | Is for entertainment. Sense of humor is highly valued.                           | Is for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.                                    | Is for connections. Financial, political, social connections are highly valued.                    |
| <b>Money</b>           | To be used or spent.   | To be managed.   | To be invested.  |
| <b>Time</b>            | Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings or survival. | Future most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.                                | History and traditions most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition and decorum. |
| <b>Clothing</b>        | Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.              | Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into the norms of middle class. Label is important. | Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer is important.                      |
| <b>Social Emphasis</b> | Social inclusion of the people they like.  | Emphasis on self-sufficiency and self-governance.  | Emphasis is on social exclusion/exclusivity.   |

Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



**Reflections on Hidden Rules:**

- Hidden rules are about how well we navigate different situations and how we understand economic environments different from our own.
- Hidden rules come directly from the environment in which one lives. If one grows up in poverty, he or she will learn the hidden rules of poverty to survive.
- Our work is not about making everyone middle class but about giving people choices so they can widen their responses if they so choose.
- One set of rules is not necessarily better or worse than another.
- All of us bring with us the hidden rules of the class in which we were raised.
- We use hidden rules to thrive in the environment in which we find ourselves.
- Everyone, regardless of economic class, can benefit from knowing the hidden rules of the other two socioeconomic classes.

**What hidden rules do you most closely identify with?**

**Mental Models**

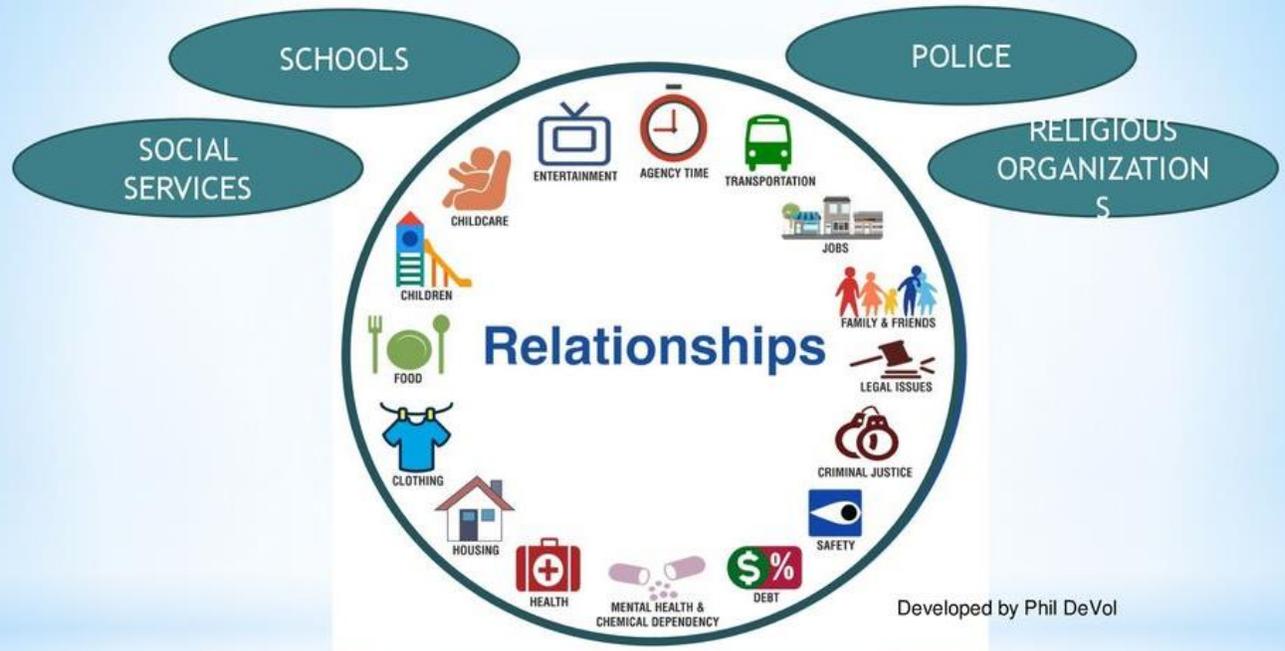
Also developed by Aha! Process Bridges Out of Poverty, a **mental model is an internal picture, two-dimensional drawing, or representation of information that aids us in taking abstract information to a concrete level.** Mental models are helpful when exploring the concrete experiences of people in generational poverty. Such models and images tend to exist below our awareness and can influence the way we think and act unless we are consciously aware.

Using mental models for planning, building relationships of mutual respect, and understanding the nature of how things work or don't work in poverty are a few of the tools organizations and individuals in poverty can use to create a real-time, authentic planning process.

**Please see the graphics on the following pages for examples of what a mental model looks like for someone experiencing poverty, middle class, or wealth.**



# Mental Model for Poverty



Developed by Phil DeVol

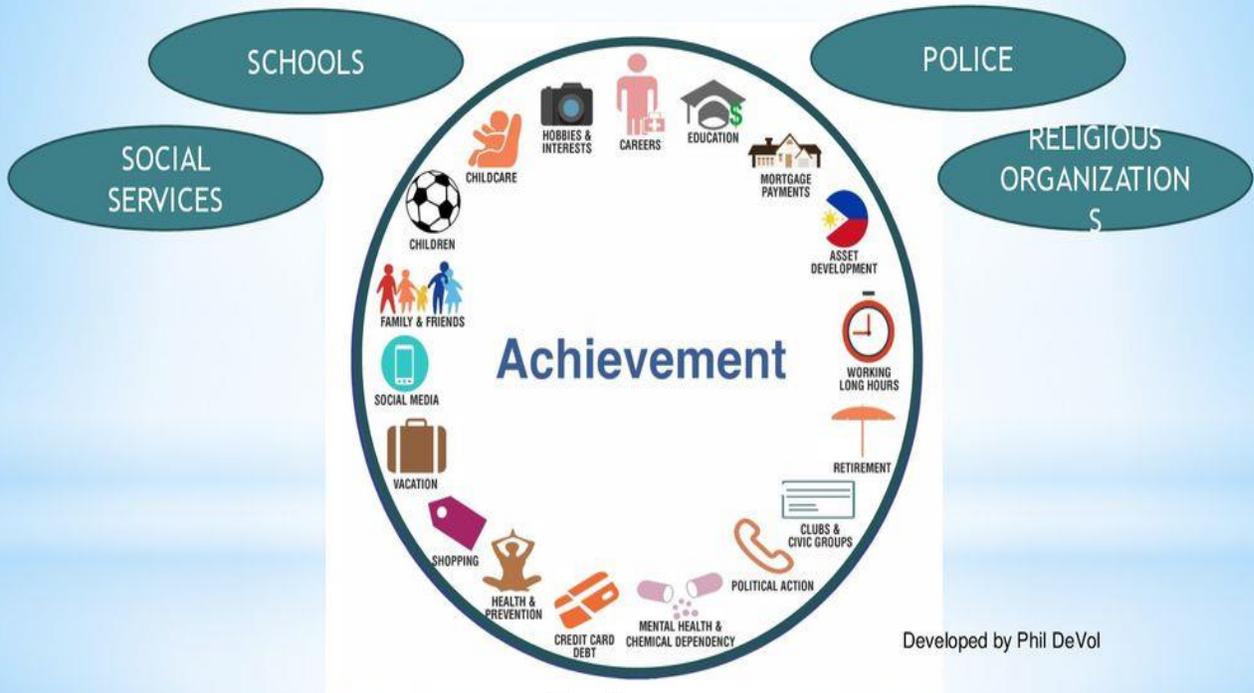
## Businesses

- Pawn shop
- Liquor store
- Corner store
- Rent-to-own
- Laundromat
- Fast food
- Check cashing
- Temp services
- Used car lots
- Dollar store

The word in the middle of the circle answers the question “**what is most important to you?**”  
 The icons answer the questions “**how is time spent?**” and “**how do you recreate?**”  
 The bullet points at the bottom answer the question “**what businesses are near you?**”  
 The bubbles on the outside answer the question “**what organizations are you involved in?**”



# Mental Model for Middle Class



Developed by Phil DeVol

## Businesses

- Shopping/strip malls
- Bookstores
- Banks
- Fitness centers
- Veterinary clinics
- Office complexes
- Coffee shops
- Restaurants/bars
- Golf courses

The word in the middle of the circle answers the question “**what is most important to you?**”  
 The icons answer the questions “**how is time spent?**” and “**how do you recreate?**”  
 The bullet points at the bottom answer the question “**what businesses are near you?**”  
 The bubbles on the outside answer the question “**what organizations are you involved in?**”



## Mental Model for Wealth

This applies to the wealthiest 1% of households in the United States—those with a net worth of \$7.8 million or more.



Developed by Ruby Payne

The word in the middle of the circle answers the question **“what is most important to you?”**  
The icons answer the questions **“how is time spent?”** and **“how do you recreate?”**

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



**Mental Models continued...**

We have often (not always) seen that many youth program participants who relate to the mental model for poverty will not choose anything over the primary relationships in their lives. This is because relationships are what is most important to the participant. A Youth Career Navigator coming from a middle-class mental model is often frustrated and bewildered to find that a participant may work for months toward a specific goal but willingly abandon it to assist a family member with an emergency (even something the Career Navigator would not view as an emergency). The Career Navigator is bewildered by this because when they ask themselves the question, “what is most important to you?” the answer is “achievement”. Mental models help demonstrate the ways in which we all may have different starting points, priorities, and resources.

You can find more information how the Getting Ahead™ process utilizes comprehensive and self-driven plans by logging on to [www.gettingaheadnetwork.com](http://www.gettingaheadnetwork.com).

**Using Hidden Rules & Mental Model tools as a Mentor:**

Here are a few tips that may be helpful for using the Hidden Rules and Mental Models tools whether you and your mentee share or have differing mental models:

1. **Refer to the Hidden Rules and Mental Model charts as a frame of reference for how your mentee may be viewing a certain goal, topic, or issue.** Use these tools to be curious and expand your level of understanding rather than place your mentee in a box.
  
2. **Ask Hidden Rule/Mental Model based questions to better understand your mentee’s priorities:**
  - What are your thoughts on saving money?
  - What types of goals do you set for yourself?
  - What types of goals have you had success achieving?
  - What type of first impression do you try to make when you meet someone?
  - In your opinion, what is the most valuable way to spend your time?
  - Whose opinion(s) matter the most to you?

Your mentee may respond to the question about goal setting by saying they prefer to take life one day at a time. If you are helping your mentee come up with some ideas for goals for professional development, start by suggesting a goal that can be accomplished within the next few days.

3. **Ask your mentee if you are heading in the right direction.** As you share advice and ideas and offer suggestions for goals and objectives, ask ongoing questions such as:

“Is this information helpful for you?”

“What could we change about this goal so you are most likely to achieve it?”

Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



“Is this plan we are making something that is realistic based on what you have going on this week?”

“Am I offering suggestions that seem attainable?”

As always, we want to hear from you! Please don’t hesitate to reach out to Youth Program staff to talk more about these resources.

**Trauma & Brain Development**

This section is brief but important to include. In any mentor-relationship there is always a possibility your mentee has a history of childhood trauma and/or neglect. **It is important to consider this, even without disclosure, so that you can enter the mentor relationship with compassion and attentiveness and an awareness of how this may impact the way they view the world, decision-making, relationships and more.**

Please take a few minutes to watch the **Childhood Trauma and the Brain** video provided by the **UK Trauma Council**. This short video is a powerful resource to describe how trauma may impact brain development and decision making. A link to this video will have already been provided to you along with this handbook. Please contact the Program Coordinator if you did not receive the video link or are unable to access the video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8>

According to the **Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development**, some risk factors and experiences that may result in the imbalance of the brain are as follows:

1. **Difficult Pregnancy** – stress (even minimal amounts negatively affects the baby’s neurochemistry), substance use during pregnancy, domestic violence, homelessness, lack of prenatal care, lack of optimal nutrients, etc. Many people mistakenly believe that babies are born as a blank slate, when in actuality, babies are affected long-term by the mother’s behaviors and mental health during pregnancy.
2. **Difficult Birth** – birth complications, emergency c-sections, premature birth, and lack of oxygen for any amount of time for the baby
3. **Early Hospitalization** – spending time in the NICU can have adverse effects due to unpredictable and sometimes painful touch from medical equipment, less time spent with the mother which results in less attachment opportunities like holding, rocking, singing, eye contact and touch.



www.TheCorkBoardOnline.com

Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK

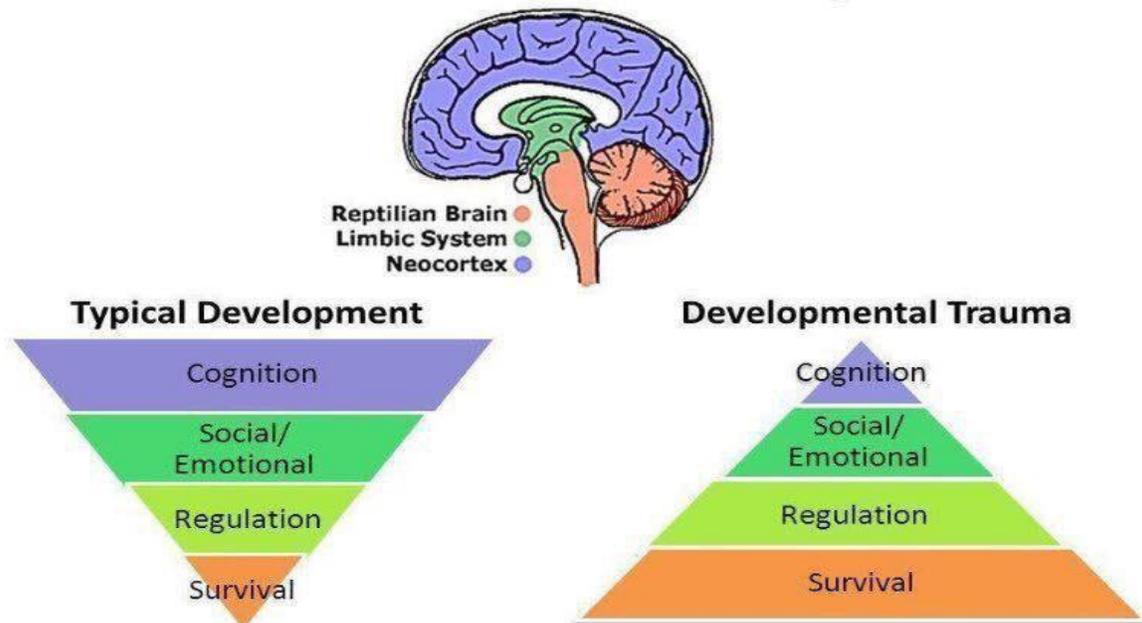


4. **Abuse** – Abuse sends the child the message, “I don’t like you.” This includes emotional/verbal abuse as well as physical/sexual abuse.
5. **Neglect** – Neglect sends the child the message, “You don’t exist.” This includes failure to meet the child’s physical and/or emotional needs.
6. **Trauma** – Trauma includes any event in which the child experiences an event in which she believes there is a risk of injury or death to herself or others and feels extreme fear and helplessness.

Your mentee may have developed strategies designed for survival that they have used over the course of their whole lives. The trust-based relationship developed with your mentee by setting expectations and boundaries can be a powerful motivator for an individual to trade in survival strategies for healthy decision making.

**Please Note:** If you suspect your mentee is currently experiencing trauma or neglect, please inform the Program Coordinator of these concerns as soon as possible. If you suspect your mentee has a history of childhood trauma or neglect and would like more resources and support, please reach out to the Program Coordinator or Career Navigator. We have some incredible partners and will make referrals and provide resources as is appropriate, needed and requested.

## Trauma & Brain Development



Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio Dept. of Education

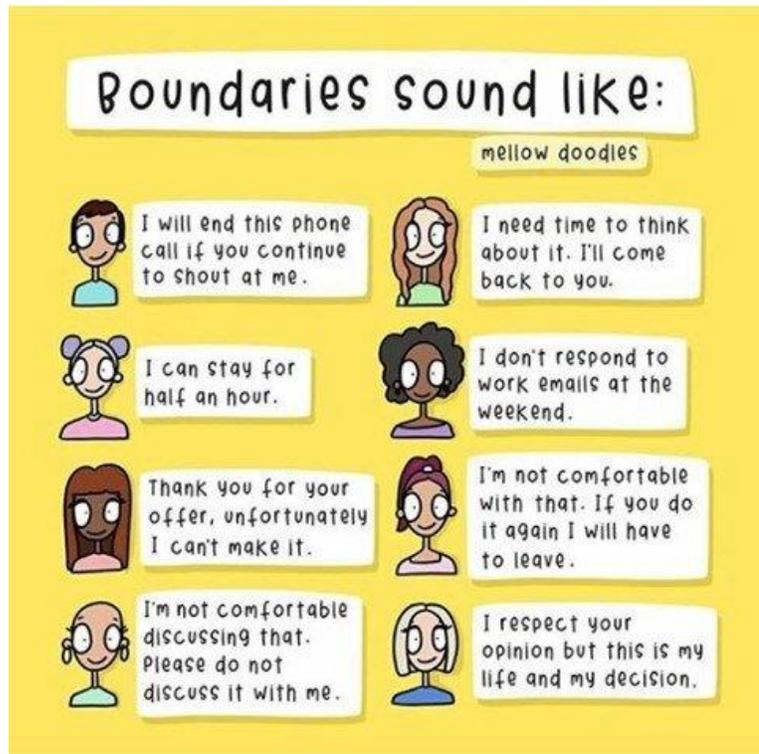


## Section 2: Boundaries

Setting boundaries with your mentee is a way to exponentially increase the value of the mentor-relationship.

Boundaries help to create the foundation for the development of a trust-based relationship. You can be a safe and trustworthy adult by being consistent and demonstrating follow-through.

The boundaries you incorporate as a daily routine have likely been a part of your professional growth and success. Modeling healthy boundaries for your mentee, such as good communication and time management are just as important as talking about the benefits of these behaviors.



Boundaries are important to write down, communicate and hold to. If you have set a boundary that you would like to change or adjust, this should be communicated to your mentee and the Career Navigator. Whenever possible, negotiate and set boundaries with your participant. This will increase the likelihood of you both agreeing on the benefits of the chosen boundaries.

**The following are suggestions of standard boundaries to implement in your mentor-relationship:**

### **Communication Boundaries:**

Setting boundaries around communication is an invitation to your mentee to join you in healthy behaviors. **The following are some ideas of communication boundaries to think through ahead of time and prepare to set with your mentee:**

- I will not:
  - address conflict via text message.
  - answer messages after 9 pm.
  - reply to communication on weekends.
  - 'sweep things under the rug' aka leave conflict unaddressed/unresolved.

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



- I will:
  - resolve conflict face-to-face when possible.
  - call you and leave a message if I need to cancel.
  - provide a timely response to questions.
  - give constructive feedback.

As a trust-based relationship is built, take the time to be clear and up front about secondary expectations outside of those set through agreements. This has the potential to have a great positive impact. It is important for a mentor to communicate some of the following statements and ask some of the following questions:

- “If emergencies arise or I am forced to reschedule, you can expect me to let you know as far ahead of time as possible. What can I expect from you if you can’t make it to our session?”
- “You can expect me to address and work through a miscommunication. I won’t shut down or disappear. What can I expect from you if we have a miscommunication?”
- “You can expect me to share the best advice I have and give you ideas about how to pursue your career path. What can I expect from you when it comes to pursuing goals and your career path?”
- “You can expect me to communicate via (insert form of communication here). I do not respond to my phone on weekends but if you send me a message I will respond the morning of the next business day. In what timeframe can I expect you to respond to me? What is the best way to reach you?”

**Purpose-Driven Boundaries:**

- Reserve the time with your mentee for things related to providing career-related advice, suggesting resources, encouraging career growth opportunities, challenging growth in soft skills and providing examples of a day in the life of a professional within your field.
- If your mentee asks for more generalized mentoring, encourage them to let their Career Navigator know that this is an interest. The Youth Program can refer them to additional mentoring services.
- Reserve your time with your mentee for monthly, scheduled meetings. Please do not meet needs outside of the guidelines of the mentoring sessions. If your mentee reaches out to you, please direct them back to the Career Navigator.

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



**Boundaries to Empower:**

The following are helpful rules of thumb:

- Do not do FOR what you can do WITH.
- Do not do for your mentee what they can do on their own.
- Share power with your mentee: *establish boundaries, goals, objectives and make decisions together.*

As you set and adjust boundaries throughout the time with your mentee, we encourage you to often **take the time to look for the need behind the behavior**. If your mentee is not keeping boundaries by arriving late, not participating in the development of goals, or seemingly non-responsive, there may be an unmet need behind this behavior. Example: A mentee may appear to be indifferent or is demonstrating avoidance during a session. The unmet need may be a lack of confidence or belief in themselves to be able to succeed. This could be related to undisclosed depression or anxiety, lack of history of experiencing accomplishments or success, family history of abuse or neglect, etc. Please ask the Career Navigator for support.

These boundaries and practices work together to provide a safe place for two important parts of growing: success and failure.

**Remember, the Virginia Career Works Youth Team is here to support you!**

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



### **Section 3: Session Content**

The purpose of mentoring sessions is for your mentee to gather information, resources, and guidance and learn more from you about the specifics of your shared career pathway.

The sessions are a time for you to share knowledge and lived experiences as well as to ask challenging questions and suggest goals and objectives. Some of this knowledge and lived experience may include networking advice, how to take strategic steps within an industry, tips on becoming assertive, when to prioritize experience vs. education, and more. All conversations will come back to highlighting what you have learned from within your industry and from lived experience as an employee, manager, hiring manager...whatever your experiences may be.

#### **Initial Session**

After you have completed this handbook and have been preliminarily matched with a mentee, the VCW Youth Program staff will facilitate scheduling the initial session. Your mentee's Career Navigator or the Youth Program Coordinator will attend and facilitate the initial session. A parent/guardian is invited and highly encouraged but not required to attend. During this session, the Youth Program staff will walk through expectations outlined in the match agreement. During this time, the CN will guide the conversation of expectations surrounding communication, commitment levels, and what each person hopes to get out of the relationship and will also encourage any questions, comments, and concerns.

The participant will play the primary role in this session by sharing information such as career pathway, long-term and short-term goals and objectives, and interest and aptitude. A successful mentor-relationship is one that grows naturally over time. If your mentee decides to share additional information such as personal challenges this may be helpful as you suggest resources and goals/objectives; however, this is not something any mentee is required to do.

Within one week of the initial session Youth Program staff will reach out to both mentor and mentee to give the opportunity to sign the match agreement. At this time, either party may decline to move forward with the match. Questions may be asked and documented pertaining to why the mentor or mentee did not agree to the match. The purpose of these questions is to ultimately create a successful match with someone who is a better fit. These questions do not need to be answered as a requirement. In this case, the process of connecting the mentee and mentor with a different match will continue if desired.

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



**Ongoing Session Format**

How you and your mentee go about structuring sessions is up to both of you. Here are just a few ideas for session content. Feel free to mix, match and come up with your own ideas with your mentee:

1. During your first session after the match has been agreed upon, talking through what you both would like to get out of this mentor-relationship. Ask questions to get to know each other. Set goals. Decide what the next session will look like.
2. Come up with recommendations and mini challenges to help your mentee progress within this career path. Discuss these ideas and come up with SMART goals. Check on progress made during each session.
3. Discuss types of professional connections your mentee should plan to make. We encourage you to offer to make professional connections as the year progresses and trust is built. Give recommendations on how to reach out to and interact with these different professional connections. Challenge your mentee to come up with an elevator/networking pitch to share during the next session. Create networking goals.
4. Recommend resources, articles, books, webinars, trainings, and more. Share why these are useful and plan for when and how to access these different resources. Challenge your mentee to read or watch a certain resource and plan to discuss the content during the following session.
5. Ask and share answers to the mentor-mentee questions provided by the Youth Program. Pick new questions for the next session at the end of each session so you can both think through answers ahead of time. These questions will be provided once a match is made. If you'd like to review them beforehand, please let us know and we'll send them your way.

## Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



Sessions might be choppy or a little awkward at first. That's ok! Authentic relationships are hard to develop, even when you see someone regularly, let alone once-a-month. When in doubt, share from the heart, ask questions with genuine interest, and ask the Youth Program staff for tips and ideas at any time.

**Please note:** if desired by both mentor and mentee, you are welcome to meet with frequency greater than once monthly and for longer than one

calendar year. Please do not make this change without communicating with the Program Coordinator. The mentoring agreement should be updated to include these details. A Career Navigator or parent/guardian must also be available to attend sessions for youth under the age of 18.



Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



## Section 4: Helpful Guidelines and Information

### Mentor-Mentee Matching

The Youth Program Coordinator and the Career Navigator will work collaboratively to create matches based on applications and interviews. Matches are based also on comfort level with specific age/gender, application content and interviews, industry sector/professional experience, interest and aptitude and any other relevant information. You will be matched with a participant who is pursuing the career path you are currently working in or retired from. They may also be exploring career options and have a high interest and aptitude in this field.

Both mentor and mentee will complete a **Connection Worksheet** to be submitted to one another prior to the initial session. Both mentor and mentee will have time to review the worksheet prior to the initial session. This worksheet will also be reviewed as a part of the initial session. Both the mentor and mentee can request a different match after reviewing the worksheet prior to the initial session. This request will be respected. Questions will be asked and documented pertaining to why the mentor or mentee did not want to move forward as a part of the process of ultimately creating a successful match; however, these questions do not need to be answered as a requirement. Both mentor and mentee are encouraged to contact the Program Coordinator with any concerns that they have not been placed in a match that can be successful.

### Frequency and Duration

The mentoring relationship will last for one calendar year. The frequency of meetings will be once-monthly for one hour. The mentor and mentee may extend the duration of the program. If you would like to request an extension, regardless of whether you are unsure if your mentee wants the same thing, please speak with your Career Navigator about this before asking your mentee. The Career Navigator and Youth Program Coordinator will facilitate all extensions. If this decision is made, the agreements will be amended.

### Meeting Locations

Due to the consideration of COVID-19, virtual sessions via Microsoft Teams or FaceTime will be encouraged as the optimal platform for meeting. Virtual sessions will also be encouraged to connect mentors and mentees who live in various parts of the region and who may not have reliable transportation and would not be able to be a sustainable match without a virtual platform.

Mentor pairs may choose to meet in person. The exact meeting location(s) should be determined at the beginning of the mentoring relationship and listed in the agreement. Meeting locations must be a public location such as the following: restaurant, coffee shop, library, place of worship, school/university,

## Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



Virginia Career Works, the office space of the mentor. Meeting locations should not be any of the following: the residences of either mentee or mentor, any private residence, personal vehicles, private, undisclosed locations.

### **Career Navigator Role**

The Career Navigator (CN) will attend the initial session for all mentees. The CN will continue to attend sessions for all mentees under 18 if a parent/guardian cannot be in attendance. The CN will not attend sessions for mentees 18 years or older, other than the initial session. During the initial session, the Career Navigator will explain the role they will fill as primarily being present to eliminate 1:1 meeting between mentor and mentee for those under 18. The CN will also explain that they will be taking notes to be able to debrief sessions with the mentee later to encourage action items in between sessions based on the content of the meeting.

### **Mentees under 18**

Career Navigators or a parent/guardian will attend all sessions involving participants who are under 18 years of age. If sessions are virtual and in the home of the participant, a parent/guardian will sign the agreement stating that they are present in the home during sessions and have access to hear and see what is happening during virtual meetings. If the Career Navigator is the present adult during sessions, the CN's name will be on the match agreement; however, the parent/guardian will still be responsible to sign off on the agreement. A Career Navigator is not required to participate in the sessions and may only do so to help facilitate better communication or assist with stuck points.

### **Participants 18+**

Participants 18+ do not need to attend mentoring sessions with the supervision of a parent/guardian or Career Navigator. Participants 18+ will be paired with mentors of the same gender.

### **Evaluations**

Mentors are requested to participate in quarterly evaluations to assess the quality of both the mentor-relationship and the mentoring service. The Program Coordinator will provide the mentor with the evaluations. The evaluations pertaining to the quality of the service will have the option to be anonymous and are not required.

### **Conflict, Concerns, Absences Termination**

In case of any conflict, concerns or unmet expectations by the Youth Program or mentee, the mentor should reach out to the Program Coordinator immediately to express concerns and request support. As this is a volunteer opportunity, the mentor may terminate the mentor relationship at any time; however, the mentor is asked to communicate with the Program Coordinator and give time for resolution and should seek to avoid instant termination.

## Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK



### **Disclosure of a Disability**

If you are living with a documented disability, you may choose whether to disclose this information to your mentee, including what and how much you share if you choose disclosure. For mentees, disability information is not included in the application and disclosure is not required to receive the services of a career mentor.

### **Accommodations**

The Youth Program will help you plan for a location and time for mentoring sessions that is accessible for you. If you need accommodations at any time during participation in the mentoring program, please contact the Career Navigator or the Program Coordinator for assistance.

The Central Virginia Workforce Development Board and Virginia Career Works Lynchburg/Lynchburg Youth Center are equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The full Equal Opportunity Provisions policy can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.vcwcentralregion.com/wp-content/uploads/AP-201-EO-Equal-Opportunity-Provisions-12-17.docx>

**Virginia Career Works Central Region Youth Program  
Career Mentoring Service: MENTOR HANDBOOK**



## **Contact Information**

Thank you for participating as a Virginia Career Work Career Mentor. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback at any time please reach out to the Career Navigator who is working with your mentee or utilize the contact information below:

**Sarah Grant**

Youth Program Coordinator  
sarah.grant@vcwcentral.com  
(434) 485-2140

**Keith Cook**

Director of Workforce Operations  
keith.cook@vcwcentral.com

**Virginia Career Works Central Region**

3125 Odd Fellows Road  
Lynchburg, Virginia 24502  
Phone (434) 455-5940

## **Thank You!**