18. Cross-age Peer Mentoring

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INTRODUCTION

Centuries ago, before compulsory public education and when both parents' work demands left little time for them to supervise their children during the day, older siblings and peers commonly were assigned the duty of supervising younger children and in many ways serving as mentors. Those days are gone. The typical arrangement today, whether in day care or in a public school setting, is for youth of the same age to interact with one another either in unsupervised settings or under the supervision of an adult. These days, unless children have the good fortune to have the support of an older sibling, they are unlikely to have many opportunities to interact with their older and wiser peers.

For most people, the words "mentor to youth" likely conjure the image of an adult providing wisdom and guidance to a younger person. Indeed, in virtually every other chapter in this handbook, the mentors are adults. Generally adults are viewed as the primary and most important socializing agents in children's lives, but that commonly held belief recently has come under question by researchers arguing that peers are the primary socializing agents of youth (Harris, 1998). In fact, researchers have suggested that there are systematic processes by which peers socialize peers (Kindermann, 1993) and that when left to their own devices this socialization can result in adverse consequences (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999).

But peer influences need not be negative. Although the current zeitgeist regarding peer influence is that of negative peer pressure, there is a growing literature indicating positive effects of peer interactions, particularly when adults carefully structure such interaction. For example, there is a burgeoning literature on same-age peers helping their peers, either as counselors, mediators, or tutors, and the benefits of cross-age tutoring are fairly well established at this point (King, Staffeiri, & Adelgais, 1998; Morey & Miller, 1993; Powell, 1997; Topping, & Ehly, 1998). However, almost non-existent is information on the effects of older youth, typically

adolescents, mentoring younger youth, typically children—that is, cross-age peer mentoring. This chapter presents an overview of what is known about peer mentoring, both in terms of research and practice, as well as what theories may be most instructive for guiding future efforts at designing, coordinating, and evaluating peer mentoring programs. Indeed, given the importance and yet the paucity of theory-driven research in mentoring, in general, and peer mentoring, in particular, I attempt to introduce and then stay close to several theoretical models as I review extant research and discuss practice issues. First, however, I begin by providing a definition of peer mentoring to narrow the focus of this chapter.

Cross-Age Peer Mentoring: A Definition

Peer mentoring involves an interpersonal relationship between two youth of different ages that reflects a greater degree of hierarchical power imbalance than is typical of a friendship and in which the goal is for the older youth to promote one or more aspects of the younger youth's development. Peer mentoring refers to a sustained (long term), usually formalized (i.e., program-based), developmental relationship. The relationship is "developmental" in that the older peer's goal is to help guide the younger mentee's development in domains such as interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and conventional connectedness and attitudes (e.g., future motivation, hopefulness). This definition of peer mentoring distinguishes it from other peer interventions in terms of age parameters, curricular or activity content, and program goals.

A first important parameter is the age difference between mentees and mentors. To be consistent with common definitions of mentoring, the mentor needs to be an "older and wiser" peer. Ideally the mentor is someone the mentee can look up to, admire, and even idealize. This may be greatly facilitated when the mentor is a few years older than the mentee. Thus, both terms, peer and cross-age, are important. Including the term "peer" with cross-age mentoring is important because it conveys that the dyad consists of two peers within the same generation. The

term "cross-age mentoring" alone does not distinguish peer from intergenerational mentoring (see Taylor, LoSciuto, & Porcellini, this volume). Using the terms "cross-age peer mentoring," rather than "peer mentoring" or "cross-age mentoring," helps to establish a distinction between cross-age peer mentoring and other peer interventions.

The term peer mentoring often is used rather loosely to refer to a situation in which one youth helps a same-age peer. Unlike cross-age peer mentoring, peer mentoring, peer helping, and peer counseling are used (often interchangeably) to indicate a same-age peer relationship in which one peer helps another with personal problems or academic deficits. Quite commonly "peer mentoring" has been used as a synonym for peer counseling, peer tutoring, or peer helping programs. However, peer counseling and helping (like peer mediation) connote and involve a greater emphasis on assessing and remediating interpersonal, psychological, or academic deficits than is typical of a mentoring relationship (Morey & Miller, 1993). Peer tutoring and mentoring commonly also have been used interchangeably, which is unfortunate because rarely is peer tutoring of sufficient duration or emotional intensity to qualify as a mentoring relationship. In contrast, the characteristic content of cross-age peer mentoring is less prescriptive, remedial, or task focused than in these other peer interventions, and while cross-age peer mentoring can be structured, the interactions should not be purely didactic or overly instrumental.

In summary, the first step in the establishment of peer mentoring as an intervention that is distinct from other peer approaches is establishing a clear definition. The definition of cross-age peer mentoring provided here makes clear that cross-age peer mentors and mentees differ in age and that the mentor's focus is not on interpersonal or academic deficiencies (as in peer helping, counseling, and tutoring) but rather on the facilitating youth development more generally.

Prevalence of Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Programs

It is difficult to determine which peer approaches are used the most. Unquestionably, peer tutoring has been the most thoroughly researched with both outcome and process studies reported in the literature since the 1970s. There also are several well-known peer tutoring programs, such as the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, which claims to have worked with "more than 129,000 children, families, and educators" (Coca-Cola Youth Partnership, 2002). Another is the Chicago-based *Time Dollar Tutoring* program which reportedly has provided 480,000 hours of instructional time in the Chicago schools through their program (Washington-Steward, 2000) and is now operated in seven other states and in Washington, DC. There also are large-scale peer helping organizations, such as *Peer Assistance and Leadership* (PAL®, 2004), which reflect variants of peer tutoring (Topping & Ehly, 1998). *Learning Helpers* (National Helpers Network, 1998) is a similar peer helping program that has 37 state organizations and 14 international affiliates (NPHA, 2004). Inconsistent with our definition of cross-age peer mentoring, these programs include one or more of the following: short-term relationships, primary emphasis is on problem or academic skill remediation, and/or involve same-age peers.

The prevalence of cross-age peer mentoring is even more difficult to determine. Many cross-age peer mentoring programs are coordinated by school counselors or teachers and not connected to agencies that report their activities. The programs that are reported in the literature often are not clearly differentiated from other peer interventions. For example, "the peer programs that the National Peer Helpers Associations support have various names such as peer helping, peer counseling, peer ministry, peer education, peer leadership, peer health education, peer mediators, peer tutoring, peer mentoring and other names" (NPHA, 2004, ¶ 4). Similarly, the General Accounting Office (2004) recently reported on 122 student mentoring programs that were federally funded by the Department of Education between 2002 and 2004. Of the 122

programs, 46 included "school-age" mentors, but only 3 enlisted solely "school-age" mentors, and of the 46 programs it is unclear if these were same- or cross-age peer mentoring programs.

Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) recently has begun a program called High School Bigs, which may provide the best example of a nationally known cross-age peer mentoring program. The High School Bigs are neither focused solely on improving specific academic skills (e.g., via tutoring or classroom "helping" presentations) nor on addressing specific problems, which makes this a true "mentoring" program. In 2003, BBBS provided mentors to approximately 95,000 youth in schools in the U.S. Of these, 39,000 student mentees worked with BBBS adolescent mentors who are called the High School Bigs (Hansen, personal communication, July 18, 2004). If the rising number of BBBS school-based, child-with-adolescent-mentor programs is any predictor, cross-age peer mentoring may emerge as a one of the most widespread mentoring approaches in the near future.

The purpose of the rest of this chapter is to overview theory, research, and practice that bear specifically on cross-age peer mentoring. In the Theory section that follows, theories are introduced which may illuminate the effects, both positive and potentially negative, of cross-age peer mentoring programs on mentees *and* mentors. In the subsequent Research section, the limited available research on cross-age peer mentoring is reviewed in terms of the previously introduced theories. Some findings from peer tutoring and peer helping research regarding potential moderators and mediators that cross-age peer mentoring researchers could explore are presented as well. The Practice section includes practice points borrowed from adult mentoring, other peer intervention, and extant cross-age peer mentoring research. The concluding section provides a synthesis and a set of recommendations for future research and practice.

THEORY

Unlike most other forms of mentoring discussed in this handbook, there is as much interest in the program effects on the mentors as on the mentees in cross-age peer mentoring. For this reason, theories are needed that not only explain the likely outcomes for mentees but for the mentors as well. Because the outcomes of peer mentoring for both mentees and mentors may be tied to what these youth bring to mentoring by way of inherent motivations, prior experience, and disposition, both theories of development and socialization are introduced.

Developmental Theories

Damon (1984) reveals the potential for Vygotsky's, Piaget's, and Sullivan's developmental theories to guide research on peer interventions. The three theories share an emphasis on how social context interacts with cognitive development and how important social perspective-taking capabilities may shape and be shaped by social interaction. Each of these theories also highlights three of the key elements of Rhodes' (this volume) theory about the factors that influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships for youth: cognitive development, empathy, and role modeling.

One of the arguments against using youth as mentors is that they may not be emotionally or cognitively mature enough to provide empathy and understanding to a younger peer. However, research suggests that older siblings regularly serve as natural mentors and make considerable contribution to their younger siblings' social and cognitive development by providing supportive contexts for their younger siblings to discuss family and extrafamilial issues (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2003; Tucker, McHale, & Crouter, 2001). By modeling empathy and perspective taking, older siblings provide their younger siblings' opportunities to develop their own empathic and perspective-taking skills (Howe & Ross, 1990).

According to Selman's (1980) neo-Piagetian theory of social perspective taking, there is a developmental progression in the complexity with which youth are able to take the perspectives

of others into account. In a mentoring relationship, mentees and mentors who differ significantly in age are likely view the world differently and differ in their empathy skills. Selman's theory also reveals the interrelationships between cognitive perspective-taking ability and interpersonal behavior (see Selman, 2003)—that is, how the complexity of youths' thinking guides their behaviors and thereby influences the course of their relationships with others. The elementary-aged children tend to act impulsively because they have only a limited awareness that their wants differ from others'. During the later elementary years, children become better able to articulate their point of view. By the end of elementary school most youth are able to hold in their mind another's point of view—that is, fully understand another's wants, needs, and feelings. By the high school years, most youth become able to see their needs and wants from a perspective embedded within their relationships. This last cognitive-developmental advance ushers in the possibility of a developing a "chumship" (Sullivan, 1953). Typically the chumship is the first relationship in which middle or high school aged youth fully disclose their inner life to a peer and trust that their chums will honor their secrets and not betray them. Out of this chumship can develop an appreciation for "the relationship" as well as a greater sense of caring for and trust in one's peers. In the absence of an older sibling to provide such opportunities for the development of perspective taking, empathy, and a prosocial orientation (Van Lange, Otten, De Bruin, & Joireman, 1997), cross-age mentors are in a unique position to fill this role for younger children.

A potential advantage of cross-age peer mentoring over same-age peer programs is that program effectiveness is less constrained by the level of the helper's cognitive maturity (Gibbs, Potter, Barriga, & Liau, 1996). The older mentor/younger mentee structure may simply provide better leverage for promoting competence, similar to be benefits younger children receive from supportive older siblings. Vygotsky's (1978) *zone of proximal development* refers to this phenomenon whereby children are able to access or perform more complex skills (i.e., thoughts,

emotions, behaviors) when "under the guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, p. 86). Although almost always, and perhaps inappropriately, this zone is used by educators to refer to the ways that adults can facilitate children's development, Vygotsky's clearly refers to the ways in which older peers foster younger children's development by encouraging, modeling, and supporting the practice of new skills.

Theories of Peer Influence: (Peer) Group Socialization Theory

Consistent with Vygotsky's view, some researchers argue that children's peers are one another's primary socializers and cultural ambassadors. One of these, Harris (1998) summarizes her "group socialization theory" as "the theory that children identify with a group consisting of their peers, that they tailor their behavior to the norms of their group, and that groups contrast themselves with other groups and adopt different norms" (p. 264). She attributes a range of diverse developmental outcomes, from delinquent behavior to academic success, to children's choice of and subsequent identification with specific peer groups. At best, she argues, adults provide contexts or opportunities for such identification to occur, but they have less influence than peers because from the child's point of view the goal of development is "wanting to have higher status—wanting to be like a bigger kid….It is in [children's] equating of maturity with status that makes little children want to behave, speak, and dress like bigger ones" (p. 267). According to Harris (1998), older peers are enormously powerful influencing agents.

Children naturally sort themselves into peers groups, for better or worse. Adults also sort children into groups, often programmatically (e.g., through interventions and classroom assignments), also for better and for worse. Kindermann (1993) found children's attitude and engagement in school (i.e., connectedness to school) was highly predictive of the peer group they selected, and when children moved in and out of well-defined peer groups, each move resulted in the children identifying with the newly chosen group's attitude toward school. Conversely, even

when interventions are intended to be helpful and facilitate prosocial behavior and attitudes, when anti-social or delinquent youth are aggregated, their goal of modeling one another's behaviors and attitudes can trump the well-intended efforts of adults (Patterson, Dishion, & Yoerger, 2000). Therefore, the attitudes that children bring to school or to an intervention program may lead to birds of a feather flocking together unless the context can be shaped for the better (preferably by peers) to reward children, especially underachieving or delinquent children, for their academic successes and socially skilled (e.g., caring, empathic) behavior.

Theories of Adolescent Mentor's Motivations

Given that older peers are powerful socializing agents, the motivations and pre-existing dispositions of adolescent mentors may weigh heavily on the outcomes of cross-age peer mentoring for the mentees (as well as for the mentors). Theories about youths' motivations for mentoring are intimately linked to the ways in which mentors expect to benefit from mentoring.

Functional theory of volunteerism. The functional theory of volunteerism (Clary et al. 1998; Stukas & Tanti, this volume) posits a variety of functions that may be served by mentoring as a form of volunteerism. These functions include satisfying the desire (a) to gain career-related experience (career function), (b) to reduce one's own negative feelings (protective function), (c) to strengthen one's connections with others or to expand one's social network (social function); (d) to grow and develop personally from the experience (enhancement function), (e) to learn more about others and the world (understanding function); or (f) to act on personally held values such as helping others or supporting a cause in which one believes (values function).

There also may be developmental factors that contribute to youth mentors' motivations. Given that identity development (Erikson, 1968) are central developmental prerogatives for most adolescents and are achieved through personal and social exploration, adolescent mentors may be most motivated to mentor as a way of meeting social or enhancement needs and less

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motivated to mentor as a way of achieving some career function. Despite their more complex perspective-taking skills in general, adolescents' self-preoccupation or "adolescent egocentrism" (i.e., "navel staring") also may increase the likelihood that they volunteer to distract themselves from their own problems (protective function). Indeed, adolescents' inchoate perspective-taking skills and tendency to be preoccupied with their social role within smaller social circles may limit their ability to step back and see larger social issues. This may make them less likely to mentor as a way to learn more about the world (understanding function). Gender may moderate the impact of these motivations. For example, both the tendency for girls to seek greater degrees of connectedness and the socialization of girls to become caregivers (Chodorow, 1978) may increase the likelihood that girls mentor for social reasons, role- or career-related reasons, or as an extension of the socialized value to help others. This may help explain why children who are more prosocial have been found have more female older siblings (Van Lange et al. 1997).

Social interest. Many of the functions described above can reflect temporal motivations—such as curiosity about careers options, need for psychological relief, or desire for greater connectedness. More enduring personality traits, such as empathy, altruism, or social interest, also may contribute to cross-age peer mentors' competence or readiness. Social interest reflects one's ability to be empathic and to identify with others (Adler, 1964). Because empathy and identification reflect cognitive functions requiring the ability to step outside one's own perspective it is unlikely that all adolescents will have the same depth or degree of social interest.

In terms of its contribution to mentors' persistence, those who report a high level of social interest should be more likely to endure the challenges and frustrations of being a mentor than those mentors with less social interest. In addition, mentors' perspective-taking abilities may mediate the relationship between age and social interest and thus may provide a better benchmark of an adolescent's readiness to serve as a mentor. Confirming this hypothesis could

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provide two theoretical constructs (perspective taking and social interest) for differentiating those adolescent mentors who are more likely to stay the course and be satisfied with their experience from those whose motivations are more self-centered and may serve primarily to help them to achieve greater "personal dominance."

Theories Explaining the Relationship Between Children and their Adolescent Mentors

Chance encounters. In a rarely referenced article entitled, *The psychology of chance encounters and life paths*, Bandura (1982) explains the importance of chance encounters in the life paths of individuals and recommends that psychologists attempt to explain the factors that make chance encounters influential for individuals. A chance encounter is an unintended meeting of persons unfamiliar with each other (Bandura, 1982, p. 745). Mentoring, seen from a life-span perspective, also can be considered a chance encounter.

According to Bandura's hypotheses, cross-age peer mentoring should influence mentors' and mentees' "life paths through the reciprocal influence of personal and social factors" (1982, p. 745). Bandura describes three properties of reciprocal influence that may help to explain the impact of cross-age peer mentoring as a chance encounter. The first is the match between mentors and mentee in terms of shared attributes and interests. "If persons are to affiliate with those whom they have had the good or bad fortune to meet, they must posses some of the personal resources needed to gain sufficient acceptance to sustain continued involvement with them" (p. 150). Having shared interests and the ability to convey them is the first predictor Bandura puts forward to explain the likelihood of a positive chance encounter. Bandura suggests "individuals contribute to their own destiny by developing potentialities that afford access to particular milieus" (p. 150), which is consistent with Harris' (1998) description of the Mathew phenomenon (i.e., "the rich get richer") whereby mature children tend to seek out older peers and learn new skills while immature children more often seek out same-age or younger peers and by

whom they are less likely to be drawn into their zone of proximal development. Therefore, children lacking social skills, who chronically misbehave, or who tend to be rejecting or rejected may be the least likely to naturally seek and subsequently form strong bonds with mentors. Such youth also may be those with whom mentors least enjoy working.

A second quality that may explain the impact of a chance encounter is interpersonal attraction between the two individuals. "Interpersonal attraction seals chance encounters into lasting bonds" (Bandura, 1982, p. 750). We do not know, however, what attributes of adolescent mentors make them most appealing to their mentees either at the start or later in the relationship. Whatever those traits turn out to be, mentees are most likely to be attracted to mentors who evoke in them feelings of esteem, importance, and attractiveness; conversely, the opposite feelings are likely to occur in response to mentors' actions that imply disinterest in the mentee, such as mentors' inconsistency, rejecting behaviors, and critical statements.

A third set of reciprocal processes that Bandura factors into the effects of chance encounters are (1) individuals' self-evaluation of the degree to which they can connect with others, (2) their need for affiliation, closeness, and someone with whom to identify, and (3) the degree to which they have already established a value set (and one that matches the person encountered). Regardless of the mentees' attributes or attractiveness in general, mentees with prior experiences of interpersonal failure (such as an abuse history), who feel they do not need others for support or identification, and who are more identified with delinquent or rebellious peer groups that are negative toward school, adults, and authority should be less likely to naturally establish pro-social relationships through chance encounters. They may be the most likely to undermine the efforts and motivation of both natural or program-based mentors.

Process-oriented models of mentoring. These last three hypotheses are fairly consistent with two mentoring models. The first was put forth by Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly and

Povinelli (2002), who emphasizes the distal and proximal influences on mentors' self-efficacy and illustrate how self-efficacy beliefs shape the nature (activities, discussions, and obstacles) of the mentoring relationship and the degree of closeness that emerges in the mentoring dyad. While they do not specify the mentees' unique contribution to the nature of the relationship and resulting closeness as well as Rhodes (this volume), Parra et al. highlight the importance of structured interactions, training, and support for strengthening mentors' self-efficacy. Indeed, these may be the best practices that are most important for cross-age peer mentoring because of the greater chance of authority-undermining behaviors emerging with adolescent mentors than with adult mentors (Dishion et al., 1999; Patterson et al., 2000).

The second model emphasizing what Bandura describes as the importance of a mentee's desire for connectedness, willingness to identify, and receptivity to a mentor's value set, is the self psychology model of psychosocial development (Kohut & Wolf, 1978). Self psychology provides a theory to test the way in which mentoring, as a transforming relational experience, can effect changes in self-esteem, connectedness, and academic success. Effective mentoring (i.e., transformative mentoring interactions), from the perspective of self-psychology, should provide two sets of experiences to the mentee. First, mentors who provide empathy, praise, and attention should promote positive a change in mentees' perception of social support that results in increased feelings that the mentees matter to their mentors. This is consistent with the work of DuBois, Neville et al. (2002), who found expanded perceptions of social support among mentees who saw their mentors as significant individuals in their lives. Changes in social support then contributed to increases in self-esteem and positive behavioral conduct. Second, mentors who are consistent, structure positive activities and conversations, and present mentees with realistic goals and expectations should find that their mentees come to value or idealize them. This idealization should result in increased connectedness with other authority figures (e.g., parents

and teachers), improved social skills (through role modeling), and consequently increased self-esteem and academic success for the mentees.

This self psychology model may be particularly well suited to explain variation in the outcomes of cross-age peer mentoring. The two core experiences that contribute to self development, according to Kohut and Wolf (1978), are that the mentee (a) experiences empathy, praise, and attention and subsequently (b) identifies with the mentor as an idealized other. Both Adler's (1964) and Selman's (1980) theories suggest that not all adolescents will be able to exercise high social interest and complex perspective-taking skills. Similarly, Rhodes' (this volume) states that outcomes also may depend on the mentor's cognitive development. Given natural variation in empathy, perspective taking, and social interest among adolescents, it may be that less mature youth are not capable of fostering the first essential experience. Second, Harris (1998) suggests that children may be more able to identify with and "idealize" older peers than with adults. Harris suggests:

> Kids do not look to grownups for guidelines on how to behave, speak, or dress because
> kids and grownups belong to different social categories that have different rules. Wanting
> to have higher status—wanting to be like a bigger kid—goes on *within* the group, within
> the social category 'kids.' Grownups are a different kettle of fish. To a kid, grownups are
> not a superior version of *us*: grownups are *them* (1998, p. 267).

This idealization of older peers by younger peers, coupled with the more mature peers' enhanced ability to be empathic (as a function of greater perspective-taking skills) may make older peers uniquely situated to facilitate their younger peers' development.

The Importance of Conventional Beliefs, Values, and Behaviors in Socializing Youth

The bulk of the theory presented in this section has highlighted a phenomenon called *conventionality*. Jessor and Jessor (1977) and Hirschi's social control theory (1969) highlighted

the role of conventional and unconventional beliefs, attachments, and behaviors in their theories of delinquency and risk-taking behavior. Ecologies that are governed and structured by adults tend reward conventional, adult-sanctioned behaviors. Those in these ecologies promote conventional beliefs and attachments to future-oriented, adult-dominated contexts, such as the school. However, when children are left to structure their own behaviors, they often do so in opposition to the conventional dictates of the adult-world. One of the unique opportunities that cross-age peer mentors have is to help children start to bridge these two worlds by rewarding prosocial behaviors and academic attitudes, achievements, and inclinations.

Youth mentors who report low conventional connectedness may be less effective at modeling and reinforcing this conventional orientation with their mentees than are those adolescent mentors who report greater connectedness to school, family, and the future. A recent extension of these social control theories is the Social Development Model. Advocates of this model emphasize helping children bond with school and prosocial peers by creating interventions that promote high levels of opportunity for involvement in school, skill development, and positive peer recognition (Abbott et al. 1998).

RESEARCH

There have been only a handful of empirical studies of cross-age peer mentoring to date. Unfortunately, the most commonly referenced peer-reviewed reports of cross-age peer mentoring have been descriptive and lacking empirical support (Burrell, Wood, Pikes, & Holliday, 2001; Noll, 1997; Wright & Borland, 1992). Of the few available evaluations of cross-age peer mentoring, but most either (a) provide no data to support the findings (e.g., Hritz & Gabow, 1997; Noll, 1997), (b) were non-experimental (i.e., included no control/comparison group), (c) only reported participant satisfaction levels (e.g., Bettencourt, Hodgins, Huba, & Pickett, 1998; Hansen, 2003; Sawyer, 2001), (d) reported non-significant findings (Dennison, 2000), (e) had

insufficient statistical power (Westerman, 2002; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002), or (f) did not distinguish between adult and adolescent mentors, group and one-on-one mentoring, or mentoring and teaching (O'Donnell & Michalak, 1997; Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, & Cristoffel, 1999). However, extant experimental studies and empirical data do suggest the promise of using theory to enhance and increase our understanding of the effects of cross-age peer mentoring on both mentors and the mentees.

Before embarking on a review of extant empirical literature from the perspective of the theories described above, it is important to consider what evidence exists of effects of cross-age peer mentoring in general. Selecting only studies of cross-age peer mentoring as defined in this chapter and restricting evidence of "empirical support" to those studies including at least a suitable comparison group, I searched the PsychINFO, ERIC, Dissertations Abstract International, and ProQuest databases and found four such studies. Only three of these utilized experimental designs with a randomly assigned control group (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002; Karcher, in press-a; Westerman, 2002). The other study used a quasi-experimental design with a comparison group determined not through random assignment but by selecting children from a local housing project and those on a wait list (Sheehan et al., 1999). The outcomes examined in each of these studies differed with the exception that in all three of the experimentally designed studies a positive effect of mentoring on connectedness to school, teachers, or parents was found (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002; Karcher, in press-a; Westerman, 2002). In the quasi-experimental study connectedness was not examined as an outcome. These findings suggest positive changes in connectedness among mentees after cross-age peer mentoring is the outcome with the greatest empirical support. One study revealed evidence of positive program effects on academic achievement (Karcher et al. 2002), but no other studies examined achievement as an outcome. Similarly, the quasi-experimental study found evidence of a positive program effect on

mentees' classroom behaviors as rated by teachers and on self-reported attitudes towards violence (Sheehan et al., 1999), but the other three studies did not examine these outcomes. Unfortunately, both of these studies are limited as a result of attrition by the size of the treatment and comparison groups (n < 14 per group) included in the analyses. To date, there have been no experimental or quasi-experimental studies of the effects of cross-age peer mentoring on the mentors, although there are several anecdotal, post-hoc mentor reports of how older peer mentors felt it benefited them to be a mentor. In sum, excluding evidence drawn from research on cross-age peer tutoring, peer counseling, and peer helping, as well as research that does not differentiate between peer tutoring and mentoring, there is very limited research available to evaluate the effects of cross-age peer mentoring.

Developmental Theories

Few studies in the cross-age peer mentoring literature have presented research from the perspective of any of the developmental theories described by Damon (1984). However, developmental concepts have been reported in other peer intervention literatures. Both in the peer mediation and the peer counseling literature, as well as in service learning programs, encouraging youth to reflect on what has occurred or what they have learned from the intervention has been seen as way to facilitate academic skill development and positive attitudes (Stukas, Clary, & Snyder, 1999). Perspective-taking abilities also have been found to increase in association with serving as a peer mediator (Lane-Garon, 1998), but that study used an attitudinal questionnaire rather than a cognitive developmental assessment of perspective taking leaving unclear the construct validity of the assessment. In sum, no one has experimentally tested the effects of including developmentally based activities in peer interventions.

Theories of Peer Influence: Group Socialization Theory

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Harris' (1998) theory of group socialization is aligned with the hypothesis that peer mentors will be more influential than adult mentors (a) in contexts, such as in school, in which peers have considerable influence and (b) regarding outcomes that tend to be socialized by peers such as beliefs, values, attitudes, and risk-taking behaviors. The fact that all of the peer-led SAMHSA (2004) "Model Programs" for substance use prevention are highly structured, and the "Promising Programs" are not, provides some support for Harris' theory and for the assertion that structured interventions involving peers will have the greatest impact on risk taking.

Theories of Adolescent Mentor's Motivations

To date, no research on cross-age peer mentoring has systematically looked at the role of mentors' motivations on either the outcomes for mentors or for their mentees. However, in one study of cross-age peer mentoring (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, in press), the "self-enhancement" motivation on the Volunteer Function Inventory (Clary et al., 1998) predicted mentors' perceptions of relationship quality. That is, the mentors' desires to develop and grow psychologically by serving as a mentor predicted how successful they viewed their match to be. However, the actual effects of viewing the match with such rose-colored glasses is not known.

Hypotheses about age and gender differences in motivations—namely the hypothesis that girls will be motivated more by altruistic and other-focused motivations or traditionally feminine career aspirations, and that boys might be more individualistic in their motivations—could be tested through quasi-experimental research by including in outcome studies of cross-age peer mentoring measures of mentors' motivations, yet such motivations may interact with social interest or perspective-taking, both of which reflect developmental maturity.

A main effect of gender in outcomes for mentees and mentors also needs to be explored in future research. In one study of 15 elementary school peer tutoring programs (only 3 programs of which were cross-age tutoring) tutored males working with female tutors benefited

the least (n = 372; Topping & Whitley, 1993). Overall, Topping and Whiteley found that when tutored in reading boys did better on reading test score gains when tutored by boys than by girls (d = .46); girls did better when tutored by girls than when tutored by boys (d = .38); and the tutors in all conditions benefited more than did the students who were tutored. This poses a concern and important research question for peer mentoring because, in most studies, more girls than boys have volunteered to mentor, yet more boys than girls were referred for mentoring. This suggests there is an increased likelihood that boys will be paired with female peer mentors.

Social interest. Social interest may prove to be a useful variable in understanding mentor motivations. In one study of 33 peer mentors, the peer mentors who reported higher initial social interest were more likely to continue or persist as mentors for a second academic year (eta^2 = .46; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003). Mentors higher in social interest also were more likely to select or choose to work with mentees who were more difficult interpersonally or academically underachieving. However, peer mentors who reported lower social interest were less likely to continue as mentors for a second year and their dropout rate when they mentored more challenging mentees. Thus a social interest assessment may prove useful in helping to identify those peer mentors who are most likely to persist when working with challenging children.

Process-Oriented Models of Mentoring

The role of perceived self-efficacy and perceptions of relationship quality. Parra et al. (2002) argue that mentors' perceived self-efficacy is a central mediator of the impact of mentoring on mentees. The importance of peer mentor's efficacy on outcomes was highlighted in a study (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, in press) which found that peer mentors' perceptions of the quality of the mentoring relationship (at six weeks into the match) were predicted, in part, by the mentors' self-efficacy beliefs. In hierarchical regression analyses predicting relationship quality, other variables (including the mentee's risk status, parents' involvement, and overall

program quality) were not significant predictors of relationship quality once mentor efficacy was accounted for. Only the mentors' motivation to have a good experience (Omoto & Snyder's [1995] enhancement scale) and the degree to which the mentee actively sought out the mentors support explained additional variance (beyond that explained by mentors' efficacy) in mentors' initial perceptions of relationship quality. By the end of the academic year, after approximately 5 months of mentoring, only mentors' perceived self-efficacy and mentees' support seeking predicted perceptions of relationship quality. This research is limited by the absence of objective outcome indicators (e.g., mentees' grades or self-reported attitudes). These findings suggest, however, that peer mentors' faith in their ability to mentor may be an important variable to address in mentor training and supervision.

Self-esteem, social skills, and idealization as mediators. The importance of identifying theory-driven mediators of outcomes (DuBois & Silverthorn, this volume) is as important in peer mentoring as in adult mentoring. The self psychology theoretical model (described earlier in the chapter) in which gains in self-esteem and social skills are hypothesized to facilitate the mentee "idealizing" or identifying with the mentor and thereby to increase connectedness to school, adults, and to school-related activities, was recently tested in a cross-age peer mentoring study that included 73 Caucasian middle school mentees and high school mentors. Karcher (in press a) tested a mediator model in which pre-post gains in connectedness to school, parents, friends, and reading would be greater for the mentees than the comparison group and would be explained as a function of changes in social skills, self-esteem, and behavioural self-regulation skills resulting from receiving mentoring. The results indicated that overall changes in connectedness to school and to parents were greater for the mentees (Eta^2 = .20, .18), but there was insufficient power (.26, .05) to detect the main effect of mentoring on connectedness to friends and to reading. However, the mediator model was not supported by the data, in part, because there was

insufficient statistical power. However, bivariate correlations between variables (all in the range of $r = .15$ to .36) and small but positive standardized regression coefficients (all about $\beta = .10$) supported the self psychology hypothesis that consistent, empathic relationships with adolescent mentors can influence changes in self-esteem, social skills, and connectedness.

Conventional Beliefs, Values, and Behaviors in Socializing Youth

The social development model (Abbott et al., 1995), the research on iatrogenic effects of peer interventions, and the connectedness research presented above all suggest that peer interventions should actively promote greater conventional connectedness, such as bonding to school, with prosocial peers, and with adults (teachers and parents). How the mentors' own level of connectedness mediate the outcomes of such peer programs is not known. In one study of 120 youth (88 girls and 32 boys), the 57 adolescents who chose to become peer mentors were higher on conventional connectedness to school, reading, family, and their future than were their peers (eta^2 = .42; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003), thus suggesting that cross-age peer mentoring programs may be less interesting to adolescents who feel less connected from school or who already engage in authority-undermining behaviors (a la Dishion et al. 1999). It also is possible that challenging experiences may negatively affect adolescent mentors' connectedness. Karcher and Lindwall found that their mentees' academic risk status predicted their mentors' declines on connectedness to school and to reading (which was the primary joint activity they engaged in). It is possible that stressed or frustrated mentors may be adversely affected by challenging mentees.

In a study of the *Buddy Program* (Westerman, 2002), in which older children mentor younger children, 66 mostly Caucasian and African American fourth graders, 36 of whom were designated at risk due to family economic status, were assigned to one of four conditions. The 66 fourth graders were randomly assigned to four groups: (a) those who only received up to 16 hours of weekly mentoring from college students, (b) those who received mentoring but also

served as mentors to kindergarteners, (c) those who only mentored kindergarteners, and (d) those who received no treatment. The groups of fourth graders who were mentored and who served as mentors fared better than those who did both or were in the control condition. Those school-aged children who both mentored and were mentors reported declines in connectedness, bonding, and attendance compared to the children who did not perform both roles simultaneously. However, several limitations clouded the interpretation of these findings. The average number of mentoring meetings was only eight (half of the meetings were missed). The sample size, when separated into whether each fourth grader was a mentee, a mentor, or at risk (yes/no) resulted in subgroups smaller than ten. Finally, several subgroups had vastly different pre- and posttest scores on some variables but no covariates were included to adjust for these differences.

The importance of conventional connectedness may be as an outcome and also as a mediator or facilitator of change. Consistent with the findings of Rhodes, Grossman, and Resch (2000), who found that improvements in parent-youth relations mediated the effect of mentoring on academic outcomes, in one study of cross-age peer mentoring improvements in reading achievement among mentees were mediated by increased connectedness to parents ($\Delta R^2 = .19$; $\beta = .49$; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002). However, this sample also was very small (n = 30) and a main effect was only found for one of two achievement scores. Yet this finding is consistent with DuBois, Neville et al. (2002) whose empirically supported model suggests that it is by expanding mentees' perceptions of social support from important adults that mentoring has its effects on behavioral and attitudinal outcomes.

Unique Opportunities of Research on Cross-age Peer Mentoring

Impact on mentors. The effect of being a youth mentor has been touted by most advocates of peer mentoring but studied in just a few empirical of investigations (Karcher & Lindwall, 2003; Karcher, in press a). Given that one of the aims of cross-age peer mentoring is

to facilitate the development of the mentors as well as mentees, studies of the impact on mentors as well as of their experience, training, and levels of commitment will be important in the future.

Differential effectiveness of mentor and mentee types. There has been no research on the differential effects on high and low risk youth, marginalized (e.g., disabled) vs. mainstream youth, different sexes or ages, nor on youth who differ in social group membership.

Mentees reporting the absence of normative declines: Is this improvement? Consistent with the landmark BBBS study findings, two studies found that cross-age peer mentoring helped mentees *to avoid* declines in conventional attitudes that may be normative albeit counterintuitive (Karcher et al., 2002; Sheehan et al., 1999). Future research on the strength and duration of this protective effect may reveal the potential for cross-age mentoring as a preventative intervention.

Importance of training. While there is no research on the role of training on outcomes in cross-age peer mentoring, there is evidence from other peer interventions that high quality training and supervision may be more important with youth than with adult mentors. A study of peer-helping programs in Washington state suggests that in schools where the programs were not supervised by counselors or other trained professionals (but rather by teachers or administrators) the school reported a significantly higher student suicide rate (Lewis & Lewis, 1996). However, no effect sizes (nor sufficient information to calculate effect sizes) were reported and the analyses were correlational (not experimental). Additional concerns include the large number of t-tests conducted, the low levels of statistical significance, and no covariates were used to equate the schools on any number of variables that might covary with suicide rates.

The role of structure. Answering questions regarding the amount and type of structure is essential to determining the usefulness of cross-age peer mentoring. Answers to basic but interrelated questions about the effect of structure vs. no structure and of instrumental activities vs. developmental activities may help determine if there are any unique benefits of cross-age

peer mentoring. One of the main points of this chapter is that activities within peer mentoring cannot be the same as those in peer tutoring if it is to stand alone as a unique intervention. But this may not be true. It may be that developmentally oriented—that is, less instrumental, academic, and task-focused—mentoring interactions do not effect different or greater changes in behavioral, developmental, or academic outcomes than do other peer programs. However, if the outcomes of cross-age peer mentoring are the same as for other peer approaches, then the costs and efficiency of each peer approach may determine cost-effectiveness and merit.

For other peer interventions some evidence suggests that the greater the amount of structure provided the more effective the adolescents are and the more they get out of it (King, Stafferi & Adelgais, 1998). Cross-age peer mentors also may benefit from using specific structured activities with their mentees, but this is not known. What kinds of activities are most effective is an important question. Are youth mentors who spend much of their time in tutoring activities more effective than youth mentors who focus on social issues or the mentee's personal life, and if so on what outcomes? Currently there are no studies comparing the relative effects of different kinds of activities on academic or psychosocial outcomes, nor have there been studies that compare the effects of cross-age peer mentoring to other approaches in general. Both will be necessary for cross-age peer mentoring to become a distinct and more reputable intervention.

PRACTICE

To date the two main practice questions—(a) what adolescent mentors should do with mentees and (b) how best to train and supervise adolescent mentors—have not received enough attention for a firm set of practices to be vigorously advocated. This section does not attempt to synthesize the variety of approaches to setting up, coordinating, or recruiting for cross-age peer mentoring programs that are reported elsewhere (e.g., Burrell, Wood, Pikes, & Holliday, 2001;

Dennison, 2000; Lewis & Henney, 2003; Pyatt, 2002; Sawyer, 2001), but rather explores the implications that can be drawn from the theory and research reviewed thus far for practice.

Theoretically, what distinguishes cross-age mentoring programs from other peer approaches is its developmental orientation. Based on this perspective, cross-age peer mentoring, although predominantly implemented in school settings, should not focus solely on academic remediation or academic skill development, but include broader developmental aims such as instilling positive attitudes towards school. Similarly, cross-age peer mentoring should not be limited to a focus on treating identified problems, but rather should provide a relational context in which youth might discuss their problems more informally. Cross-age peer mentoring furthermore should not focus solely on teaching information or skills, but it may use prevention curricula, reading materials, or other academically or problem-oriented activities as a vehicle to facilitate trust and reciprocal caring between mentors and mentees. Therefore, the content of cross-age mentoring programs, which are intimately linked to outcomes, should be relational-developmental in nature, and cognitive-developmental theories can help guide such programs.

Developmental Theories

One way to capitalize on cognitive-developmental theory is to consider structuring interactions or selecting activities that encourage perspective taking. Simply encouraging activities that allow mentors and mentees to ask each other questions in an attempt to better understand one another, their unique experiences, and their respective goals and interests may help facilitate perspective-taking and serve to strengthen the mentor-mentee bond. Prevention curricula that include such "perspective-taking activities" are *Second Step* (violence prevention), *Project Northland* (substance use prevention), and Botvin's *Life Skills Training* (see SAMHSA, 2004). What makes cross-age mentoring distinct from peer helping, tutoring, and counseling is its emphasis on the development of a mutually supportive, close relationship over an extended

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period of time. Care should be taken, therefore, to emphasize the use of any curricula to that end rather than as a means of learning specific skills. From a developmental point of view, most fruitful may be efforts that engage children in developmentally appropriate ways, such as through activities that emphasize engaging in physical activity, sharing opinions or learning information (requiring only a first-person perspective), and using those perspectives "learned" or shared to work cooperatively with a peer or with the mentor on a joint activity.

Group Socialization Theory

Harris (1998) argues that if unsupervised, youth will work to distinguish themselves from adults. Therefore, supervision, in general, and structure, more specifically, should be key elements of effective peer programs. Structured peer approaches seem to be the most preventative against early forms of risk-taking (see "Model" and "Effective" programs, such as Second Step and Project Northland at SAMHSA, 2004). Therefore, efforts to structure the meetings of the mentors and mentees may pay greater dividends than unstructured interactions.

Adolescent Mentor's Motivations

Program supervisors need to keep in mind the reasons that mentors volunteer to participate in cross-age mentoring programs, and should never lose sight that these adolescents are their clients too. Not only should the experience be developmental and enjoyable for the mentees, but mentors also need to benefit. There are ways that mentors may be trained to be more efficacious (see below) and thereby be "better" mentors and perhaps more skilled in the process. Program coordinators also need to pay attention to what motivates their mentors (e.g., career goals, desire for socialization, to feel better) and make efforts to ensure that the mentors are satisfied with the experience. For instance, coordinators could use the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) as one method of monitoring mentors' satisfaction (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The VFI which two parts: questions completed initially about why one wants to volunteer—that

is, their motivations—and questions to be answered during or after the experience regarding how much each of the different volunteering functions was met by participating in the program. If a sizeable number of mentors, for example, want to mentor to expand their social networks, then program coordinators would be wise to make participation rewarding in that way because doing so (a) increases the likelihood the mentors are happy and will persist, and (b) helps avoid having a program in which the coordinators' and mentors' goals are at odds.

Social interest. Screening potential mentors to better identify who will be most likely to persist is an important practice.   Including an assessment of social interest in the mentor application is one method of screening (see Bass, Curlette, Kern, & McWilliams, 2002; Crandall, 1991). But program coordinators also should keep their eyes open for the characteristics that common among the best mentors in their respective programs. I once assumed outgoing socially engaging mentors would be superior until I learned that those adolescents also get involved in other activities which lessen their ability to be consistent as mentors (Karcher, in press b).

Program Practices and Activities

How can program coordinators enhance the likelihood that cross-age peer mentoring, as a chance encounter, positively influences the life paths of youth involved? First, coordinators can work to avoid coercive, inflexible program practices that may lead older peer mentors to create "closed social systems wielding strong coercive and rewarding power" (Bandura, 1982, p. 750), in several ways, including (a) emphasizing the importance of an empathic, supportive relationship over an emphasis on task completion; (b) training the adolescent mentors to use effective discipline and encouragement practices that minimize the likelihood that mentors will use coercive, manipulating behaviors to get mentees to behave or participate; and (c) actively monitor and publicly acknowledge the mentors' use of assertive (rather than aggressive) and empathic communication.

Bandura made three sets of recommendations that may help coordinators' create cross-age mentoring relationships that "affect life paths through the reciprocal influence of personal and social factors" (1982, p. 750). The first is to match youth who have experiences and interests in common. Such interest lists can be found in materials available from P/PV and MENTOR.

Second, capitalize on the interpersonal attraction between the two individuals. One way to do this is to use a matching process in which a group of mentors and potential mentees interact through game play, discussion, and other activities as a way to get acquainted, and then to let them both indicate with whom they would most like to be matched. In one study (Karcher, in press a), 80% of the mentees and mentors chose each other as a first or second choice after only a few hours interacting with each other. Given the research finding that when adolescent mentors were inconsistent and regularly absent, their mentees were more likely to feel less attractive over time, and that "interpersonal attraction seals chance encounters into lasting bonds" (Bandura, 1982, p. 750), program coordinators should closely supervise mentor and mentee attendance in order to avoid either feeling rejected. When mentors begin to miss mentoring meetings or events, they should be reminded about the impact of absenteeism on mentees' self-esteem, and if the problem is not corrected, then a formal termination ritual should be conducted to impress upon the child that he or she is not at fault for the failing relationship (see, Lakes & Karcher, 2002). Of course, mentors should be trained in the importance of evoking in their mentees feelings of esteem, importance, and attractiveness.

Third, Bandura emphasized the central role of individuals' prior experiences and capacity to relate to others. Mentors may benefit from training in understanding that children differ in their receptivity to caring from others and that often children who have experienced rejection in the past may appear the least interested in engaging in a close, mutually supportive relationship. Mentors should be encouraged to reflect on their own as well as their mentees' (a) capacity for

connecting with others, (b) their need for affiliation, closeness, and someone with whom to identify, and (3) the compatibility of their values (e.g., is one strongly conventional while the other antagonistic towards authority or school). In sum, adolescent mentors may need help to cognitively understand that their mentees' observable actions may not truly convey their desires, that some children will be more or less open to a caring, supportive relationship, and that they too may wrestle with issues of trust, intimacy, or sensitivity to rejection that complicate their own experience of the mentoring relationship.

Guidelines for Effective and Ethical Practice

When cross-age peer mentoring program coordinators begin to consider which practices to emphasize in their programs, in addition to the recommendations based on theory and research made above, four specific sources may be of particular interest. Two are drawn from the larger mentoring literature. These are the *Elements of Effective Practice* that are available on the website of the National Mentoring Partnership and the best practices identified through DuBois, Holloway, et al.'s (2002) meta-analytic review of theoretically and empirically derived practices. These will not be reviewed here. However, many of the practices may be even more important for cross-age mentors given their general level of maturity. Fortunately, one of the advantages of having adolescent mentors on-site, such as in school-based settings, is that it affords program coordinators more control over program practices, recruiting, selecting, training, and supervision.

Although not specifically focused on cross-age mentoring, cross-age peer helping and peer tutoring materials may provide useful ideas about training and supervision. On the website of the National Peer Helpers Association are their *Standards and Ethics* and Programmatic Standards Checklist. Also useful is the research and training literature on peer tutoring (e.g., Topping & Ehly, 1998) and peer helping (National Helpers Network, 1998). However, I recommend that readers focus on the cross-age peer helping and tutoring literature. Same-age

helping, tutoring, and counseling programs present a unique set of developmental and peer dynamics that may not be appropriate for or generalize to cross-age relationships.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Synthesis

Older peers helping nurture their younger peers' growth is not a new practice. Yet it is becoming less and less common, especially for children without older siblings. Cross-age peer mentoring may serve the function previously met by those natural peer mentoring relationships, but it has a long way to go to fully differentiate itself from peer tutoring, peer helping, and peer counseling. This demarcation may be achieved by emphasizing its uniquely developmental focus. Most recently structured peer interventions have focused either on tutoring academic skills or remediating social or behavioral problems. Cross-age peer mentoring, as a longer-term, relationship-focused intervention can complement these other peer interventions providing an intervention uniquely well-suited to facilitate developmental outcomes such as connectedness to school, prosocial bonding, social skills and self-esteem. However, cross-age peer mentoring lags behind its sibling interventions in terms of supporting research and tested practices. Therefore, until a sufficient empirical base exists to recommend specific practices and approaches, program coordinators and researchers alike would do well to rely on developmental theory as a guide and look to other cross-age interventions for ideas about how best to facilitate reciprocally satisfying mentoring relationships between older and younger youth.

Recommendations for Research

1. Conduct rigorous efficacy trials. Given the neophyte status of the research base on cross-age peer mentoring, a critical first step is to attempt to conduct efficacy trails that reflect the criteria described by DuBois and Silverthorn (this volume). Once general efficacy is better understood, further research may examine variations in formats and populations served.

2. Examine effects on peer networks. Sometimes cross-age peer mentoring is conducted one on one away from other youth. More often, perhaps especially when conducted in schools, cross-age peer mentoring may be conducted in a group format. In order to understand the effects of such programs on the larger peer networks at a school, it may be useful to study whether cross-age peer mentoring effects changes in mentors and mentees' peer networks. There may be an effect of program format such as that the outcomes of one-on-one cross-age mentoring differ depending on whether it is conducted in the context of other peers (a group format). Harris (1998) might predict a negative effect of such a group format. Cross-age mentors may become distracted by peers (and less attentive to their mentees), bothered by their peers in the program (resulting in mentor attrition), or instigated by deviant peers (who then undermine the conventional structure of the program). Conversely, considering the normative social and cognitive-developmental needs of the mentors, it may be that having their own, same-age peers involved as fellow mentors and mentees change the interpersonal dynamics (e.g., making peers into friends) in positive ways that affect the overall climate of a school. Such change might occur through an expansion of social network, changes in membership, or shifts in attitudes held by peer networks linked to the mentoring program. A group format also may increase or satisfy mentors' motivation, thereby contributing to longer matches which may mediate outcomes for both mentees and mentors.

3. Investigate the developmental benefits of cross-age peer mentoring for subgroups of adolescent mentors. The benefits of facilitating relationship development within a positive peer culture may be significantly greater for some mentees and mentors than others. For example, those youth who are less frequently nominated as liked by their peers may benefit most from structured opportunities to interact with peers from whom they might otherwise feel rejected. For example, the Social Type Rating Scale procedure described by Brown and Lohr (1987)

might be used to identify subgroups of youth (e.g., more or less popular, conventional, or academically oriented) and test group status as a moderator of program effects. Other moderators of outcomes may include personality traits, such as extro- vs. introversion, or shared experience/experiences (Bandura's hypothesis). For example, research could examine whether cross-age peer mentoring is more useful for youth experiencing similar challenges (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 1998) and test the observation-based conclusion of Karcher and Lindwall (2003) that extroverted mentors appeared more likely to over commit to other extracurricular activities than introverted peers, thereby leading them to be absent more often and thereby negatively affecting mentee outcomes. Other important moderators remain untested as well. How might age, sex, and age-span differences between mentors and mentees contribute to program effectiveness or to the satisfaction of mentees and mentors in cross-age peer mentoring?

4. Examine interactions between format and youth characteristics. Often program effects are revealed through interactions. It could be instructive to examine the interaction between the effects of program format (e.g., group or isolated dyads) and the effects of either (a) serving as or (b) having a cross-age peer mentor for different kinds of youth. For instance, introverted youth mentors and mentees may prefer and benefit more from one-on-one programs. Conversely, extroverted and outgoing youth may prefer but not benefit as much from the group format.

5. Examine the effects of training and supervision. Little is known about the training that youth mentors receive let alone the effects of such training on mentors' persistence, mentees' experience, or program outcomes. Critical to know is whether, as argued above, ongoing mentor training and supervision is more important for cross-age peer mentors than for adult mentors (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002). If so, schools might want to consider providing course credit to ensure that mentors receive ongoing training and support. Despite the burgeoning interest in youths' civic development, the instatement of mentor classes for credit is

not likely to occur in an era of high-stakes testing unless it can be shown that both mentors and mentees benefit in some significant and lasting way from receiving ongoing training and support.

6. Examine what effective matches do. "Activities or No Activities?" This is the question. Some evidence suggests that the greater the amount of structure provided to peer tutors the more effective they are and the more the tutors themselves get out of the process (King, Staffeiri & Adelgais, 1998). Research on cross-age peer mentoring should examine two basic questions: (a) are program effects larger when mentors use structured activities with their mentees? For example, are mentors who also provide academic help or encouragement more effective than youth mentors who focus only on the mentee's personal life? (b) If so, what kinds of activities are most effective?

Recommendations for Practice

1. Structure programs to meet the developmental needs of mentees and mentors. Young children, often unaware of their own desires and wants until pressed to articulate them, enjoy fun, physical, rule-based play activities. Adolescents more often seek interaction with their peers, opportunities to explore and learn about what makes themselves unique, and contexts in which they can receive attention and praise. Programs that do not include opportunities for both of these developmentally appropriate expressions of perspective-taking skills may be more likely to frustrate mentors, mentees, or both. This may lessen the likelihood that a positive bond develops between the mentee and the mentor, the program, or its staff. Viewing cross-age peer mentoring as a developmental intervention may be vital to its success (see Selman, 2003).

2. Screen for mentors who are most likely to persist. Three constructs and related measures were introduced in this chapter as potential tools for screening mentors: social interest (Crandall, 1991), connectedness (Karcher, in press-a), and the functions of volunteering (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). In addition, identifying a local, program-specific set of variables that predict

persistence and effective mentors also may require interviewing or observing mentors across multiple years. Because each program will differ in program structure and population served, it is difficult to make general statements about what elements of programs motivate and satisfy mentors who will differ in age, cultural background, or geographic locale.

3. Supervise, train, evaluate, and recognize. These are the four pillars upon which effective (and safe) cross-age peer mentoring programs are most firmly built. Supervision: Peer programs supervised by non-trained professionals may put children at risk. Training: Some ways of training peer mentors may be better than others. Evaluation: Without evaluation coordinators won't know what they are doing right or for whom. For example, an evaluation may reveal that a program is most effective for those kids who are at lower risk for behavioral or academic problems and for youth who want to have a mentor. It would be a travesty to continue to recruit uninterested, high-risk youth when they get little out of it and end up frustrating the other half of your clients—the mentors. Only ongoing evaluation can reveal such effects. Recognition: Adolescent mentors may reap greater benefits from recognition events than adult mentors. For youth, such events may increase self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social status, and facilitate the development one's identity or self-image as a helping, caring individual.

4. Minimize opportunities for engaging in authority-undermining behaviors. Peers can be powerful influencing agents. In the absence of supervision, guidance, and consequences for anti-conventional or anti-adult behaviors or attitudes, peer programs run the risk of instilling the exact beliefs and promoting the kinds of behaviors they are intended to prevent. It is recommended that program coordinators discourage authority-undermining statements and behaviors by actively structuring opportunities and rewarding behaviors that are consistent with developmentally crucial social skills (empathy, cooperation, self-control) and positive connections to adults (e.g., parents and teachers), school, and school-related activities.

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