

Boundaries

Boundaries are a protective barrier that help to keep everyone safe and teach youth what healthy relationships look and feel like.

Boundary Setting:

- ✓ Having a mentor doesn't mean that "anything goes".
- ✓ Understand that the role of mentor differs from teachers, parents, and counselors— you are a friend, but also an adult role model.
- ✓ Take opportunities to model positive behavior and communication.
- ✓ Set appropriate limits such as helping to clean up after an activity and using respectful language.

Boundaries are particularly important for youth who:

- Come from chaotic and unpredictable environments.
- Have been victims of abuse.
- Have to take care of the adults in their lives and as a result do not have their own needs met.

Ongoing Training for Mentors, 2006. Mentoring Resource Center



Self-Disclosure

When self-disclosure is done in the *appropriate context* and to an *appropriate extent*, it can be a powerful way to connect with your student and build trust.

Be careful not to burden your student with your own problems.

Your primary responsibility is to be supportive of your student and listen to their concerns. The motives for sharing personal information should always be **youth centered**.

Be careful not to disclose information that may be inappropriate.

The specifics of your partying adolescent past, the vulgarity of a movie, or the intricacies of your marriage may be information that can be shared with other adult friends, not with a child.

Let students answer their own questions.

Your student asks, "Did you do drugs when you were my age?"

An appropriate response would be to say, "It sounds like this is a topic that you're thinking about a lot lately." OR "Are a lot of your friends doing drugs?" This approach might get your student to think about their own life. Also, many students ask mentors personal questions as a way of figuring out their own views on the topic. If a young person really wants to know about your personal past and experiences, they will ask again.

Scenarios:

- Your student asks if you are married and if you have kids.
- Your 6th grade mentee asks your thoughts about all the 6th grade girls on his school campus who are pregnant.
- You had to cancel last week's mentoring session due to a death in the family. Your student asks why you weren't there.

Adapted from Designing and Customizing Mentor Training by Elsy Arévalo with Contributions By DeVone Boggan and Lynne West