

# Tips for Mentors

## Take the time to develop trust.

Many of our youth have not had positive relationships with adults in the past. Mutual trust and respect are goals to work toward. Keep your promises, speak truthfully, state your expectations and set clear boundaries. In addition, remember that most youth are very sensitive about being labeled. Avoid using derogatory phrases such as "welfare mother," "juvenile delinquent" or "abusive families."

## Don't preach.

In working with your mentee, practice active listening and try to encourage problem solving, offering alternatives instead of answers. The role of the mentor is relatively free of constraints. It is important to work together to determine activities and define the direction of the relationship. A mentor is an advocate, friend, role model, sponsor, nurturer and coach. A mentor is not a parent, therapist, judge, rescuer, authority figure, employer or bank.

## Identify areas of need.

Don't expect each session to be a confession. Once problem areas are identified, work to find ways to address those areas of need and give support. Some mentees may not easily accept help. You can be a strong and committed voice of support. Stay alert to changes and individual needs.

## Access resources.

Help your mentee access community resources. Instead of doing the research yourself, model the process you use when seeking information and services. When appropriate, guide your mentee through a brainstorming process. The Internet is a good place to start your search. Of course, feel free to call our offices at [\(412\) 281-1288](tel:4122811288) or email us at [info@amachipgh.org](mailto:info@amachipgh.org) for assistance finding resources.

## Keep us in the loop.

For Amachi Pittsburgh to be as successful as possible and for us to best support our mentors, we need to know what and when mentoring matches are doing together and what challenges they face. Take the time to fill out your monthly activity report so that Amachi Pittsburgh staff can provide you with useful assistance.

## And Remember...

Maintaining regular contact is crucial to the success of a mentoring relationship, especially during the initial trust-building phase of the relationship.

When working with your mentee, **practice active listening** and try to **encourage problem solving**, offering alternatives instead of answers.