

Building Our Future



*Toolkit for
Mentoring
Diverse Students
for Dietetics
Careers*

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to provide you with the *Building Our Future Mentor Program Toolkit*. The toolkit is the first step in the American Dietetic Association's efforts to develop and implement a program for mentoring culturally diverse students into dietetics/nutrition programs.

Summary of ADA Diversity Mentoring Project

ADA members, the largest group of food and nutrition professionals in the world, have the capability of expanding access to nutrition services for diverse populations in a variety of traditional and non-traditional therapeutic and health prevention settings. Toward that end, ADA's 2000-2003 Strategic Plan includes goals, objectives, and tactics focused on underrepresented groups. The Association has committed to increasing diversity in educational preparation from 20.7% in 1998 to 25.7% by 2004. To meet this goal, ADA recognized the urgent need to try new methods for addressing diversity issues and began the Diversity Mentoring Project with funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Interdisciplinary Community-Based Programs, Allied Health Branch.

As the Steering Committee, we identified and sought input from experts in cultural diversity, best practices in mentoring programs, and the design of successful training formats. An Invitational Summit on Mentoring and Diversity was held July 6-8, 2001 in Chicago. The Summit convened 40 individuals representing key stakeholders, such as students, educators, and health care and food industry professionals. These forty individual stakeholders became partners in the development of the toolkit.

The Summit was notable for the variety of cultural perspectives, educational expertise and diversity experiences of the participants. Four workgroups discussed goals, outcomes, and strategies for mentoring programs targeted to minority students at various age levels from K-12 to college age. Based on recommendations from the workgroups, the toolkit was developed to provide you with models for mentoring African American, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian, Alaskan Native and Hawaiian Native students.

We hope to inspire you, ADA members in state affiliates, dietetic practice groups, and diversity networking groups, to establish mentoring programs for K-8 and high school students in your communities in order to raise awareness of dietetics careers and increase the pool of potential students from underrepresented groups. We believe mentoring also can be a successful strategy for those of you who are college and university faculty to attract and retain non-declared majors from diverse cultures in dietetics education programs, as well as assist declared dietetics majors from underrepresented groups to successfully complete credentialing requirements.

Additionally, we believe diversity mentoring programs will provide the structure for specific steps to make the field of nutrition and dietetics more visible to K-12 minority students, school communities, and parents, such as visiting schools, providing role

models, and identifying minority spokespersons. We expect other health professions will be able to apply this model, ultimately improving the quality of health care and accessibility of health services within culturally diverse populations.

How To Use This Toolkit

This toolkit will enable you to:

- Understand the need for more minority representation in dietetics
- Recognize a variety of effective mentoring models to attract and retain students from underrepresented groups
- Understand the elements of effective practice that apply to all mentoring programs
- Select the program model that is most appropriate for your organization
- Have resources on hand (sample correspondence, forms, etc.) to make it easy to get your program started
- Know where to go for additional information and assistance

The toolkit is organized in two sections. **Section One** provides guidelines that apply to all types of mentoring programs. It is divided into six topic areas separated by gold tabs. **Section Two** provides guidelines specific to mentoring students in different age groups. Blue tabs are used to organize the information specific to each of these age groups.

Section One provides background on the critical need for diversity in dietetics in the first gold tab and general information about mentoring in the second gold tab. The remaining gold tabs deal with the important components of mentor programming.

We are assuming that you know relatively little about how to start and run a mentor program. Therefore, the overview of mentoring includes the elements of effective practice. As you design your program, please keep in mind that it's worth the time to do it right. Use the elements of effective practice in tab 2 as a guide. You will find information on different models of mentor programs (one-on-one, group mentoring, etc) and guidelines on how to decide which type of program is best for you. If you are already familiar with mentor program design, you can just scan the Overview and go on to the third tab. You may want to go back to tabs 1 and 2 from time to time as a reference.

In gold tabs 3-5, we offer you information on the critical steps in every mentoring program: recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring, and evaluation. You will find some sample forms that you can use as is or modify to suit your unique needs. These forms include recruitment materials, screening materials, training handouts, and an evaluation form. For easy access, sample forms and handouts are highlighted in **bold italics** in the Table of Contents.

Finally, the sixth gold tab lists resources that can help you: books, articles, websites, and organizations. We also have included brief planning examples for a state affiliate, dietetic practice group (DPG), and/or an educational program with some suggested timelines.

Section Two is devoted to mentoring programs for four categories of students, each designated by a blue tab:

-
- College Students - Declared majors enrolled in dietetics education program accredited/approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education
 - College Students – Undeclared majors who can be recruited for dietetics careers
 - High School Students
 - Elementary School Students

The information in Section Two will help you establish a context for your mentoring program. It also provides specific program design elements (such as the classroom activities for K-8) and information you may wish to share with your mentors. For easy access, handouts are highlighted in ***bold italics*** in the Table of Contents. Finally, the last blue tab includes copies of the ADA dietetics career recruitment handouts.

The general information and forms in Section One coupled with the information in Section Two for the group or groups you wish to target are all the tools you need to start your mentoring program.

We hope you find this toolkit useful as you begin mentoring programs in your organizations. We will be asking you to share your successes and suggestions for improving the toolkit with us and ADA staff throughout the coming years.

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Section One: Guidelines for All Mentoring Programs

1. Overview of Diversity

Diversity in Dietetics

Among the total US population, for those reporting one race: 75.1% were White, 12.3% were Black or African American, 0.9% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3.6% were Asian, 0.1% were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and, 5.5% were some other race; 2.4% reported two or more races. Among the total US population, among all races: 12.5% were Hispanic or Latino and 87.5% were not Hispanic or Latino. (Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin (Census 2000 Brief), US Census Bureau, March 2001)

However, underrepresentation of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans exists in dietetics as well as other health professions. The American Dietetic Association 1999 membership survey results indicate that only 2.4% of registered dietitians (RD) are African American, 2.0% are Hispanic, 5.4% are Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 0.2 % are American Indian, Alaskan Native and Hawaiian Natives. Additionally, 97.4% of dietitians are women.

In all health professions, adequate representation of minority people is necessary for access to and the quality of services for the public. Perceived ethnic and social differences with health care providers often discourage consumers from seeking care or sharing intimate information required for appropriate treatment. Social and ethnic differences between providers and clients can inhibit development of effective treatment plans. These issues are particularly important for us, as dietetics professionals.

We all know that diet is a major factor in prevention and control of chronic diseases, especially obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Strong evidence supports the need to address these racial and ethnic differences in disease prevalence and health outcomes. Prevention and standard treatment approaches must be tailored to the needs of various patient groups, and food services in many instances must also be geared to the diverse groups.

Obesity

According to the report issued by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health on the evaluation and treatment of obesity in adults, "the need for obesity prevention and treatment is particularly pressing in racial/ ethnic minority populations because of the high proportion of overweight and obese persons in many such populations". Obesity is associated with increased risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

- The prevalence of obesity is much higher in minority women. Among women, 33% of non-Hispanic whites, 52 percent of non-Hispanic blacks, and 50 percent of Mexican Americans are overweight.
- The Strong Heart Study (1995) on risk factors for American Indians found that obesity rates ranged from 54 to 80 % among different tribes.

Diabetes

The complications of diabetes that result from the absence of early treatment are a serious problem for minority populations.

- African Americans experience higher rates of at least 3 of the serious complications of diabetes: blindness, amputation, and end stage renal disease (kidney failure).
- Prevalence of type 2 diabetes among Native Americans in the United States is 12.2% for those over 19 years of age. Among people with diabetes, the rate of diabetic end stage renal disease is 6 times higher among Native Americans. Amputation rates among Native Americans are 3-4 times higher than the general population.
- The prevalence of type 2 diabetes is 2 times higher in Latinos than non-Hispanic whites. 1.2 million or 10.6% of all Mexican Americans have diabetes. The prevalence of diabetic retinopathy in Mexican Americans is 32-40%.

Cardiovascular Disease

- African American men and women are at particular risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Racial/ethnic differences are especially pronounced for women. African American women, have coronary heart disease (CHD) and mortality rates 35.3% higher and stroke rates 71.4% higher than for white women.
- Women and Heart Disease: An Atlas of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mortality highlights persistent inequalities among women of the major racial and ethnic groups. This report supported the President's Initiative to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health. The death rate from heart disease in African American women was 553 deaths per 100,000 population, followed by white women (388 deaths per 100,000 population).

Food Services

In addition to prevention and treatment of chronic disease, another need is to design food and nutrition services in health facilities that are sensitive to ethnic/racial differences. Food served in hospitals, long-term care, and other health care and community-based organizations has become an area of major concern as these institutions compete for clients within an increasingly diverse consumer base. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) hospital accreditation standards include requirements that the racial and ethnic sensitivities of their patients be addressed in areas of food services, patient communications, and patient education. JCAHO standards encourage hospital staff to work closely with their local communities to identify and address the health care needs of different racial/ethnic groups.

The number of minority students enrolled in undergraduate dietitian education programs offers hope for the future. According to ADA 1999 enrollment statistics, minority students are 23% of total enrollment (6.8% African American, 7.1% Hispanic, 6.2% Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 0.7 % American Indian, Alaskan Native and Hawaiian Natives). However, the percentage of minority students enrolled in coordinated programs and postbaccalaureate dietetic internships necessary for credentialing eligibility remains approximately 14% (3.7% African American, 5%

Hispanic, 5.4% Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 0.4% American Indian, Alaskan Native and Hawaiian Natives). These data suggest a disparity between the number of students interested in pursuing dietetics as a career and the number able to complete educational requirements and ultimately obtain the RD credential to practice.

During the 1990s, ADA expressed significant concern regarding the number of minorities in dietetics. Major forums and policy statements by ADA panels stressed the need to respond to an increasingly multicultural society. As recently as August 1999, the ADA commissioned Dr. Howard Greenwald of the University of Southern California to conduct research on why minorities are underrepresented in the dietetics profession and to suggest remedial steps based on successful efforts by individuals and programs to promote minority representation.

Diversity and Mentoring

Information obtained from the Greenwald study supports mentoring as a promising means of recruiting and enabling minority people to achieve their potential as dietetics practitioners. Minority RDs most often mentioned personal qualities such as perseverance and study skills as factors that helped them succeed in their training. Closely following personal capabilities were assistance, mentorship, and interest by faculty and preceptors. Education program directors cited establishment of professional networks for recruitment and providing tutoring and visible support for minorities as having positive results.

While mentoring alone will not ensure students' success, it is a key factor, along with the others listed above. Testimony at the ADA Summit on Mentoring and Diversity provided strong anecdotal support from individual experiences as to the importance of mentoring to students. Mentoring of pre-college students also can have a significant impact on their career choices. For these reasons, we hope you will develop a variety of mentoring programs across the country to attract significant numbers of qualified minority students into the dietetics profession.

When organized formally, mentoring can be a powerful tool to encourage interest in and entrance into a specific profession. For minority students and other targeted groups, mentoring can offer special emphasis on dietetics as a career where their skills are wanted and needed. Mentoring brings dietetics to students' attention, offers help with their studies when necessary and enhances their chances of securing internships and, ultimately, employment.

2. Overview of Mentoring

Value of Mentoring

Formal mentoring in conjunction with career development is just beginning to be explored. Preliminary results are promising, but there is little formal research. Yet the practice of apprenticing is well documented and appreciated. For thousands of years, crafts and trades people have shared their skills with apprentices, helping them become ready for employment.

In much the same way, mentors can expose young people and young adults to a career. There are many successful professionals who can cite role models or people who encouraged them to achieve—perhaps even guided them to enter a field of study or career. This kind of involvement can be considered informal mentoring.

Academically, mentoring has proven to be valuable. A recent study by Big Brothers Big Sisters showed that young people who met with a mentor three times each month for one year were 52 percent less likely to skip school, 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs, and 33 percent less likely to get into fights. Research from Procter & Gamble's mentoring program in Cincinnati, Ohio schools showed that of the high school seniors with mentors, 86 percent went on to college. Previously, only between 25 and 30 percent had gone to college. These are just two of a number of studies linking mentoring to improved performance in school. Certainly, a strong grade point average can give students an edge when competing for college acceptance, internships, and jobs.

Mentoring is valuable to mentors, as well. A dietetics practitioner working with students may begin to think about his or her job more critically. The experience can generate new ideas and renew interest and excitement in a career. Mentors also can extend their network of professionals, as dietitians meet other dietitians involved in the program.

Finally, the entire dietetics profession can gain more status and attention through a mentoring program. Media stories can spread awareness of dietetics and its importance in health care. Such awareness could pique interest in students who may explore dietetics as a career and in adults who may want to become mentors. Mentoring programs in dietetics that are successful in attracting and retaining minority students will serve as models for other health care professions where there is also a severe shortage of minority candidates.

Mentor Program Goals

Goals are used to articulate a program's ultimate achievement — the big picture. The overall goal of ADA's *Building Our Future* is:

To increase cultural diversity in dietetics now and in the future by supporting current dietetics majors and developing a pipeline of younger minority students who will be the dietetics majors of tomorrow.

There is an overall goal for mentoring programs geared to each group of students addressed in this toolkit.

For college students who have declared dietetics as their major, the goal is:

To successfully complete a coordinated program in dietetics or a didactic program and a dietetic internship and pass the registration examination for dietitians.

Or

To successfully complete a dietetic technician program and pass the registration examination for dietetic technicians.

For college students who have not yet declared a major, the goal is:

To select dietetics as their major.

For high school students, the goal is:

To go to college and select dietetics as their major.

For students in kindergarten through eighth grade, the goal is:

To have an understanding of and a positive view of the dietetics profession.

Mentor Program Objectives

Objectives are the measurable steps a program takes toward achieving a goal. For the diversity mentoring programs described in this toolkit, the objectives differ for each group of students.

For culturally diverse college students who have declared dietetics as their major, the objectives are:

- To help students be academically competitive by identifying his or her learning style and developing study skills. If the student's learning style does not match the teaching style in the classroom, the mentoring program can help address the differences and find resources so the student can perform at his or her highest level.
- To help culturally diverse students learn networking, presentation, and interviewing skills.
- To introduce culturally diverse students to people in the dietetics profession. (Note that this objective does not obligate a mentor to secure an internship or employment for a student. Being an active advocate for a protégé is optional.)

For college students from underrepresented groups who have not declared dietetics as their major, the objectives are:

- To assess the student's interest in and abilities for dietetics as a career by giving the student a complete picture of the dietetics profession in terms of benefits, rewards, and challenges.
- To guide students in taking the appropriate courses to enter the dietetics program.
- To offer academic support by identifying the student's learning style and developing study skills so the student can excel. If the student's learning style does not match the teaching style in the classroom, the mentoring program can help address the differences so the student can perform at his or her highest level.

- To offer encouragement by helping culturally diverse students find job opportunities in the dietetics field. Having dietetics experience can help in securing an internship later.

For culturally diverse high school students, the objectives are:

- To identify students who may be interested in dietetics.
- To present dietetics as a desirable career.
- To guide students in taking the appropriate high school courses to prepare them for college.
- To offer academic support so students can excel.
- To encourage and help students in applying for college and financial aid.
- To help students find summer employment in dietetics or a related field.

For students in kindergarten through the eighth grade, the objectives are:

- To acquaint students with a dietetics professional so they can understand the profession.
- To present a positive view of dietetics through hands-on learning experiences.

Mentor Program Designs

Three mentoring program designs exist: the one-to-one relationship between a mentor and protégé; group mentoring, which matches one or more mentors with a group of protégés; and telementoring, which allows a mentor and protégé to build a relationship via e-mail on the Internet. Each design has advantages and disadvantages (Table 1).

One-to-one mentoring

With this traditional approach, one mentor is matched with one protégé, which allows them to develop a close relationship. The mentor can become a trusted advisor to, as well as an advocate for, his or her protégé. On the other hand, this style is the most expensive to maintain involving increased volunteer time or the indirect costs of faculty time. Training, screening, and ongoing staff support is required. In addition, one-to-one matches occasionally do not work, so the mentor and protégé must be matched with others. Depending on the size of the program, there may not be enough mentors for the number of protégés wanting a match.

Group mentoring

In this approach, one or more mentors works with a group of protégés. Protégés have the flexibility to bond more closely with the adult of their choice. Also, when one mentor or protégé cannot attend a session, the program can continue with the other members of the group. This method is less costly than one-to-one mentoring, and typically it occurs at a supervised site, such as a school, so the safety and liability concerns of one-to-one mentoring do not apply. The drawbacks include not being able to develop strong one-to-one relationships and managing group dynamics so that more extroverted protégés are not the only young people receiving attention. Also, mentors are challenged not to spread themselves too thin, giving protégés less than the attention they need.

Telementoring

This design allows mentors and protégés to develop a relationship via e-mail. It is particularly effective for protégés in rural areas, where population and transportation

can impede a mentoring program — and where there may not be local dietitians available to be mentors. In addition, telementoring can be useful for protégés living in small towns, where everyone knows each other and confidentiality may be breached. Early research results show that boys and inner city protégés feel more comfortable being mentored online, and men are easier to recruit as mentors if the design used is telementoring. Telementoring is not expensive to manage, either. The disadvantages include the lack of a face-to-face relationship and the need for a central message site with a sorting mechanism so that mentor and protégé messages are exchanged only with each other. Even though the *Elements of Effective Practices* are followed, just as they are in one-to-one and group mentoring, the central message site also archives confidential e-mails so there is a record of the mentor/protégé relationship.

Table 1
Mentor Program Designs

Program Design	Advantages	Disadvantages
One-to-one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close relationship between mentor and protégé • Trust develops between mentor and protégé 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly • Staff support required • May need to rematch • More mentors required
Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not costly • Choice in bonding • Mentor/protégé absence doesn't sink program • Less liability at supervised location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong one-to-one relationship • Managing group dynamics • Less time for any one protégé
Telementoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural protégés can participate • Confidentiality for protégés from small towns • Some mentors/protégés more comfortable • Not costly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No face-to-face interaction • Need central message site with sorting, archiving ability

Elements of Effective Practice

In 1989, the National Mentoring Partnership and United Way of America convened a representative group of national and community-based nonprofit organizations with significant experience in running mentoring programs. These leaders met regularly to discuss issues and practices that were emerging in their mentoring programs, focusing especially on how to promote the growth of responsible mentoring programs. They defined responsible mentoring programs as those that meet the needs of the protégés and the volunteer mentors.

The collaboration led to the creation of the following elements of effective practice, which have proven to be effective in a wide range of existing mentoring settings.

Responsible mentoring

- Is a structured, one-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of the mentored participant
- Fosters caring and supportive relationships
- Encourages individuals to develop to their fullest potential
- Helps an individual to develop his or her own vision for the future
- Is a strategy to develop active community partnerships

A responsible mentoring program requires

- A well-defined mission and established operating principles
- Regular, consistent contact between the mentor and the participant
- Support by the family or guardian of the participant
- Additional community support services
- An established oversight organization
- Adherence to general principles of volunteerism
- Paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills
- Written job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions
- Adherence to EEO requirements
- Inclusiveness of racial, economic, and gender representation as appropriate to the program
- Adequate financial and in-kind resources
- Written administrative and program procedures
- Written eligibility requirements for program participants
- Program evaluation and ongoing assessment
- A long-range plan that has community input
- Risk management and confidentiality policies
- Use of generally accepted accounting practices
- A prudent and reasonable rationale for staffing requirements that is based on
 - the organization's statement of purpose and goals,
 - the needs of mentors and participants,
 - community resources, and
 - skill levels of staff and volunteers

Nuts and bolts checklist for mentoring programs

Does your program have the following?

1. A statement of purpose and long-range plan that includes:

- ✓ Who, what, where, when, why, and how activities will be performed
- ✓ Input from originators, staff, funders, potential volunteers, and participants
- ✓ Assessment of community need
- ✓ Realistic, attainable, and easy-to-understand operational plan
- ✓ Goals, objectives, and timelines for all aspects of the plan
- ✓ Funding and resource development plan

2. A recruitment plan for both mentors and participants that includes:

- ✓ Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits
- ✓ Year-round marketing and public relations
- ✓ Targeted outreach based on participants' needs
- ✓ Volunteer opportunities beyond mentoring
- ✓ A basis in your program's statement of purpose and long-range plan

3. An orientation for mentors and participants that includes:

- ✓ Program overview
- ✓ Description of eligibility, screening process and suitability requirements
- ✓ Level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility)
- ✓ Expectations and restrictions (accountability)
- ✓ Benefits and rewards they can expect
- ✓ A separate focus for potential mentors and participants
- ✓ A summary of program policies, including written reports, interviews, evaluation and reimbursement

4. Eligibility screening for mentors and participants that includes:

- ✓ An application process and review
- ✓ A face-to-face interview and home visit
- ✓ Reference checks for mentors, which may include character references, child abuse registry check, driving record checks and criminal record checks where legally permissible
- ✓ Suitability criteria that relate to the program statement of purpose and needs of the target population, including personality profile; skills identification; gender; age; language, and racial requirements; level of education; career interests; motivation for volunteering; and academic standing
- ✓ Successful completion of prematch training and orientation

5. A readiness and training curriculum for all mentors and participants that includes:

- ✓ Trained staff trainers
- ✓ Orientation to the program and resource network, including information and referral, other supportive services and schools
- ✓ Skills development as appropriate
- ✓ Cultural/heritage sensitivity and appreciation training
- ✓ Guidelines for participants on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship
- ✓ Do's and don'ts of relationship management
- ✓ Job and role descriptions
- ✓ Confidentiality and liability information
- ✓ Crisis management/problem solving resources
- ✓ Communications skills development
- ✓ Ongoing sessions as necessary

6. A matching strategy that includes:

- ✓ A link with the program's statement of purpose
- ✓ A commitment to consistency
- ✓ A grounding in the program's eligibility criteria
- ✓ A rationale for the selection of this particular matching strategy from the wide range of available models
- ✓ Appropriate criteria for matches, including gender, age, language requirements, availability, needs, interests, preferences of volunteer and participant, life experience, temperament
- ✓ A signed statement of understanding that both parties agree to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship
- ✓ Prematch social activities between mentor and participant pools
- ✓ Team building activities to reduce the anxiety of the first meeting

7. A monitoring process that includes:

- ✓ Consistent, scheduled meetings with staff, mentors and participants
- ✓ A tracking system for ongoing assessment
- ✓ Written records
- ✓ Input from community partners, family, and significant others
- ✓ A process for managing grievances, praise, rematching, interpersonal problem solving, and premature relationship closure

8. A support, recognition, and retention component that includes:

- ✓ A formal kick-off event
- ✓ Ongoing peer support groups for volunteers, participants, and others
- ✓ Ongoing training and development
- ✓ Relevant issue discussion and information dissemination
- ✓ Networking with appropriate organizations
- ✓ Social gatherings of different groups as needed
- ✓ Annual recognition and appreciation event
- ✓ Newsletters or other mailings to participants, mentors, supporters, and funders

9. Closure steps that include:

- ✓ Private and confidential exit interviews between participant and staff, mentor and staff, and mentor and participant without staff to debrief the mentoring relationship
- ✓ Clearly stated policy for future contacts
- ✓ Assistance for participants in defining next steps for achieving personal goals

10. An evaluation process based on:

- ✓ Outcome analysis of program and relationship
- ✓ Program criteria and statement of purpose
- ✓ Information needs of board, faculty, administrators, funders, community partners, and other supporters of the program

How to Select the Best Program for Your Organization

In selecting the best program for your organization, ask the following questions:

- **What is our program's goal?**

Knowing the outcome that you want from your program gives you a head start on choosing your program design. For example, if your goal is to expose culturally diverse elementary students to dietetics, then group activities can be successful. A dietetics practitioner can visit the classroom in a school with a high minority population monthly for a food demonstration that includes the students as participants. By doing activities and getting information, students will understand dietetics and see that the career can be fun. On the other hand, if your goal is to improve college students' grade point averages and make internships more accessible to them, then a one-to-one mentoring relationship with a dietitian or dietetic technician is going to be most effective.

- **What resources do we have?**

After examining your goal, the ideal program design will become clearer. The next step is identifying the resources you need and the resources you have available. If the two are compatible, you are all set. However, if you do not have the resources you need, you must revisit your goal and choose an alternative that can still work within your parameters. For example, telementoring may be the answer for a college student who cannot travel for a face-to-face visit. Mentoring does not have to be an "all or nothing" proposition. You do not have to have a Cadillac in order to have a car.

It is critical to have the support of your members, faculty, and administration for the mentoring program design. Relating the mentoring program to the organization's

goals will aid in gaining this support. The program must not only have buy-in from the leaders, but also buy-in from the grass roots. When everyone is in agreement, the program will have the funding, promotion, follow through, and enthusiasm to succeed.

Program Staffing

A program manager and program assistant can be the same person, but there are enough responsibilities to accommodate two positions.

Program manager job description

The mentoring program manager should:

- Establish the mentoring initiative and be responsible for its overall operations.
- Schedule and attend regular and special meetings necessary to the operation of the mentoring initiative.
- Establish and manage the mentoring initiative's annual budget; oversee the fiscal reporting process.
- Oversee mentor and protégé recruitment, training, screening, matching, recognition, and other aspects of the mentoring process.
- Oversee relationship monitoring and documentation process; be available to help solve problems that arise either in the process or between the mentor and protégé.
- Share information and evaluation results with ADA and the public, as necessary.

Program assistant job description

The mentoring program assistant can:

- Provide clerical and administrative support, including report and letter writing; data entry; record, equipment and supplies maintenance; and board support.
- Establish and maintain currency of mentor/protégé documentation format.
- Keep all materials for training current and available.
- Check mentor references and document results.
- Help monitor mentoring pairs and document all contacts with them.
- Offer front-line coverage for telephones and visitors.
- Handle mail distribution (incoming and outgoing).

3. Recruitment and Screening of Mentors

Marketing Your Program

In recruiting mentors for the *Building Our Future* program, we are looking for quality people who are skilled in the dietetics field, who are committed to it in their careers, who really want to share their knowledge with young people, and who come from a culturally diverse background. Certainly before you can recruit such people, you must get their attention. You have many options at your disposal, and you can use them separately or in combination with one another. These options include telephone contact, e-mail messages, advertising, covering the program in your newsletter, and pitching your local media to do a feature. Some suggestions and sample materials follow.

One helpful hint is to have a distinctive logo, graphic layout, and specific colors to present a consistent, recognizable message. Having a slogan that sticks in people's minds also delivers your message. Use these elements on your stationary, envelopes, fliers, and brochures to command attention.

Make sure everyone in your organization knows about the mentoring initiative and your need for mentors. Do you sponsor an inclusive event? Use it to make a splashy announcement! Do you have a newsletter? Use it to run an article, photograph and/or "advertisement" about the program! Do you have an e-mail network? Use it to send the message! Think of any communication tool at your disposal, and use it to get the word out.

Letting others know about this mentoring initiative and its importance to the future of dietetics gives them time to absorb its value. Communicating the benefits beforehand is much more effective than contacting those with no background, and your recruiters will thank you for making their job that much easier.

Recruitment Strategy

Influential leaders can help

Look to your board of directors, faculty, or administrators to recruit mentors. Who among them has the most clout? Whose name is recognizable? Who can be most persuasive when asking for help? Who has already been the most supportive of this mentoring initiative? These are the people you should invite to help recruit your pool of mentors.

Make the value of the mentoring initiative clear to your board members, faculty, or administration, and give them the information they need to make their calls. Mentoring offers immense advantages to student—a mentor can provide real-life perspectives about the dietetics field, help academically, and introduce students into a network of dietetics professionals. It also has value for the mentor—students can share their enthusiasm and fresh ideas.

But, a mentoring initiative has value beyond the personal gains for protégés and their mentors. It is an investment in the future of dietetics as a whole. By guiding and supporting minorities in choosing dietetics as a life-long career, this program will develop the diverse talent that is needed to serve the equally diverse population throughout America.

Additional Resources

After the first mentoring programs are implemented, ADA will evaluate the results and provide members with information to use in recruitment. You may have testimonials from mentors and protégés that will be helpful, as well. In addition, former mentors may be willing to help recruit a new group of mentors.

In the meantime, the National Mentoring Partnership's website, www.mentoring.org, provides information on numerous topics, including recruitment, and connects users with local mentoring partnerships that may have additional useful information and materials.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR RECRUITMENT TELEPHONE CALL

Hello, (FIRST NAME),

This is (FULL NAME). I'm a member of the (Insert organization name). I am calling you about a wonderful investment opportunity, and it doesn't have a thing to do with money. It simply involves your time and talent.

You're probably aware that the field of dietetics is lacking in minority professionals — to the point that we are not able to serve people in (NAME OF STATE) the way we should. So, we've established a mentoring program that introduces dietetics to young people and matches professionals like you with minorities who could consider dietetics as a career.

Obviously, the students get to see what dietetics is all about, and they'll benefit from a relationship with you. We want them to understand that, while dietetics takes a lot of work, it is a rewarding career with many opportunities to grow. The bottom line is that we want to recruit culturally diverse students into our field.

I think you'll enjoy the experience, too. [INSERT PERSONAL MENTORING EXPERIENCE AND HOW REWARDING IT HAS BEEN.] I like hearing about what students are learning in school, and I like giving them a taste of reality.

So, I'm asking you today to be a mentor. You would commit to one school year, and depending on the type of program, you may be able to mentor in person, or you might participate in group mentoring or mentoring by e-mail. We would give you a little training ahead of time to make it that much easier.

Do you have any questions? [ANSWER QUESTIONS.] So, what do you say? Can I count you in?

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**WE ARE BUILDING
OUR FUTURE!**

Can You Help?

The American Dietetics Association has launched a mentoring program to increase cultural diversity in the field of dietetics. We need to expand the cultural diversity in our profession so we can match the cultural diversity of the nation and serve **all** Americans to the best of our abilities.

(INSERT A PICTURE
OF A CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEMBER)

To succeed, we need mentors! Please share your talent and experience with tomorrow's dietetics professionals. If you are called, say, **"Yes!"**.

If you want to volunteer,

[GO TO website? INCLUDE A PHONE NUMBER?]

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear (FIRST NAME),

I am writing you about a wonderful investment opportunity, and it doesn't have a thing to do with money. It simply involves your time and talent.

You're probably aware that the field of dietetics is lacking in minority professionals — to the point that we are not able to serve people in (NAME OF STATE) the way we should. So, we've established a mentoring program that introduces dietetics to young people and matches professionals like you with minorities who could consider dietetics as a career.

Through this program, students will learn about dietetics, and they will benefit from a relationship with you. We want them to understand that, while dietetics takes a lot of work, it is a rewarding career with many opportunities to grow. The bottom line is that we want to recruit minority students into our field.

I think you would enjoy the experience, too. I certainly have. I like hearing about what students are learning in school and being able to share my experience with them.

Would you consider joining me as a mentor? You would commit to one school year, and depending on the type of program, you may be able to mentor in person, or you might participate in group mentoring or mentoring by e-mail. You would receive training ahead of time to make it that much easier.

I hope you will say "yes" to this investment in the future of dietetics. I look forward to talking with you in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ORGANIZATION]

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Eligibility Criteria for Screening Mentors

The screening process is one of the most important elements of a successful mentoring initiative. Obviously, screening is conducted for the protégé's protection.

In the *Building Our Future* mentoring initiative, as in many programs, screening is the key to making compatible matches between mentors and their protégés, so the relationships have a better chance of success right from the start. The more we know about the mentor's personality, what he or she can offer in the relationship, and what he or she expects from the match, the closer we will come to making everyone happy.

Mentors should

- Be successful, experienced leaders in the dietetics field.
- Understand dietetics from a broad perspective in addition to their own specialties.
- Have strong verbal communication skills.
- Be enthusiastic about working with young people.
- Be culturally sensitive role models.
- Have the time and be willing to commit that time to the relationship.

Timing the Screening Process

The screening process includes interviewing, reference checking, and, in some instances, criminal record checking. You may wish to screen mentors prior to training; but other mentoring programs have found that some mentors screen themselves out of the program once they have been through training, or fail to show up for the training. In those cases, the time and expense of interviewing and screening have been largely wasted. It may be preferable to invite all interested volunteers to attend training prior to any screening activities. That way, they will be able to "self-screen" at training, and you know that everyone who takes the next step is a serious candidate. Either sequence can work, but bear in mind that it may be most efficient to conduct the training first.

Interview Phase

The interview phase is the best opportunity to get to know potential mentors. First, you can discover which candidates will be effective. Second, you can find out the characteristics that will help make a successful match between mentor and protégé.

Getting a profile of your protégés can be helpful in this process, as well. The more you know about your mentors and protégés, the better matches you will make.

Put your applicants at ease in this part of the process by telling them that the interview is designed to help you make better matches, not to screen them out of the program. (If someone needs to be removed, the reference check generally takes care of that.) On the following pages are a sample mentor profile form and format for interviewing potential mentors. These forms should be kept in each mentor's file.

SAMPLE MENTOR PROFILE

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (w) _____ (h) _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Title/Organization _____

Education Background _____

Summary Job Description _____

I would prefer to be matched with a: (check one)

- High School Student
- College Student, Undeclared Major
- College Student, Declared Dietetics Major

**The areas I am most interested in helping a student are:
(check as many as you wish)**

- career guidance
- academic guidance (course selection, etc.)
- time management
- job search
- networking
- resume preparation
- job-seeking skills
- interviewing skills
- personal issues
- sharing my own experiences

I have _____ hours a month to devote to mentoring.

I would prefer to mentor (check all that apply):

- In person
- E-mail
- Phone
- Combination of in-person and other

My best time to meet with a student is generally:

- Morning
- Midday
- Evening

continued

SAMPLE MENTOR PROFILE (CONT.)

I am available:

- During the week Weekends Either weekday or weekends

What type of personality are you most comfortable with?

What do you hope your student will gain from this relationship?

What do you hope to gain from this relationship?

In matching you with a student, is there anything else we should take into account?

Personal references:

Please provide names and daytime phone numbers for two personal references:

1. _____ Phone: _____

2. _____ Phone: _____

Thank You

SAMPLE INTERVIEW FORMAT - MENTOR

What questions do you have about the program?

Why would you like to be a mentor?

When you were in school, did you have a mentor? If so, what kinds of things did that person do for you?

Tell me a little bit about other volunteer activities you have been involved with. What did you like? What did you not like?

What kinds of extracurricular activities were you involved in during school?

What, if any, has been your recent experience with young people (church, volunteer activities, own children, etc.)?

Realistically, how much time do you have to devote to a student?

What type of student would you most enjoy working with?

What problems do you anticipate? What could go wrong? [Talking about potential problems gives candidates a chance to think ahead and avoid pitfalls. It also gives you a chance to tell them about the kinds of support they can expect if something does go wrong.]

Is there anything else that might help us match you with the most appropriate student for you?

Interviewer's comments:

Date _____

Potential mentor's name _____

Interviewer's name _____

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SAMPLE STUDENT PROFILE

Name _____

Address _____

School (if different) _____

Phone: (h) _____ (school) _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

School Attending _____

I am in my: (check one)

first year second year third year fourth year

Expected date of completion _____

My program is a (check one)

high school bachelor's degree master's degree certificate program

My area of specialty is _____

I am also interested in _____

The areas where I would most like help from a mentor are:

(check as many as you wish)

- career guidance
- academic guidance (course selection, etc.)
- time management
- job search
- networking
- resume writing
- job-seeking skills
- interviewing skills
- personal issues
- sharing the mentor's own experiences

I have _____ hours a month to devote to mentoring.

I would prefer to meet my mentor (check all that apply):

In person E-mail Phone Combination of in-person and other

I would prefer a mentor who is located (check one):

Where I go to school Near my home

My best time to meet with a mentor is generally:

Morning Midday Evening

continued

SAMPLE STUDENT PROFILE (CONT.)

I am available:

During the week Weekends Either weekday or weekends

What type of personality are you most comfortable with?

What do you hope to gain from this relationship?

What do you hope your mentor will gain from this relationship?

In matching you with a mentor, is there anything else we should take into account?

Emergency Contact

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____

Thank You

SAMPLE INTERVIEW FORMAT – PROTÉGÉ

What questions do you have about the program?

Why would you like to be a protégé?

Have you ever had a mentor before? If so, what kinds of things did that person do for you?

What kinds of extracurricular activities are you involved in?

Realistically, how much time do you have to devote to this relationship?

What type of mentor would you most enjoy working with?

What problems do you anticipate? What could go wrong? [Talking about potential problems gives protégés a chance to think ahead and avoid pitfalls. It also gives us a chance to tell them about the kinds of support they can expect if something does go wrong.]

Is there anything else that might help us match you with the most appropriate mentor for you?

Interviewer's comments:

Date _____

Protégé's name _____

Interviewer's name _____

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Reference Check Process

A reference check can be used for the protégé's protection, but for your purposes, the reference check gives you another tool to help make better mentor/protégé matches. Another creative use for the reference check is that it can be a good recruiting tool. If the reference is a dietetics professional, it is possible that he/she may also be willing to mentor.

Reference checks should be done by people who know the potential mentor well — a coworker or friend, for example. As done with the applicants, people called as references should be told that the process is not so much about screening people as it is about getting to know them better.

On the following page is a sample format for documenting reference checks. At least two personal references should be checked, and the completed forms should be kept in the mentor's file.

SAMPLE REFERENCE CHECK FORMAT

Identify yourself and explain that the applicant has given this person as a reference for volunteer work as a mentor. Describe your program.

How long have you known the applicant?

In what capacity do you know him/her?

How would you describe this person?

Have you had the opportunity to see the applicant interact with young people? If so, describe the experience.

Are you aware of any reason that the applicant should not be paired with a protégé in this program?

Do you feel that the applicant would do well in the mentoring role I have described?

If so, what type of young person do you think the applicant would best relate to?

Is there anything else you can tell me that would help us make the best match for this applicant?

Thank you. Is there additional information you would like about our program?

Date _____

Potential mentor's name _____

Interviewer's name _____

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Criminal Record Checks

A criminal check of potential mentors, conducted with your local police department, will protect your organization and will screen out people who clearly are inappropriate to become mentors. Until recently, many programs avoided police checks because they were time-consuming and, depending upon the jurisdiction, costly. Moreover, mentoring program managers were afraid that volunteers might be put off by having to undergo a police check. However, several high-profile cases of mentors' endangering their protégés, including cases of sexual abuse, have awakened concern among the general public, and parents in particular. More and more programs have determined that it is best practice to conduct a police check on anyone mentoring a minor, and today's volunteers understand and accept the need for this screening.

You must have the potential mentor's written permission to contact the police. After you have received the applicant's police report, keep it in his or her file.

Procedure for Handling Questionable Records

There is no question that anyone who has committed a sex-related or drug-dealing offense must be disqualified from the ADA *Building Our Future* initiative. However, criminal record checks often show offenses that may or may not have an impact on the applicant's ability to mentor. Likewise, certain questionable offenses may or may not place your organization in legal jeopardy. Refer any queries to your attorney, get a written response, and keep it in your files.

An example would be a conviction for a 25-year-old driving while intoxicated. Was the offense committed when the applicant was in college? What were the circumstances? Was it an isolated offense, or do you have reason to suspect an ongoing problem? With the help of an attorney, you must be prepared to assess this kind of situation and make a judgment call about an applicant's suitability for mentoring.

Making the Cut

As soon as you have completed the screening process and approved your pool of mentors, send them a letter of congratulations. The letter should include:

- A message of welcome from your organization
- A reminder of the date(s) you have scheduled for mentor training
- A mention of how critical it is for them to attend training, especially because it will make the mentoring relationship easier for them and more effective for their protégés

4. Training, Matching, and Monitoring Mentors and Protégés

Goals for Training

Training for mentors gives them a chance to self-screen — to examine what is going to happen in the mentoring relationship and to ask himself or herself, “Is being a mentor really for me?”

Second, training allows mentors to become comfortable with the structure of the *Building Our Future* program. It teaches them where to begin, how to proceed, and where to turn should any problems arise during their mentor/protégé relationship.

Third, training gives the program manager and mentors a chance to get acquainted with one another so their future interactions can be more personable.

Training for protégés may sound strange to anyone who has not been associated with a mentoring program. Why would a protégé need to be trained? Because, contrary to what people tend to think about mentoring pairs, it is the *protégé* who drives the relationship.

When protégés attend training, it is an opportunity for them to become fully informed about the commitment they are making and to understand how they can make the best use of the mentoring relationship. Often, young people focus heavily on the advice they will get from their mentors. They think less about the access their mentors can give them — in this case — to others in the dietetics field and the support their mentors can give them by being their advocates. Training also should help protégés understand what they must do to inspire mentors to go the extra mile on their behalf (Table 2).

Look for training resources through a local mentoring partnership, a local mentoring organization such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and the National Mentoring Partnership's website, www.mentoring.org.

Table 2
At a Glance – Why Train Protégés?

Because protégés drive most relationships
Because young people should be empowered through understanding their role and their mentor's role
Because protégés will gain most from their relationships if they know what to do and what not to do
To ensure the young people have a clear understanding of the mentor/protégé relationship
To ensure that young people understand the program design and expectations
To ensure that young people are willing participants
To ensure that young people recognize the signs of trouble and know where to turn
To allow the program manager to share information about young people's expectations with mentors

How to Use the Sample Training Materials

The following sample agendas and handouts can be used in the mentor and protégé training sessions. Additional handouts helpful to mentors can be found in **Section II** of this toolkit, under the tab specific to an age group. For example, the “Challenges Faced in the Freshman and Sophomore Year” will be useful to mentors of undeclared majors, and the “Developmental Aspects of Adolescence” will help mentors of college students. Items that may be included in training are highlighted in *bold italics* in the Table of Contents, so you can find what you need quickly.

The first handout, “The Three A’s of Mentoring: Advice, Access and Advocacy” reminds trainees of the key roles of a mentor. They can write notes under each of the 3 A’s.

The second handout, on ranking job priorities, is a good getting-acquainted activity for mentors of any student in high school or older. Define the terms (authority is when you can tell other people what to do, autonomy is when you get to make your own decisions, competence is the satisfaction you get from doing anything well, etc.) and ask the trainees to rank them in order of priority. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. The answers depend on individual personalities and someone’s stage in life. It’s fun to compare notes with a new protégé, and see what their priorities are. A mentor can discuss ways in which the practice of dietetics might fit well with the student’s priorities.

Sensitivity to cultural diversity is critical to the success of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Due to the demographics in the profession, it may often be the case that a white mentor will be matched with a minority student. We do not want to stereotype any minority group with certain group behaviors. However, we want every mentor to be aware that for any given behavior, there are cultural as well as individual elements. For example, a shy person may speak very softly. But in some cultures, it is the norm for all communication to take place in a low voice. Likewise, eye contact or lack of it may be the cultural norm. You can’t expect a firm handshake from someone whose culture favors bowing, and has never learned to shake hands “American-style.”

The cultural diversity handout identifies some common behaviors and attitudes that may be misunderstood. Invite the volunteers to think of other such behaviors, and discuss ways they can learn to better understand their protégé’s cultural background. Also, encourage participants to identify at least three behaviors of their own that they think of as “cultural.” Would a person from another culture know that these were cultural norms, or might they interpret these behaviors as personal quirks?

The “Do’s and Don’ts” may look like mere common sense; but this list has been developed after years of observing mentor/protégé pairs that work, as well as those that fail. Try to flesh out the “do’s and don’ts” with concrete examples.

Following the handouts for mentor training are handouts that you can use in protégé training sessions. The first handout is a worksheet that the student can fill out to help focus on his/her own definition of mentoring, and on the specific things a mentor might do. It also reminds the protégé to focus on what the mentor might need and expect in return. You can have students discuss their answers in small groups, followed by a large group debriefing.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR MENTOR TRAINING SESSION

Topics for Discussion

Welcome and Introductions

Participants and mentor program committee/volunteer leaders

Program Overview

Program design and goals

Definition of the Mentor/Protégé Relationship

Voluntary relationship in which the mentor serves as advisor, advocate and friend

Functions of a Mentor

Listening, teaching skills, advocacy, exposure to opportunities, increasing protégé's visibility, sharing one's own experience and perspectives

Getting Started

Self-assessment of motivation, expectations, background, assets, limitations and fears, communication skills

Cultural Diversity

Challenges Faced by Students

Establishing Mutual Expectations for Process and Outcome

Setting Goals

Designing a Work Plan

Frequency and structure of meetings, tasks to be accomplished, target dates

Pitfalls

Do's and Don'ts

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WHAT COUNTS ON THE JOB:
RANKING PRIORITIES

*RANK EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACCORDING TO ITS
IMPORTANCE TO YOU.*

AUTHORITY

AUTONOMY

COMPETENCE

CREATIVITY

SECURITY

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CULTURAL AWARENESS

For each of the following behaviors, list possible cultural variations:

- Eye contact
- Handshake
- Tone of voice
- Comfortable physical space between two people
- Inclusion of a new person into a group
- Greeting strangers on the street (yes, no, how?)
- Direct vs. indirect responses to difficult questions
- Treatment of elders (forms of address, etc.)
- Values and attitudes regarding the roles of males and females
- Family values
- Food habits
- Others

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MENTOR DO'S AND DON'TS

Do

- Show respect.
- Listen attentively.
- Give honest feedback.
- Keep appointments.
- State clear expectations.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Learn from your protégé.
- Remember what it was like to be a student.
- Let your protégé know how you're gaining.
- Remember: a mentor always sets an example.
- Start and end on a positive note.
- Have fun.

Don't

- Intimidate protégé.
- Jump to conclusions.
- Sugarcoat negatives.
- Act preoccupied.
- Promise what you can't deliver.
- Reveal confidences.
- Be afraid to explore differences.
- Assume that what works for you works for everyone.
- Give personal advice.
- Put off meetings repeatedly.

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SAMPLE AGENDA FOR PROTÉGÉ TRAINING SESSION

Purpose: To make the protégé familiar with the mentor/protégé relationship and comfortable with the protégé role.

Topics for Discussion

Welcome and Introductions

Participants and mentor program committee/volunteer leaders

Program Design

Program design and goals

Definition of "Mentor"

How to Get the Most Out of Your Mentoring Relationship

Setting Goals and Establishing a Plan

Do's and Don'ts

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WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is (fill in your definition):

What can a mentor do for you?

1.

2.

3.

What does a mentor need/expect from you?

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THE THREE A'S OF MENTORING

ADVICE

ACCESS

ADVOCACY

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PROTÉGÉ DO'S AND DON'TS

Do

- Talk to your mentor.
- Return phone calls.
- Suggest activities you would enjoy.
- Let your mentor know how they can help you.
- Be honest about things you want to do and things you don't want to do.
- Show up for meetings...on time!
- Call in advance if you have to cancel a meeting.
- Let your mentor know that you appreciate what he/she is doing.
- Show interest in your mentor.
- Explore differences between you and your mentor (age, race, etc.).

Don't

- Fail to return phone calls.
- Stand your mentor up when you have a meeting scheduled.
- Agree to do something you don't want to do.
- Wait for your mentor to make every move first.
- Let your mentor set goals for you.
- Allow yourself to be intimidated.
- Avoid communicating about problems.
- Expect your mentor to buy you things.
- Bring friends along when you are meeting your mentor.
- Allow your mentor to touch you in an inappropriate fashion...ever!

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Criteria for Matching Mentors and Protégés

Matching your mentors with your protégés is the magic moment when you use all the information you have gathered to create the best mentoring pairs possible. Above everything else, you should rely on two things—personality compatibility and what participants expect from their relationships.

The personality factor

Mentors should not be allowed to say they will be happy to mentor whomever needs him or her the most. Encourage people to be honest about whether they would rather work with a shy student or an outgoing student, a creative student or a pragmatic student, etc. Your program needs to make the *best* matches, not just any matches. Plus, experience shows that there are enough different types of people to accommodate everyone's needs.

Common expectations

You may be able to match people with the same professional interests so they will share common ground regarding process and outcome.

You also want to consider the time your participants have for this relationship, what kinds of activities they are willing to experience and what they are going to call “success” when the year is over. Knowing these expectations can help you make better matches. In other words, if you have a mentor who is willing to move mountains, then you want to match him or her with a student who wants to go along for the ride.

What about gender?

Certain mentoring situations require same-sex pairs. However, in the *Building Our Future* initiative, as with other career related mentoring programs, gender is not a factor and should not play a dominant role in matching your mentors with your protégés. However, keep in mind that opposite-sex pairs can present challenges. Use your best judgment in recruiting mentors younger than 30 to work with high school- and college-age students.

Notifying Mentors and Protégés

After you have matched protégés with mentors, send a letter of notification to all. Make sure you include the mentor's profile in the protégé's letter and vice versa. Each should have the chance to know something about the other before their first conversation. A sample letter and profile forms follow.

SAMPLE MATCH NOTIFICATION LETTER

Dear [NAME],

I am delighted to tell you that you have been matched with [NAME AND TITLE (for mentors)/SCHOOL AND YEAR (for protégés)] as your mentor/protégé in the [INSERT ORGANIZATION'S NAME] *Building Our Future* mentoring initiative.

Based on your personalities, common interests, and expectations, we believe this match will lead to a fun and rewarding mentoring relationship. To help in the “getting to know you” phase, I am enclosing your mentor’s/protégé’s profile with this letter. It includes a way to contact your partner, and I encourage you to communicate with him/her soon.

As you know from your training, we are here to answer questions or provide help at any time. We also will be in touch periodically to hear about your mentoring experiences.

All the best as you begin on this exciting journey with your mentor/protégé!

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION

**SAMPLE PARENTAL PERMISSION AND
WAIVER OF LIABILITY**
(for High School Students)

The undersigned, as the parent/guardian of the participant and as a condition to the participant's enrollment in the Mentor Program (hereafter "the Program"), hereby agrees to release and hold harmless [Sponsoring Organization], its agents, volunteers, current and former directors, officers, employees, successors, assigns and legal representatives from all claims, causes of action, damages, suits or demands of any kind or nature whatsoever, in law or equity, known or unknown, contingent or liquidated, arising out of the participant's involvement in the Program. Further, the undersigned acknowledges that this release waives any legal rights the undersigned and the participant may have against [sponsoring organization], its agents, volunteers, successors, assigns and legal representatives for any injury or loss which the participant may sustain in connection with or as a result of participation in the Program. The undersigned also acknowledges that [sponsoring organization] has explained the policies regarding meetings and visits with the Mentors and participants, and accepts that, in no event, will [sponsoring organization] be held responsible for any consequences of the participant's involvement in the Program.

I, Parent/Guardian (please circle) give my permission for _____
_____ to participate in the Mentor Program.

Parent/Guardian's name printed

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

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Monitoring/Support for Mentor/ Protégé Pairs

Keeping track of your mentoring relationships is important to their health and to the life of your program. Periodic communication gives the mentor and protégé the chance to affirm their progress, as well as ask for help as needed. Knowing what is happening with your mentoring pairs gives your program accountability and a way to evaluate its effectiveness. This information is crucial to the continued funding of the initiative and to the ultimate realization of your goals.

For the first three months, make sure the program coordinator or assistant calls the mentors and protégés once each month. The coordinator should have a check-off form with questions such as those on the sample Activity Report Form on the next page. The conversation should end with a discussion of whether the mentor/protégé agreed to do anything requiring follow-through for his/her next meeting. This gives the coordinator the chance to offer ideas, provide resources, if necessary, and encourage the mentor/protégé to fulfill his/her promise.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY REPORT FORM

Mentor Name _____

Protégé Name _____

Coordinator Name _____

Date of Contact _____

Have you and your mentor/protégé talked on the phone, e-mailed, met in person?

Have you talked about course choices the protégé is making for school?

Have you talked about time management?

Have you discussed the protégé's career direction?

Have you talked about places the protégé might go or people he/she might meet relative to the dietetics field?

Have you discussed how you will keep in touch and how often?

Other Issues/Comments/Notes for follow-up:

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Troubleshooting

It is not unusual during your monitoring calls for mentors and protégés to mention problems that have come up in their relationship. Program coordinators then have the chance to troubleshoot the situation.

The most common problem is having either the mentor or the protégé not be responsive to communication efforts. In that case, the coordinator could call the person not communicating and find out why he/she is not following through with the mentoring commitment. Depending on the answer, the coordinator then must explain the situation to the person not at fault and ask for patience or terminate the relationship.

Problems also arise when expectations are not being met. Typically, these are the expectations that were not divulged to the program coordinator or in the relationship. Perhaps the protégé expects that his/her mentor will get him/her an internship or the mentor expects that his/her protégé is going to perform certain tasks as part of the experience. If no one has discussed these expectations, problems are bound to arise. Again, the program coordinator can help the pair solve their problems or, in certain situations, intervene to get things back on track.

A program coordinator with tact and diplomacy skills is important. Possessing a bit of wisdom does not hurt, either.

Terminating Relationships

If a mentor and protégé agree that their match is not going to work, you need to terminate their relationship.

When the termination is voluntary, simply send a letter, thanking each for participating in the program and saying that their relationship has ended. You also can assess, with the mentor and the protégé, whether they want to be rematched for another mentoring opportunity.

A mentoring relationship can be terminated involuntarily too. This happens when there is a consistent lack of communication between the mentor and protégé or when your program coordinator cannot get in touch with the mentor or the protégé for more than a month. At that time, send a letter to the person at fault, saying that if the program coordinator does not get a call or e-mail within 10 business days, the relationship will be terminated.

Termination is the only alternative, of course, when either the mentor or the protégé exhibits inappropriate behavior. Harassment of any kind would be considered inappropriate. So would sexual behavior or innuendo and ethical or professional violations.

SAMPLE TERMINATION LETTER

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your willingness to be a mentor/protégé in the [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] *Building Our Future* mentoring initiative. However, because of the circumstances of the match, the relationship with your mentor/protégé has been terminated.

If you wish to discuss your continued involvement in the program, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION

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5. Evaluation, Recognition and Follow Up

Establishing Measures of Success

Most mentoring programs focus more on process than outcome. Yet, programs are evaluated based on outcome, and they are accountable for outcome. So, before your program begins, you must establish measures of success, which are based on your goal(s). Ask the question, "What outcome(s) do we want and expect?" Then, make sure your objectives support the outcome(s) you have chosen.

Note that your evaluation must be practical, based on the size and scope of your program. There is a balance you must find between gathering the necessary information and trying to evaluate every aspect of the process. Again, ask what outcome(s) you want and why.

Documenting Mentor/Protégé Activities

The program coordinator or assistant should contact mentors and protégés on a regular basis, ask questions about the mentoring relationship, and record the answers. When mentoring high school students, there are liability issues, and you must document that you have monitored those relationships. Keep all of your written records, and make sure your documentation continues from the beginning of the program to its end.

This process is much preferred over sending out a survey, which experience has shown may not be returned. A written survey can be useful at the end of the mentoring cycle, however, especially if mentors and protégés are able to complete it at the closing meeting or event.

The following is a sample documentation form.

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

NAME _____ DATE _____

Check if you are a: mentor protégé

Please answer each of the following questions on a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 being the least and 5 the greatest.

- 1. Overall satisfaction with the program 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. Satisfaction with mentor/protégé 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. Does the program benefit you in your current daily work? 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. Does the program deepen your understanding of the dietetics profession? 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. Does the program broaden your perspectives? 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. Satisfaction with individual support from program manager or coordinator 1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate the frequency of your meetings and other contacts.

- 7. Frequency of meetings: (check one)
 less than monthly monthly twice monthly weekly
- 8. Frequency of other contact, such as telephone: (check one)
 less than monthly monthly twice monthly weekly
- 9. Other contact was by (indicate all that apply):
 phone e-mail written memos other (specify) _____
- 10. Where have you held your meetings? (Indicate all that apply.)
 office on site off site lunch dinner other (specify)
- 11. What was your goal for this program? _____

continued

Please answer yes or no to the following questions:

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Are your goals being met? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. For protégés: Has your mentor provided the following:
For mentors: Have you provided: | | |
| a. Feedback on goals/objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Feedback on strategies for problem solving | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Information about the profession | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Advice on technical problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Advice on career development | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Recommendations on training or education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Advice on personal presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Sharing of own experience | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Information on job opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Information on internship opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. Introductions to other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l. Recommendations to other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m. Social interaction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Would you recommend this program to others? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please share comments or suggestions to improve the mentor program.

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Measuring Outcomes

For the *Building Our Future* diversity mentoring program, a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures is suggested. Examples of quantitative measures would be whether student grade point averages improved or whether students got internships in dietetics or related fields. Examples of qualitative measures would be whether mentor pairs/groups got together and how often, as well as what activities they completed.

Having both kinds of information will give you more insight into your program. You will discover which variables within the program are most valuable. You also will find out whether participants are happy, which is not a program goal but is important to the retention of mentors. Ultimately, having both kinds information will allow you to improve your program, as well as gather success stories and statistics.

Mentor Recognition

Everyone likes to be thanked. They also like to be recognized. We often take for granted that mentors give their time and talents in return for the joy they receive from the mentoring experience. Indeed, they are emotionally rewarded for their mentoring commitment. However, public recognition goes a long way toward recruiting, retaining, and motivating mentors because, by agreeing to volunteer, they become leaders in their fields. They become known for giving back. They are identified as contributing to the growth of the profession.

Never let an opportunity for recognition pass you by. For example, send a letter of recognition from the highest-ranking person in your organization to mentors as soon as their yearly commitment ends. Use an annual meeting or event to recognize your mentors.

Place an advertisement of recognition in local newspapers and magazines, if your budget allows. Recognize mentors in your newsletter with articles about their mentoring activities. Work with your local media to present features about your mentors and protégés on television or in print. Let ADA staff know about your outstanding mentor pairs so they can be promoted in industry trade publications and elsewhere.

Give mentors certificates and other tokens that they can put in their offices. And remember that something enjoyable, such as a mug with the words, "Thank you for mentoring!" and the ADA logo will make the program visible to others.

SAMPLE LETTER OF RECOGNITION

Dear [NAME]:

On behalf of the [ORGANIZATION NAME], I want to thank you for your outstanding efforts as a mentor in our Building the Future Diversity Mentoring Program over this past year. You have made a significant contribution both to the future of your protégé, to the dietetics profession, and to the community at large.

As a busy, successful professional, there are many demands on your time. Yet you have taken the time and energy to reach out to a young culturally diverse person, to help smooth their path to a successful career in dietetics. I am sure you know how much this means to your protégé. The kind of help you offered can be a life-shaping experience.

Your focus was on your protégé, and rightly so. But there is also the big picture—you have made a contribution to our profession by encouraging a minority person to enter the field, thus helping us reach our goal of a more diverse body of dietetics professionals. You have also helped your community. After all, we know that the overall health of the whole community will be best served by dietetics professionals who represent the cultural diversity in that community.

Again, thank you for helping to reach one of the American Dietetic Association's key strategic goals: to increase diversity in our profession. We could not reach this goal without you. We are grateful for your vision, leadership and energy.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION

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Long-Term Follow Up

As part of your evaluation process, make sure that you stay in touch with your protégés long term.

Before they graduate from high school, know where they are attending college. During and after college, confirm a permanent address. Contact protégés within the month following their college graduation to find out whether they have an internship or job, where they are working and whether their address has changed or is going to change.

If a protégé has not gotten an internship or job, keep in contact monthly until he/she is employed. This contact will provide support and the encouragement he/she might need to remain committed to the dietetics profession.

One-Year Questionnaire

One year after college graduation, send protégés a short questionnaire with questions such as:

- Where are you interning/working?
- What kind of work are you doing?
- Are you still in touch with your mentor?
- Did you learn anything from your mentor that is helping you succeed in your internship/job? If so, what?

Engaging in long-term follow-up gives you additional evaluative information that can be useful in promoting your mentoring initiative, in recruiting mentors, in grooming former protégés to be future mentors and in working with the media. Staying in touch long term also creates a network of mentors and protégés who can continue being helpful to one another professionally long after their mentoring commitment ends.

6. Select Resources on Mentoring

Texts, Monographs and Journal Publications

Mentoring:

The Kindness of Strangers: Adult Mentors, Urban Youth, and the New Voluntarism; Marc Freedman; Cambridge University Press; 1999 (paperback edition)

Contemporary Issues in Mentoring; Jean Grossman, ed; Public/Private Ventures; Philadelphia; 1999

Mentoring School-Age Children: Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs; Carla Herrera et al.; PPV; 2000

The Mentoring Guidebook; Lib Crockett and Jay Smink; The National Dropout Prevention Center; Clemson University, 1991

The ABC's of Mentoring; The National Mentoring Partnership; Alexandria, VA
How to be A Great Mentor; The National Mentoring Partnership; Alexandria, VA; 1999

Mentoring Minority Youth:

Cross Cultural Mentoring; Patricia Larke et. al, RAISE, Inc. 1989

Effects of Race, Gender and Perceived Similarity and Contact on Mentoring Relationships; Eshner and Murphy, Journal of Vocational Behavior, #50, 1997

Training Multiculturally Competent Counselors to work with Asian Americans; K.V. Chandras; Counselor Education and Supervision, v.30, # 1, 9/97

Mentoring College Bound Latino Students: The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, v.10 #10; 2/2000

Career-Oriented Mentoring for Minorities:

Mentoring and Early Encouragement as Keys to Getting more Hispanic Women into Educational Administration; Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, v.2, #5, 1/92

Myth Busters; K.T. Andes, Restaurant Business, June 10, 1993 (Black chefs mentor African American Youth)

Career-Oriented Mentoring in Health Care:

The Impact of Hospitals on Youth Mentoring Projects: The Commonwealth Fund's Hospital Youth Mentoring Project; Harwood et. al, The Lewin Group, 1997

Relationships in a Career Mentoring Program: Lessons Learned from the Hospital Youth Mentoring Program; Wendy McLanahan, PPV, 1998

The Research Apprenticeship Program: Promoting Careers in Biomedical and Health Professions for Minority Populations; Denise D. Davis, presented at the Annual Meeting of the Educational Research Association, Montreal, Ontario, April 19-23, 1999 (available through ERIC Clearinghouse)

