

## **How do we offer more support to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color youth with intersecting identities, specifically those who identify as LGBTQIA2S (two-spirit)+?**

Bring awareness, researching, continuing to educate yourself. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

We are all constantly learning about some of the best ways to support all youth and specifically youth in the communities described. We partner with advocacy organizations and we work to recruit in all of these communities to find mentors who can best support these youth. Research tells us that it is best when we can find a mentor from the communities that the youth reside in. When a youth can see themselves in their mentor the outcomes are better. That being said, any caring mentor can have an amazing impact on a youth even if they are not from the same community. What best practice then tells us is that we, as mentoring organizations, need to be able to provide learning opportunities for those mentors to better understand how to support the youth they are matched with. (Jim Bennett)

More funding and support to already existing programming ran by these different communities. So often, outsiders of these communities will want to 'support' by trying to force something into their own structures or their own programming on behalf of these minority groups. (Angel Geller)

## **How can Afterschool and Mentoring Programs partner in deeper and more meaningful ways?**

Planting it. Just talking about it. Educating others. Just by being there. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

From TeamMates perspective being a school based mentoring program, working closely with afterschool programming has been helpful and is a natural fit for mentoring and afterschool programming. The timing of afterschool can engage those community members that work during the day and can participate better after work hours. There needs to be some creativity to blend the two types of programming but it has huge unrealized potential. (Jim Bennett)

Being open to partnering with a variety of mentoring programs to meet the needs of the variety of youth in need in the community. (KB Mensah)

Think about investing vs. partnering. (Angel Geller)

## **How can our educational system better address the crisis of lack of mentorship?**

Mentorship doesn't have to take place in a school or formal setting. You don't have to be in a mentor position to be a mentor. You can be a mentor anytime and anywhere. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

Schools are a natural place to identify youth who might be in need of a mentor and tend to know the youth better than most. I don't believe that schools think about mentoring initially as a support and lean more on the formal structures and personnel that are in schools to support youth. Helping schools to think more about mentorship as a support and helping programs to recruit mentors to do the work would be a really great first couple of steps. (Jim Bennett)

Emphasize the concept of mentoring in classroom conversations and having a variety of resources/connections available to students (KB Mensah)

Create an environment of mentoring within the school system. Youth to youth mentorship normalizes this investment in another young person. Create incentives for teenagers to mentor and then recruit them right out of high school. (Angel Geller)

### **Would a stipend, or pool of benefits promote more involvement?**

More resources to help mentors be prepared of what a mentor does and look like. Training purposes. More fundraisers. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

When you pay mentors the dynamic changes for both the mentor and mentee. When a mentee knows that this caring adult comes to see me consistently and is doing so without any apparent incentive other than that they care, it becomes something incredibly powerful. That being said, we at TeamMates are looking to work with local businesses to provide discounts when a mentor can show their mentoring ID badge as a perk to volunteering their time. I am also sure that the other mentoring programs are looking at incentives as well. (Jim Bennett)

I could see a stipend or gas/grocery gift card being a great way to support mentors, especially if you recruit more college age- young adults (24+). Also find a way to reward and honor these mentors at certain milestones (4 years, 7 years, 10 years etc.) (Angel Geller)

### **In reflection on the next steps of mentoring in Lincoln, is this all inclusive information in moving forward?**

Showing up and being consistent. Continuing to advertise and fundraiser. Collaborate as a community. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

In the Lincoln Youth Mentoring Coalition State of Mentoring Report, we outlined what is next for the coalitions work on page 19. This includes identifying barriers to recruiting, identifying service gaps in Lincoln, conducting a long-term results-based report on mentoring and improving the youth referral processes and identification of a program to support youth. There is a whole lot of work that can, and needs to be done by the coalition and the individual programs within. (Jim Bennett)

### **What do you recommend young adults who don’t go to college do to find mentors?**

**Mentors are not just in college.** I would say find whatever it is you looking for to meet you exactly where you are. Maybe it’s in a form of a coach, professor, advisor, or even just a friend. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

Most mentoring happens for young adults in the work place or through a faith-based organization when not through a college or school. There are also men’s and women’s groups and service organizations that provide for mentorship as well. Sometimes just an identification of a non-formal mentor is best. Identifying someone in that young adult’s circle who would be willing to provide mentorship on a one-to-one basis (Jim Bennett)

Seek out representatives from the profession that youth are interested in pursuing or at their place of employment, that are accomplished positive role models. Connect with programs for older youth in the community such as The Hub or the WIOA programs. (KB Mensah)

Our Native young adults need support more than ever once they leave high school. I do wish there were more programming for 19+ youth. For whatever reason, a young person might not go directly to college. But those young people still need some kind of support, even if that just looks like a older youth group with some safe adults to keep guiding them. (Angel Geller)

### **What is being done to keep 1,000 Lincoln youth waiting for a match informed about community resources/opportunities?**

Advertising, Fundraising, Marketing. Bringing awareness to the community. (Je’Kerra Hopper)  
It has been my experience that the mentoring organizations are not providing this information.

Generally, in schools, clubs, afterschool programs or other service providers are where youth are informed about resources and opportunities. This is generally where they also heard about the mentoring programs and got them to sign up. (Jim Bennett)

### **How do you suggest an individual can open conversations with mentors/mentees who have opposing view points?**

Just use active listening skills. You don’t always have to have an opinion. Just be there. Support them. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

This is such a common issue in mentorship and it is important that organizations train to this point. Helping mentors have a clear understanding of their role in the mentorship is critical to a successful match. A mentor’s role is not to change opinions or debate based on view points. Listening, asking questions and providing support are very important through it is ok to disagree and have those discussions at the same time. Tough conversations are sometimes best had when doing other activities. Shooting hoops, going on a walk, playing cards or doing crafts. Lots of different strategies exist but the mentor should consider what they want as an outcome of the conversation before having it. (Jim Bennett)

Be open to learning about each other’s perspective, take the time to learn about each other’s background and reasons for having the viewpoint that they do (KB Mensah)

Ultimately mentees usually just want someone to listen. I think if it is appropriate to do so, the mentor can just ask, "do you mind if I give you my perspective?" and if the mentee gives the go ahead, then they can discuss. Otherwise, this isn't really a space for the mentor to "teach" lessons or try to change a young person's view point. (Angel Geller)

### **What is one thing you live by and try to install in your mentee?**

One of my rules to live is Never settle for less. I will always teach my mentee this and anyone that I come across. (Je’Kerra Hopper)

For my two mentee’s I strive to instill honesty and integrity. But overall, I would say that I want them to feel more hopeful after it is all over. If they are hopeful about their futures then good things are going to happen. (Jim Bennett)

Live your life to the fullest b/c you're not promised tomorrow (KB Mensah)

Just how big and vast the world is. When you haven't traveled or met a variety of different people, the world can seem small. But there is a bigger world out there with so many possibilities. It's also a good thing for me to be reminded of when I let small problems get me down. There is so much more happening around me, and so many more important things in life when it comes down to it. Make sure problems are right sized. (Angel Geller)

**For Je'Kerra and others- As a young woman, what would you say is key to staying focus on your goals and being a single mother, basically, how do you do it ?? What drives you to keep pushing?**

I would say what drives me is remembering what I never got to have or experience as a kid. Everything that I missed out on knowing I can never get the time back. I always remember how I felt in those moments. The pain and memories will never go away. I use the pain and turn it into power and that's what drives me, that's what keeps me focused on my goals. I know and seen exactly what I don't want for myself or my life. (Je'Kerra Hopper)

**For Je'Kerra- How do you feel the role of an experienced mentor fits into being a probation officer and do you believe stigma can be reduced through this blending?**

I would say absolutely. My job as a probationer officer is to meet my clients where they are. As a probationer officer my job is to keep the community safe and help my client change their behavior so they no longer reoffend. I am here to teach my client skills they do not have. Help them sharpen the skills they already have. In order for me to do this, I have to start by building a relationship first. I have to start by seeing my client for who they really are not what society says they are. I have to start there. The key is learning how to balance between the two and understanding when I need to enforce being a probation officer and when to not. They go hand in hand with one another and you cannot have one without the other. (Je'Kerra Hopper)

**What is your "Call to Action" for those listening and for Lincoln?**

It's just as simple as this. Pouring into our young adults is only going to make our communities a better and safer place. They are our next generation. We need to be the change we want to see in the world and that starts with our youth. (Je'Kerra Hopper)

Get involved! Mentoring can be deeply personal and may frighten some people, but it is the single most critical way to move the needle for at least one young person. Now more than ever our youth need this level of support and you can provide that to a lucky young person (Jim Bennett)

Invest in and build better relationships with communities that you'd like more mentors to come from. Want more mentors from the Native community? There are ways to approach the local community and it's unique. (Angel Geller)