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ABSTRACT

This ideabook is one of three products that make up a complete mentorship program. The purpose of the program is to increase the motivation of minority young women to pursue occupations and careers that will be in demand in the future. This book is intended for use by the mentors during their 2-hour training session. It is the basis for the workshop activities and includes general information about being a mentor as well as specific information about minority females and career development. Topics include characteristics of mentors, hints for being an effective mentor, talking about one's work, and productive conversations, nitty-gritty issues, and body language. It also contains descriptions of activities that mentors and students can complete during their time together. (YLB)

Helping Young Women at Work: An Ideabook for Mentors

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Preface

The material in this publication was developed as part of a one-year project funded in 1985 by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program. The Project, "Linking Career Role Models with Minority Young Women," was informally known as the Mentor Training Project. This preface includes a brief explanation of the project and descriptions of the four products developed in conjunction with it.

The primary goal of the Mentor Training Project was to increase the motivation of minority young women to pursue occupations and careers that will be in demand in the future. To achieve that goal, 25 minority career women in the Portland area were recruited and trained to be effective mentors. These women represented managerial and professional occupations, occupations involving technology, and nontraditional occupations for women. After undergoing training, these women served as mentors for the minority high school girls who participated in the project. A mentorship involved visits by the student to the mentor's place of work and structured activities for students to complete and reflect upon in a student career journal.

A second goal of the project was to strengthen the capacity of local communities to use mentors as vehicles for ensuring equity in career development programs for youth. To achieve this goal, a task force made up of key representatives of the schools, the community and private industry met regularly with project staff to help identify factors which influence the development and maintenance of collaborative relationships and programs.

This book, Helping Young Women at Work: An Ideabook for Mentors, was used by the mentors during their two-hour training session. It was the basis for the workshop activities, and includes general information about being a mentor as well as specific information about minority females and career development. It also contains descriptions of activities that mentors and students can complete during their time together. The Ideabook is one of four products. The other products are

Career Journal: a workbook for students to use during the mentorship. The Journal contains information, activities, and questions for students to consider; it complements the activities described in the Ideabook.

Workshop Leader's Guide for Mentor Training: a manual for presenters. The Leader's Guide contains background information about the mentor experience, tips about training, and step-by-step instructions on how to conduct a mentor training workshop.

Guidelines for School-Business-Community Collaboration: a Mentor Training brochure highlighting the benefits of collaboration and telling how to begin a mentorship program for minority young women.

Contents

Introduction

Adult role models can greatly help a young person get and keep that first big job, and can also be a factor in fostering the long-term motivation so necessary for career advancement. Having a mentor is especially helpful for youth facing unusual barriers to employment or advancement, such as those faced by young ethnic and minority women. In addition, the use of role models and mentors is an important avenue for motivating minority young women to find out about and to enter emerging technological occupations, careers in the sciences, and professional careers such as management, medicine, or law.

The purpose of the Ideabook is to prepare you to be an effective mentor for minority young women. This does not mean to imply that you may not already be effective. It's just that, while many schools have some kind of work-experience program that involves students visiting the workplace, no two programs are the same. Thus the result for a mentor can be an accumulation of slight differences in terms, conditions, or type of student that may be frustrating to contend with. Since working women of distinct ethnic or racial heritage are in demand as role models and mentors, they are likely to be asked to serve often. So you truly are a million-dollar resource, and it makes good business sense to take care of that investment!

This Ideabook and the training session accompanying it will give you the skills to make the most out of any encounter a student has with you during a work experience program. It will take you through the nitty-gritty details of getting started and setting ground rules. Further, it will help you decide what to talk about, what to do (and not do) with a student, and how to plant the seeds of long-term career motivation. As a result, you will look forward to working with students because you will know how to help someone else develop an interest in your occupation or career area and possibly pursue the same kind of career that has been satisfying to you.

What should you bring with you to any mentorship? Most of all, we assume you will bring your personal and professional vitality as a worker in a technological, scientific, professional, or nontraditional occupation. In addition, you should be

- supported by your business organization or agency to act as a mentor for young women
- willing to work with a young woman for at least six to eight weeks in a one-on-one situation
- able to participate in training that can increase your effectiveness as a mentor

- willing to become part of a community resource bank for similar future activities

By participating in the training session you will learn how to use this Ideabook, and you will gain

- activities and learning techniques that can make work experiences more meaningful for your student
- an opportunity for you to reflect on the contributions that you can make as a mentor or role model for young women
- an understanding of the demography of minority women relative to economics, families, education and career choices
- tips on sharing "reality" with youth; helping them understand their unique circumstances and choices
- ways to learn how business, industry, community agencies and schools can better work together to prepare minority young women for productive, challenging and satisfying work

Facts and Figures About Women and Work

The plight of women in the work force is quite different from that of men. Women workers must face barriers such as breaking stereotypes in order to achieve personal satisfaction and challenge. In addition, women are often in the position of having to support a family while working at jobs that barely pay well enough to meet their own needs.

It's no secret that more and more minority women are falling into the single head of household and poverty categories. It's also no secret that professional careers, nontraditional occupations and technology-oriented jobs pay well and offer benefits and rewards that go beyond salary considerations. The following items can be used to discuss the importance of having mentors and role models as sources of encouragement and motivation for young women entering the world of work.

See whether you can provide the correct answers to the questions below before checking the answer sheet that follows.

_____ 1. Women make up approximately what percentage of the voting age population?

_____ 2. Currently, what percentage of American families fall into the category of a "nuclear family" (breadwinner husband, homemaker wife, two children)?

_____ 3. Approximately what percentage of children under age 18 live in a single-parent home?

_____ 4. What percentage of single-parent households are headed by women?

_____ 5. In 1970, 29 percent of all preschoolers had mothers who worked for pay. What was the figure in 1981?

_____ 6. What percentage of working mothers maintain their own families?

_____ 7. What was the median annual income of women maintaining families with children under age 18 in 1980?

_____ 8. The 1980 median annual income for Black families was $23,000 when both parents were working. What was the median annual income when the mother was not in the labor force?

_____ 9. What percentage of Hispanics are currently living at or below poverty level?

_____ 10. What percentage of Blacks are currently living at or below poverty level?

_____ 11. In 1981 almost 13.5 million men were officially classified as poor. In that same year how many women were officially living in poverty?

_____ 12. In 1980 what was the median annual income for women over 65?

_____ 13. What was the monetary value of women's volunteer work in 1980?

_____ 14. In 1982, seven of the twenty highest-paying occupations for men were in engineering fields. How many of the twenty top-paying occupations for women were in the engineering fields?

_____ 15. In 1982 how many of the twenty highest-paying occupations for women were "public service" jobs (e.g., teaching, nursing)?

_____ 16. In 1960, 5 percent of all managers were women; what was the percentage in 1980?

_____ 17. In 1960, 1 percent of skilled craft jobs were held by women. What was the percentage in 1980?

_____ 18. From 1959 to 1975 the average working woman earned fifty-nine cents for every dollar earned by her working male counterpart. Was this wage gap <u>greater</u> or <u>less</u> for male and female corporate executives?

_____ 19. In a study of college graduates who earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard, what was the average wage gap between males and females after nine years of work?

_____ 20. In 1982 high-technology jobs accounted for about 3.2 percent of the total work force. What percentage of total employment will high tech account for in 1995?

_____ 21. It is currently estimated that 25 percent of all employed persons work directly with computers. By 1990, what percentage of employed workers will use computers in their jobs?

_____ 22. Women are 20 percent of all elementary school principals. What percentage are they of high school principals?

_____ 23. What percentage of women report that they have experienced sexual harassment on the job?

24. What percentage of these jobs are held by women?

Receptionist _____	Plumber _____
Filing clerk _____	Drafter _____
Data processor _____	Nurse _____
Systems analyst _____	Pipe fitter _____
[illegible]eyor _____	Secretary _____

_____ 25. What percentage of medical degrees were earned by minorities in 1982?

_____ 26. How many women are among the 1,428 living members of the National Academy of Sciences?

_____ 27. Of all high school students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test, 52 percent were female. What percentage of Black students taking the SATs were female?

_____ 28. In 1981 school enrollment among Hispanics was 83 percent for 16 and 17 year olds. What was it for 18- and 19-year-olds?

_____ 29. In 1982, 32 percent of all white students had taken three math courses in high school. What was the percentage for Black students?

_____ 30. How many of the nation's 25 largest city school systems enroll more than 50 percent minority students?

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Answers to Facts and Figures About Women and Work

1. 52.4 percent
2. 7-8 percent
3. 20 percent (1 out of 5 kids)
4. 90 percent
5. 45 percent
6. About 20 percent
7. $8,300
8. $14,900
9. 12 percent
10. 29 percent
11. 18,462,000
12. $4,226
13. 18 billion dollars
14. One
15. At least 13
16. 6 percent
17. 2 percent
18. Greater (37¢ per dollar)
19. Approximately $12,000
20. 5 percent
21. 50 percent
22. 4 percent
23. 90 percent
24. Receptionist--99 percent
    Nurse--97 percent
    Secretary--97 percent
    Filing clerk--86 percent
    Data processor--75 percent
    Systems analyst--20 percent
    Drafter--18 percent
    Plumber--0 percent
    Pipefitter--0 percent
    Surveyor--0 percent
25. 10.7 percent
26. 53 (or 3.7 percent)
27. 60 percent
28. 38 percent
29. 13 percent
30. 23 (in 1980)

Characteristics of Mentors

What is a Mentor?

In Homer's epic, the Odyssey, Mentor was the name of the man to whom Odysseus entrusted his son Telemachus when Odysseus set off on his travels and adventures. From this, the word came to mean "trusted friend and counselor," and has recently been adopted in the business world to refer to a career guide or an executive nurturer.

There are several synonyms for the term, including sponsor, role model, teacher, coach, counselor, and even benefactor. The term "sponsor" generally connotes more power than a mentor; that is, someone who can act on behalf of another to get choicest assignments, responsibilities, etc. The term "role model" seems to imply a more casual or even a one-sided arrangement; in some instances a role model might be completely unaware that she or he is being perceived as a career model by someone else. In this context, however, a mentor is someone who consciously serves as a career role model for a student.

The various synonyms also can convey different qualities of a mentor. For example, a role model would likely be a source of inspiration about a particular career; a sponsor would likely be someone with a vested interest in a protege's advancement; a peer or colleague is likely to be the source of an informal or coaching relationship.

In its broadest sense, mentorship can be thought of as providing a variety of information, guidance and helping activities. In the context of the Ideabook, the terms "mentor" and "career role model" are used interchangeably, with a strong emphasis on highlighting some of the teaching and learning functions of the mentor/student work-experience.

Why a Mentor is Important

To teach about a job. A mentor shows not just cognitive understanding, but a firsthand, concrete experience of the skills, tools, tasks, timelines and pressures involved. The realities of a job often differ from the ideal perception of the job. For example, in the words of one mentor, "students lose the 'Marcus Welby' concept of a doctor and begin to think in terms of bookkeeping and the logistics of running an office, or 4 a.m. emergency room duty." Imbedded throughout all the specific pieces of work are the underlying values and motivations which drive a profession or trade.

To serve as a vehicle for self-discovery and for developing personal skills and habits. Having a mentor can increase the self-esteem and confidence of students and help them to expand their horizons.

To give support, encouragement and advocacy. Minority women face the added stresses of challenging ethnic or racial as well as gender traditions. In addition, they may run into strong family or peer-group resistance to their career plans and goals. Support and encouragement are crucial in overcoming these pressures.

To provide access and advancement in underrepresented career areas. Mentors are most important at early career stages when much depends on the student having the motivation to persist and persevere while preparing for and starting in a career. Mentors should give advice on courses of study as well as information about equipment and tools.

Having a mentor can increase the chances of students' getting a full-time job if they apply for one. This counters the tendency to be satisfied with part-time work or to get channeled into work that is not related to career interests.

Finally, a mentor can combat the isolation and fragmentation experienced by women in underrepresented occupations by strengthening the bonds of friendship and networking.

To foster economic and financial independence. It has been found that having a mentor is especially important for single mothers, 44 percent of whom live at or below poverty level. Since minority women are becoming a larger and larger percentage of those single mothers, mentors can offer significant encouragement for minority women to aspire to and achieve higher-paying jobs and professional growth.

To help overcome obstacles. Subtle but persistent barriers deter women in general and minority women in particular from scientific and technical fields, from the trades and nontraditional occupations, and from professional careers. This condition is illustrated by the following quote:

> It is rare for women to be actively excluded from vocational and technical programs or from the jobs themselves. Instead the status quo in recruitment, training, hiring and job retention operates unintentionally to discourage women from considering these nontraditional careers.
>
> Jo Shuchat Sanders[1]

Perhaps successful mentorships can ultimately help to soften and reshape the organizational rigidity that has evolved from long-standing traditions, patterns, and perceptions.

[1] J. Shuchat Sanders. "How to Double Our Skilled Workforce." Vocational Eduation. Vol. 57, No. 7 (October 1982).

The Qualities a Mentor Needs

In no particular order, the following qualities have all been cited as important for a mentor to possess:

1. willingness to invest time and energy in the professional development of a student

2. conviction or belief in the potential of young women to contribute to the work force

3. some measure of experience, skill, advancement, recognition or achievement in one's own occupation or career

4. awareness of and confidence in one's style of interaction and work

5. high standards and expectations of self and work colleagues

6. enthusiasm and a sense of humor

. clear and effective communication skills including the ability to express a point, defend a position, and confront "hard" issues without getting overly aggressive or judgmental

If you are interested in being a mentor, you probably possess some, if not all, of these attributes. Participating in mentor training will help you to sharpen your skills so you can be even more effective with a student.

Hints for Being An Effective Mentor

We all have busy work lives and many things can "slip through the cracks." The tips below are common-sense items you should bear in mind as you meet with students. Take a few minutes every now and then to look over these items. They will help make the time you spend with a student more enjoyable for both of you.

Organization-Related

- Let your co-workers know in advance when a student will be there so they can help the student to feel at ease.
- Introduce the student to as many of your colleagues as possible.
- Explain employee standards to the student (the student should follow the same codes of behavior, attire, and attendance as employees at a work site).

Job-Related

- Include the student in daily events as appropriate (sitting in on meetings, making delivery runs, and so on).
- Try to explain tasks clearly and concisely, as well as the criteria used to judge how well a task is done.
- Explain and discuss performance criteria in general. As a specific example, you might wish to explain how someone in your position is evaluated for promotion.
- Give students hands-on experiences with the tools and processes you use in your work.
- Give clear instructions and explanations. When giving a direction, stay with it until you know the student understands what is expected.

Personal

- Be alert to the nonverbal clues a student gives (uneasiness, evasiveness, loss of interest, and so forth). Such clues usually mean that something needs clarifying.

- Give students chances to talk about themselves. The better you know them as individuals, the better you'll be able to work with them.

- Help students relate what they're learning to their own needs and interests. If you see that something doesn't make sense to students, talk about it.

- Try to build an atmosphere that promotes acceptance and an exchange of ideas.

- Be a good listener. Give your attention; paraphrase what you hear.

- Give specific feedback on students' ideas and behavior.

- Answer questions directly. If you come to a difficult question, be tactful, but don't dodge it or beat around the bush.

- Try to be consistent. Predictability is a stabilizing factor in a new environment.

Other

- Above all, be yourself.

- Try to end sessions with your student on a positive note.

- Realize there are no failures in a mentorship. Both you and your student will learn as much from mistakes as from successes.

Talking About Your Work

On the following pages is a worksheet for mentors. It will help you identify some specific topics about your work that you can talk about with your student. The sections of the worksheet correspond to similar sections in the Career Journal, where students are instructed to write down their notes and reactions to conversations about these topics. By the end of the mentorship, your student should have a sense of (1) what it is that you do, (2) what your working conditions are like, (3) the future outlook for your kind of work, (4) how to prepare for and advance in your kind of work, (5) how your work feels, and (6) how your work affects your personal life.

Use the worksheet by making notes about each item in the spaces provided. Try to review the worksheet before each visit from your student, for it will remind you where to steer conversations. Review it after each visit and check off the items you covered.

While there is no set sequence for covering these topics, they do seem to go together in pairs. "What You Do" and "What Your Work is Like" overlap some, and it is probably easiest to begin with these two topic areas. After that, you might go on to "The Future and Your Job" and "Job Entry and Preparation," which also complement each other, or you can discuss "How Your Work Feels" and "How Your Work Affects Your Personal Life," which both deal with integrating the personal and professional domains.

Conversations needn't be long or overly technical. For example, 15 minutes would be adequate time for any one section or topic (unless, of course, the student wants to continue). Try to strike a balance between giving information and asking the student what she thinks or how she would feel.

You may want your first conversation to be about the fact that you will be having regular talks during the mentorship. Clarify with your student that you expect her to participate too. You may want to schedule regular times to talk or let conversations occur spontaneously. If you favor spontaneity, you as the mentor should initiate the first few conversations and establish a pattern.

Finally, remember that it will take several conversations with your student to cover all the material on the worksheet. In fact, you might not even get to all of it in the time that you have with her. So don't worry about trying to cover every item. If you can give your student an opportunity to glimpse and reflect on even a portion of your work life, you will have planted a small but important seed. It may not bloom for several years but when it does, your student will remember you as someone who made a difference at the beginning of her career path.

What You Do

- [ ] General description of your job

- [ ] Major tasks, subtasks, specific responsibilities

- [ ] Equipment or tools you use

- [ ] What you produce (products, services)

- [ ] How your job fits into the total organization

- [ ] Relationship of your job to similar types of work

What Your Work is Like

☐ Working hours (per day per week); salary range for this type of occupation; typical fringe benefits (health insurance, retirement, credit unions, etc.)

☐ Working environment (indoors or outdoors, travel, hazards, noise, lighting, special clothing)

☐ Unions or professional organizations involved in your work; any federal, state or local regulations that affect your work

☐ How you spend a typical day

☐ Personal qualities needed for this type of work

☐ History of this kind of work (if relevant)

The Future and Your Job

- [ ] General opportunities for advancement

- [ ] Equal advancement opportunities for women and men, regardless of race or ethnicity

- [ ] Employment projections for the next five to ten years

- [ ] Effects of technology on your specific job and on your occupation in general (e.g., computers, robotics, laser technology, chemical processing)

- [ ] Effects of economic conditions on your job (local, regional, national, global)

- [ ] Other jobs you could do with your skills

Job Entry and Preparation

☐ How you got started in your job

☐ Other jobs you have held, skills you developed from them, their relationship to your present job

☐ Skills you had to learn specifically for this job; how you acquired them

☐ Skills you developed from life's experiences in general

☐ Your recommendations to others for acquiring these skills; suggestions you would give someone applying for your job

How Your Work Feels

- [ ] What you like most (and least) about your job

- [ ] What you would change if you could

- [ ] Interpersonal skills you find most important in your work and why

- [ ] Attitudes and values that are important to you and how they are reflected in your work

- [ ] Obstacles or barriers you had to overcome to get where you are now

- [ ] Why you chose this type of work

- [ ] If you are dissatisfied with your work, what you would rather be doing

How Your Work Affects Your Personal Life

☐ Family time

☐ Leisure time

☐ General health/diet/exercise

☐ Stress factor: tension, fatigue, burn-out

☐ Stimulation factor: excitement, challenge, opportunity

☐ Where your present job fits into your life: lifetime career or stepping stone to something else

Productive Conversations

Sometimes the first few conversations in a mentorship are awkward. This is often the case when a student admires and feels shy with the mentor, and the mentor is trying to put the student at ease. Besides "breaking the ice," the mentor needs to discuss basic expectations and grounds rules so that both parties will know what will happen and who's to do what. Remember: contact with your student is usually short. The sooner you establish rapport and make expectations known, the more pleasant and productive sessions will be.

Developing a good working relationship is somewhat like learning to drive a stick-shift car: progress is jerky until you gain experience. These guidelines should help get your relationship with your student off to a smooth start.

Exploring Personal Interests and Background

1. Classes
   - the ones she likes best or least and the reasons
   - the ones she does well or poorly in

2. Activities out of school or after school
   - recreational
   - community service, clubs
   - jobs (volunteer or paid)

3. Favorites
   - ways to spend time
   - music
   - books, movies
   - food

4. Typical day
   - getting up, before school
   - classes, activities, people to spend time with
   - evenings
   - family and friends

5. Getting Around
   - car (her own, parents', friend's)
   - bus, by foot

Setting Expectations

1. Decide on the number and length of mentor/student contacts. Plan the dates and times in advance, at least for the first one to two weeks.

2. Agree on what is appropriate dress.

3. Agree on a procedure for notifying each other if you will be late or absent.

4. Set up definite times to talk over problems. If you find problem-solving sessions are not necessary, you can always relax the expectation.

5. Let your student know that you will be talking about the items that are in her Career Journal. You may wish to use some of the time set aside in item 4 above.

Setting Ground Rules

1. Set up a check-in procedure for your student to use upon arrival.

2. Provide a "home base" or workstation for your student if possible.

3. Allow for breaks during visits if they are longer than two hours.

4. Make it clear how you feel about food, drinks, radios, and noise in your work area.

5. Tell your student where she can and can't go within the organization (and why), if appropriate.

6. Make your student aware of both the formal and informal systems, e.g., those for requesting appointments or attending meetings.

Nitty-Gritty Issues

During the time that your student spends with you, some situations might arise that could be either "left alone" or "dealt with." While it may feel more comfortable to leave well enough alone, it may be more beneficial in the long run to grapple with hard or sensitive issues. There are never any right answers, but here are some hypothetical incidents that you might encounter with your student. What would you do in each case?

1. Your student appears for your first meeting with tricolor, day-glow hair, thigh-high skirt, and a sequin in her nose. She speaks well and is courteous as she introduces herself to you. What is your first impression? What do you say to her?

2. Your student is racist. In your discussions with her you find deep-seated mistrust of and anger toward white people. You can tell that she expects you to concur with her feelings. How do you deal with this? What do you say?

3. You have met with your student on three occasions and each time you've seen her, she has looked disheveled. Her blouse is half tucked in, her hair is uncombed, her shoes are scuffed, etc. Does this concern you? What do you say?

4. Both times your student has come to see you, you have noticed a strange odor wafting through your office. This smell and the discolored arcs under her armpits suggest poor personal hygiene. How would you deal with this? Do you approach the problem directly? If so, how can you justify making such personal comments to someone you hardly know?

5. Your student seems nice, interested, and cooperative, but when she smiles you can see that her teeth have suffered from neglect. They are discolored and your student has bad breath. Is this your business? What do you say?

6. Your student uses poor grammar. Seldom have you heard so many double negatives and mismatched subjects and verbs in such a short amount of time. Is it sufficient for you to exemplify or model proper speech, or should you talk about it with her? What do you say?

7. Your student converses continuously in Black dialect. You point out that it is fine to do that in informal settings, but is not acceptable in the business world. She becomes defensive, says "Black is beautiful" and that she has no intention of changing her ways and, furthermore, if you were true to yourself, you wouldn't need to conform to other people's ways. What do you do?

8. You've been sitting with your student for half an hour and have yet to hear more than a monosyllabic utterance from her. She is painfully shy. You tell her to relax, and she says she wants to but just doesn't know how. How can you help her?

9. Your mentorship has had a tremendous influence on your student. Her enthusiasm is infectious and has brightened your day the four times you've seen her. She's intelligent and has good, but not great, grades and tremendous potential. On her fifth visit she bursts into tears. Her family just isn't making it financially and, as she is the oldest child, she has to quit school now and get a job. What do you say? What do you do?

10. Your student has crossed the boundary from congeniality to overfamiliarity. She calls you by your first name, asks you personal questions and treats you like a buddy. Is this a good idea? How do you handle it if you think it needs handling?

11. Your student's demeanor is loud and unintentionally rude. On the tour of your office, she made very inappropriate remarks to some of the people she met, e.g., "How do you rate an office with a window?" How do you tell her that her attempts at small talk and humor are unsuitable?

12. Your student's school counselor calls you to enlist your help. Your student has had a string of unexcused absences and tardies at school. Her grades are beginning to suffer. The counselor feels that, as the student likes you (she's always been on time for your appointments and speaks highly of you), you might have some influence. Should you get involved? To what extent?

13. Your student is a dedicated, born-again, fundamentalist Christian and wants the world to know it. Every time you've seen her she has worn a "I Love Jesus" button and she peppers her speech with "the Bible says," "if you have faith" and "it's a blessing." Do you see this as a problem? How do you talk about it with her?

14. Through subtle clues you detect that your student is becoming emotionally attached to you. She calls almost daily just to say "hi," sends you friendship cards, and occasionally brings you gifts. Your relationship is drawing to a close, but her need for contact with you shows no signs of letting up. Now what do you do?

15. In the first two meetings with your student, a comfortable rapport has developed. She comes to your third session looking distraught. She just found out that she is seven weeks pregnant. Her boyfriend dropped her when she told him and she is convinced that her overbearing father would throw her out of the house if he knew. There is no clergyperson in whom she has confidence, and she's afraid to tell the school counselor. You're the only adult she trusts. She needs your help. How will you give it to her?

16. Your student smokes and her clothes and breath smell like cigarettes. She hasn't lit up in your presence, but she sometimes exhales smoke as she walks into your office and digs in her purse as soon as she leaves. Is this something you should talk to her about? What do you say?

17. In your meetings with your student you have ascertained that, although she is very sincere, she is of low-average intelligence. She is smart enough to do many worthwhile jobs and also smart enough to know where the money is. She has decided, partially through your inspiration, that she wants to be either a nuclear physicist or a heart transplant surgeon. Do you counsel her toward more realistic goals? If so, how?

18. Your student is responsible and earns good grades. She works very hard at a part-time job and has saved some money toward college. She really needs a car in order to fulfill all her commitments, but needs an adult with a steady job to cosign a small loan. By process of elimination of family and acquaintances, you're it. What do you do or say when she tells you this? Do you sign? If not, how do you tell her?

19. You have enjoyed the time you've spent with your student. She has been attentive, asked good questions, and has good potential. At one of your last meetings, she tells you that she has decided to be a prostitute. Her aunt is one and makes good money. She also likes the flexible hours. She asks your opinion. You give it. What is it?

20. Your student has been an interested and cooperative participant in the program, but in her third or fourth session with you she expresses a genuine concern that women can't have it all. Her aunt has done very well as a lawyer but has had a rough time in her personal life. She is divorced and her two children spend long hours in day-care and with babysitters. She has little time for a social life. Your student wants a good job, but doesn't want it to take over her whole life. She asks you, "Can women really have it both ways?" Be honest. Can they?

21. Your student believes that women entering the trades and professions are taking jobs away from men who have families to support. She thinks it may be okay for women to work part-time after the kids are in school as long as she's home to kiss everyone good-bye in the morning and fix dinner at night. She sincerely believes this. What do you tell her?

22. Your student has a boyfriend and wants to bring him to your sessions. You tell her you'd like to meet him, but the sessions are just for the two of you. She agrees, but her boyfriend accompanies her to every session, waits in the outer office, and gives her a big kiss as she walks into and out of your office. Are you comfortable with this? What do you say or do about it?

23. Your student confides to you that she was picked up for shoplifting last week. It was her first offense so she was let go, but the incident is on her permanent record. She is afraid of two things: that she'll get the urge to shoplift again and that having a juvenile record will affect her ability to get a job. What do you tell her?

24. Your student displays some of the following kinds of body language in your sessions with her. What do you say, if anything, about her nonverbal behavior?

- Slouches in her chair with her legs apart and her arms draped over the armrest with her hands dangling.
- Won't look you in the eye. She looks everywhere but at you, even when she is talking to you.
- Snaps her gum while chewing it.
- Crosses her legs and arms, aims her body away from you, and leans away from you.
- Taps her fingers, plays with her hair, and clears her throat a lot.

25. You've noticed in your talks with your student that she is very boastful. She is self-confident to the point of conceit and frequently exaggerates when talking about herself. It becomes obvious that she hasn't traveled as much, accomplished as much or spent as much as she says; she probably really hasn't dated every member of Michael Jackson's entourage. You see this as a potential problem in an employment situation. How do you talk to her about it?

26. Your student seems to want to be in the program, but can't let down her "tough" facade. She talks rough and hides any warm, caring, or sympathetic feelings she might have. How do you break through and get her to relate to you person-to-person instead of rebellious adolescent to adult?

The above situations represent real-life problems that you may encounter if a student enters your life for even a short time. How these situations are discussed or resolved, or even if they are brought up at all, will depend a lot on the rapport between you and your student. The Ideabook sections on "Productive Conversations" (see pages 20-21) and "Body Language" (see pages 30-31) have some helpful hints. In addition, here are a few guidelines that would apply in almost all cases.

- Face the problem. Ignoring it won't make it go away. Inappropriate attitude and behaviors in the work context will, if they continue, only increase your anxiety level and probably those of your co-workers too. If a problem is really a problem, it's best to deal with it early, before it gets bigger.

- Think beforehand about what you want to accomplish in dealing with a sensitive issue or situation. For example, do you want only to know whether or not the student is aware of a behavior and its effect? Or do you want to impart your viewpoint? Or do you want to change the student's behavior? Knowing your purpose helps keep things focused.

- Bring things up early in a visit; don't wait till the end of the visit, or for an "opportune time" to present itself. There's probably never a good time to bring up a hard topic, so it's best to get to it right away. You'll never regret at how much better you feel after you've discussed and resolved a difficult situation.

- Separate the behavior from the person. Speak objectively about the behavior and positively about the person. For example, "I like your energy, but when you do _____, it puts me in an awkward position."

- Don't overdo humor, teasing or jokes. Issues presented in a half-joking-but-serious manner will not always be grasped by a teenager. Also, adolescent egos can be unpredictable; what might have seemed funny one day may not be received in the same vein the next day. The best guideline is to stay serious but supportive, don't tease or joke, and save humor for lighter times.

- Discuss sensitive issues in a private place, if possible. Think twice about using your office, if you have a private one, because it may feel too formal and stiff if you and your student are not accustomed to meeting and talking there. Private space in the cafeteria, employee lounge or conference room might be better. You may even want to take a walk and talk out-of-doors.

- Consider relating something personal about yourself during the discussion with your student. For example, tell about a similar incident in your youth and how you handled it. This kind of self-disclosure and empathy makes you seem real and special to the student, not just another adult giving a lecture.

- Reinforce at a later time something positive about your student and emphasize that the issue was about behavior, not personality.

Body Language

Much of what we say to others and what others say to us is said without words. It is with this silent language that we often communicate our feelings. By interpreting the nonverbal "speech" of others, we can tell how they are reacting to what we do and say. The silent language, also called body language, consists of

- facial expressions
- eye contact
- gestures
- body movement and posture
- tone of voice
- use of personal and public space
- dress, appearance, and hygiene

You probably have become uncomfortable when a stranger stood too close to you at a bus stop or in line at a movie. You became uncomfortable because that person violated your sense of personal space. You know you can end a conversation by turning your back on someone or by breaking eye contact. This type of body language tells a person that you don't want to talk anymore.

Each culture gives different interpretations to the silent language. For instance, making strong eye contact in one culture may be perceived as friendly while in another it may be perceived as aggressive.

All of us know and respond to several silent languages. As a member of an ethnic group, you know the silent language of that group. You know also the body language of other groups to which you belong, such as professional colleagues or social acquaintances. Teenagers are also aware of the silent language of their peers and how it differs from that of the adults around them. For example, if young people shake hands firmly with adults, they will be received positively. On the other hand, if they were to shake hands with their peers in the hallway between classes or at a dance, they would probably be perceived as acting silly because they have their own ways of acknowledging each other.

Many times we have to adapt our behavior to the situation. What may be appropriate with friends or family won't be appropriate in the work setting. What is appropriate in the work setting won't always be appropriate with friends or family. Sometimes the differences are slight and don't mean anything; other times, they may cause significant misunderstandings.

In the work place adults have certain expectations of young workers. As a mentor you will need to be aware of how your body language affects your

student. Are you conveying expectations accurately? Are you giving clear or mixed messages? Furthermore, you will need to interpret your student's body language to find out how you are being received or how the student is feeling about her experience.

Following are some tips about body language that will help your student come across as an interested and willing worker. Look them over, share them with your student, and let her know what she says with her nonverbal speech.

- good posture (standing and sitting)
- nodding head to show attention
- leaning toward speaker
- enunciating clearly
- showing pleasant and sincere facial expressions
- maintaining eye contact
- being neatly groomed
- talking in an animated style, using small hand gestures and facial expressions
- having vocal variety (avoiding a monotone)
- appearing calm (not fidgeting)
- sitting close enough to show you are open and friendly, but not too close
- shaking hands firmly

All of us need to become more aware of the messages we give and receive through the use of body language. We will be better able to express what we want to say and understand what others are telling us.

Applications

Comment Cards

This is an ongoing activity. Each day (or visit), mentor and student each write one thing on a card and post it in a mutually agreed upon place for the other to read. Either mentor or student may suggest a topic, or you may take turns. If each of you has a topic, then include both on that day's comment card. Suggested topics might be

- What are you looking forward to most today?
- What was your biggest accomplishment yesterday (or last time)?
- What was your biggest challenge yesterday (or last time)?
- What is one thing you want to accomplish today?
- What is one thing that I don't know about you yet?

You may decide to make this activity cumulative and to keep posting new cards without taking down the previous cards. Or you may want to remove the cards each time. Either way, comment cards are intended to stimulate discussion.

This activity emphasizes three things that most of us don't do often enough: (1) share positive things about ourselves (blowing our own horns), (2) "go public" about inner thoughts and values, and (3) ask for information from others.

Whether or not and how much you use this technique will depend on the natural rapport that develops between you and your student, and whether or not she needs to be drawn out more.

Facts and Figures

Plan time during one of your discussion periods to talk about some (or all) of the "facts and figures" questions (see pages 6-9). Explore with your student whether she feels she has no choice but to be "one of the statistics," or whether she feels she has the power to shape her future.

You may want to post some of the questions to arouse your student's curiosity, or post them as statements of facts. (Similar to the comment cards, have a posting area or bulletin board space for these interesting tidbits.)

Heroes in My Life

Set aside one of your early discussion times to talk about heroes, role models, and mentors and why they are (or were) important. Use your listening, paraphrasing, and probing skills to draw your student into full participation.

Near the end of the mentorship, take time to talk with your student about what she might look for in future mentors and career role models.

What's What and Who's Who

Your student can learn about your job setting by touring your work place and meeting or possibly interviewing different people in your organization. She may even want to create an organizational chart showing main functions, support functions, and lines of authority, all of which can then be compared to an actual company chart.

Be sure to lay groundwork with your colleagues for this activity by informing them about your mentorship and by alerting staff in advance that your student may be touring the facility or requesting interviews with them. If you won't be conducting the tour, make arrangements for someone else (e.g., personnel staff) to do it.

Before the tour, tell you student what she will be doing and why, and what she should look for (see below). Remind her of expected interview manners if it seems necessary and office protocol (how to schedule meetings, when to interrupt, etc.). Assist your student as necessary during her tour.

By examining the mentor's workplace, the student can become aware of the variety of functions, support systems, technologies, and personnel of workplaces in general. After the tour discuss what your student found out about the company and the different kinds of work performed there. Encourage your student to reflect on the value of different kinds of jobs.

Information for Facilities Tour

Have your student find out the following information about your company as she makes her tour. A corresponding worksheet is in your student's Career Journal.

1. What is the formal system like?
   - its primary purpose
   - its product
   - its service (if a service organization)
   - customers or clients
     --children
     --adults
     --other companies
     --people in trouble

- product or service
  --cost
  --profit or nonprofit
  --who designs the product or the service
  --who makes the product or delivers the service
- internal communication (e.g., newsletters, memorandums)
- technology used, especially computers

2. What is the support system like?
   - clerical
   - accounting
   - mailroom
   - custodial
   - research
   - other (e.g., media/duplicating)

3. What is the informal system like?
   - What is considered appropriate attire? Does it differ for men and women? Different job categories?
   - What do the "personal items" on desks and walls tell you about different people?
   - What "social functions" take place (e.g., breaks, group lunches) and where (e.g., in coffee room, in hallway)?