Perceptions of "Big Sisters" and their "Little Sisters" Regarding
Mentoring Relationships

Alice Quarles, EdD
Principal
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Email: jmq3@bellsouth.net

Nancy L. Maldonado, PhD
Director of Education
Virtual Sage Publishers
Email: nlmaldonado@bellsouth.net

Candace H. Lacey, PhD
Program Professor
Nova Southeastern University
Email: lacey@nsu.nova.edu

Steve D. Thompson, PhD
Program Professor
Nova Southeastern University
Email: tsteve@nsu.nova.edu

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So on we go
Her welfare is of my concern
No burden is she to bear
We'll get there
For I know

She would not encumber me
She ain't heavy, she's my sister

It's a long, long road
From which there is no return
While we're on the way to there
Why not share
And the load
Doesn't weigh me down at all
She ain't heavy, she's my sister

Adapted from
He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother
B. Scott and B. Russell

Context

Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital in the creation of human capital served as the theoretical underpinning for this study. These theories were first introduced as narrow economic principles. Coleman's (1988, 1990) conceptual theory of social capital is illustrated as a social structure, an individual or a group serving as a resource for another individual or group. Coleman (1988) defined human capital as the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual facilitating productivity.

Coleman (1988, 1990) broadened the theory by defining social capital by its function and relation to human capital. He views social capital as a variety of different entities that facilitate action, including the interactions of individuals, the sharing of resources, and the combining of resources which make possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be possible in its

absence (Coleman). Forms of social capital include the concepts of obligation, expectation, trust, information sharing, norms, relations, and the extent of the obligation in an individual or group (Coleman).

Greek mythology introduced mentoring as a model to foster in youth the skills necessary for successful. Mentors have served throughout history as surrogate parents assisting young people to become successful adulthood. Today mentoring serves as a method of intervention and prevention. Mentoring programs have increased with the focus on building positive relationships between adult role models and youth in an effort to foster social competencies, promote academic motivation, and build a positive image of a possible self (Lee & Cramond, 1999; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995).

Research has demonstrated the significance that self-efficacy, aspirations, and possible selves have on the development of a positive vision of the future (Bandura, Barbaranelli,Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Limited research has indicated there were gender differences in belief in possible selves with adolescent girls yielding higher correlations with relationships rather than occupational future (Knox, Funk, Elliot & Bush, 2000).

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

Self-Efficacy and Mentoring

Self-efficacy, grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, is the belief that an individual's judgments regarding personal capabilities to organize and implement required plans of action will produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs form the foundation for motivation, feelings of well-being, and personal accomplishment (Pajares, 2002).

Theorists believe that the acquisition of skills and knowledge is connected to self-efficacy (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Patrick, Hicks, & Ryan 1997). Self-efficacy, however, has been determined to be both a social and a personal construct (Pajares, 2002); and therefore, relationships can impact perceptions of the self. In addition, theorists indicate that adolescent girls have unique challenges that respond well to genuine relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Dollette, Hossfeld, Matthews, Philips, Steese, & Taormina, 2006).

Aspirations and Mentoring

The choices that young adults make during adolescence shape their futures, and the educational choices made early in life often dictate or limit career paths for the future (Kao & Tienda, 1998). Parental support and modeling are highly linked to educational and career aspirations, building in adolescents a strong desire to achieve (Bandura et al., 2001; Majoribanks, 1986; Trice & Knapp, 1992). For disadvantaged youth, support and resources are often not as available as might be desired.

Possible Selves and Mentoring

The concept of "possible selves" has been defined as a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. It represents a personal construct of what one might become, what one would like to become, and what one is afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This construct represents individuals in the present and in the future and their significant hopes, fears, and fantasies. Possible selves provide the contextual framework for self-knowledge, from past and present, for one to perceive what is possible to achieve and the needed motivating behavior (Markus & Nuris).

Research indicates that mentoring relationships influence key components in the lives of mentees, including sharing of values, work ethics, the building of self-conceptions, and ideals

(McClusky, Noller, Lamoureaux, & McClusky, 2004; McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen, & Shapiro, 1998). Additionally, positive relationships and fostering the development of a positive conception of self in youth has been shown to enhance behavioral and social competencies necessary to be successful as students and adults (Coleman, 1988; Lee & Cramond, 1999; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Developing perseverance to achieve goals, as well as developing perceived competence, control, willpower, and positive expectancies often leads to personal attributes that have a positive effect on adolescents' future success (Bandura et al., 1996; Bandura et al., 2001; Patrick et al., 1997).

Purpose of the Study

Much of the mentoring literature represents studies and program evaluations of various mentoring models, focusing on academic performance, school attendance, pro-social/behavioral performance, and resistance to drug and alcohol use, representing an array of student populations (Grossman & Rhodes, as cited in McClusky, et. al, 2004; Sipe & Roder, 1996; Tierney, et. al, 1995). The relationship between and among self-efficacy, aspirations, and possible selves has been associated with a positive vision of the future. How these aspects of self-knowledge are impacted by disadvantaged at-risk adolescent girls' participation in a formal mentoring relationship has not been explored. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the relationships between six Little Sisters (mentees) and their Big Sisters (mentors) to develop an understanding of the perceptions of high-risk adolescent female mentees and their mentors regarding their mentoring relationships.

Research Methods

Participants

      The Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program is a mentoring program with historic merit; Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Greater Miami served as the catalyst for identifying the participants for the study, the mentees and their mentors. The six mentee participants were in senior high school or had graduated from high school and had been engaged in a formal mentoring relationship for three to eight years. Participants (See Table 1) were purposefully selected to represent various characteristics associated with high-risk factors in adolescents.

Table 1

Mentor and Mentee Demographics

Mentee	Age	Ethnicity	Mentors Occupation	Length of Relationship	Status of Relationship
Mentee 1	18	White Italian American	Graduate Student	3 Years	Ongoing
Mentee 2	18	African American	American Cancer Society	7 Years	Ongoing
Mentee 3	18	African American	Teacher	9 Years	Ongoing
Mentee 4	17	Hispanic	College Professor	5 Years	Ongoing
Mentee 5	18	Multi Racial	Lawyer	5 Years	Ongoing
Mentee 6	18	Multi Racial	Lawyer	5 Years	Ongoing

Data Sources

       The researchers followed appropriate protocol to ensure protection of the participants and employed an intake survey, interviews, and interview notes as the data sources. Open-ended questions were posed in semi-structured, individual interviews with both the mentees (See Appendix A) and their mentors (See Appendix B) (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

       The researchers analyzed the verbatim transcripts using manual coding procedures as outlined by Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen. This method ensured rigor by providing consistency in coding and schemes (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Silverman, 2000). Questions from the mentee and mentor interview protocols were interrelated and designed to explore the essence of the mentoring relationships from the two points of view. This interrelated question design was intentional to afford multiple levels of content analysis and triangulation of the data to further the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The analysis compared the significant statements of mentees and mentors as they related to three major themes which previously emerged from analysis of subgroup transcripts: the building of self-efficacy, the development of aspirations, and the building of positive current and future possible selves.

<div align="center">Findings</div>

Parallel Statements: Building of Self-Efficacy

       The mentees as well as the mentors attest that the relationships have been instrumental in building self-confidence, building belief in personal capabilities, and in building self-efficacy in the mentees. The mentors recognized the strengths and weaknesses of their mentees with acute accuracy. Mentors served as role models and provided direct interventions, like tutoring,

academic counseling, and even shopping as a vehicle to develop social skills in their mentees. Whether enduring the difficult situation of an ill and dying parent or learning the importance of professional language, the mentors were attuned to the needs of their mentees. The parallel statements further indicated that the mentors developed the skills that fostered self-efficacy in their mentees.

Mentors were perceptive in their judgments of the weaknesses and strengths of their mentees. Mentors capitalized on their mentees' strengths while bolstering their weaknesses in the areas of academics, social skills, and the mentees responses to difficult situations. They served as role models and provided direct support to build mentees' feelings of self-efficacy. One of the fundamental constructs of self-efficacy is self-confidence and belief in one's own capabilities. This area was critical in the analysis of the relationship and the building of positive feelings of self-efficacy in the mentees. The parallel statements of both the mentees and mentors were aligned to analyze the mentees' development in this major theme.

> Mentee 1: Mentor was always with me [during difficult times with mother's hospitalization]. I did not do too well in school. I had a lot of problems with math. Mentor helped me with my mom and with school. So I did change, and I started making good grades. Mentor tutored me, so that helped me to make good grades.

> Mentor 1: I think that it [the relationship built self-efficacy] did for sure. Just the example of trying to help her with her math, it just keeps coming to mind; she always said, "I can't do math, I can't do math," but then when we sat down one on one and did it. She saw that she was capable of doing it. I think her personality has also grown, and she's capable now. She knows she can hold a conversation with someone she's not familiar with. She's more comfortable in situations than she was before. I think she's grown, and she sees that she's capable of anything she sets her mind to.

> Mentee 2: Mentor always helped me with speaking. When we first met, she said, "you always talk in your slang. There's a time when you just need to talk proper and there's a time and you can just kick back and just talk anyway." If I ever met somebody new, I would just be quiet and not say too much, and I would just look at them and just look and look around, but now I could start a conversation. Mentor does this all the time with strangers; she just starts up a whole conversation with people, and now I do too.

Mentor 2: Everything that I do, I extend it to her, and bring it to her, so she can share with me. We did a little bit of everything. When she would just say something that would be grammatically incorrect, I said, I think it's okay to be casual in casual conversation when you're hanging out with your friends, but at the same time, if you're in a different setting, you need to speak appropriately. Whenever she says something in slang, I would always correct her. I won't see her for a while, and then I'll see her, and her grammar and the speech are getting better.

Mentee 3: Yes, the [mentoring] relationship, it made me so that I can do all that I can if I just put my mind to it [more capable and confident]. I see how Mentor is determined to go on with her job. Mentor had got hurt before, but Mentor was still working. Mentor still did what she had to do. Mentor takes care of her house, her car; I see how mentor got through that and everything. Mentor still made it through.

Mentor 3: I said she was my little [sister], like in real life, and I was her big in real life, and my family accepted her as my little sister. The goal was to see that she got everything that she could get and to see that there are different cultures and different aspects of the world. Also that people are different in some ways, but yet they are still the same; they are people. I did try to encourage her and try to make things a little better. I gave her positive reinforcement on whatever she needed. I supported her as she grew up. She knows she was capable in the end of doing whatever she needed to do.

Mentee 4: My strength is definitely the artistic side -- I'm very right brained. I like singing, acting, writing, fashion design, drawing. Also my stubbornness is also one of my strengths because I am very determined, very persistent. Stubbornness at the same time is also one of my weaknesses because sometimes I will be too pushy. I think the relationship has made my belief in my [capabilities] stronger. Mentor makes me feel more confident about myself knowing that I can always trust her; I can always rely on her.

Mentor 4: She thinks she can do anything which is always a good thing to hear. She's creative and has persistence. She is also self- centeredness. I tease her. I call her the drama queen. But again that's me feeling more comfortable saying Mentee you need to pull back and stop doing that so much because people care about you, you don't have to be intimidated. I have seen changes in her that show that she is starting to move away from it a little bit. I don't know if it's just she's moved away from it because she feels more comfortable in her own skin. I think I helped her with the confidence she had in herself, but I've talked to her about you can do anything if you put your mind to it. She has continued to pursue that.

Mentee 5: At home, I was basically quiet. I did not like to go out much. At home I would be quiet or I talk to my twin sister or stuff like that. It [the mentoring relationship] has changed for one thing. When I first met her, I was like a little, like anti-social, but now since I got to know her, I am more outgoing. Before when I met a new person, I would be like shy, wouldn't say anything. The other person would have to like talk to me to get me to say things, but after I met my mentor it was like I was trying to get to know them

before they try to get to know me. Basically they [beliefs in my own capabilities] got stronger. So yes, I do believe that it changed it a little bit. I'm more confident and speak out now.

Mentor 5: Mentee was so shy she did not speak the first time we met. I also felt it was important to build a friendship, so that she would begin to speak more, be more outgoing. I think her confidence and self-esteem level were pretty low. She's gotten a little bit better, she'll look at the other person, and she might say hello. She's a little more outgoing in that she will at least have a conversation with you. She can look you in the eye. I think those are traits that would show you that her self-esteem is building

Mentee 6: When I encounter a new person, I am very, very shy, I am very quiet, and I don't like to talk, but now I am more friendly, I am more social. Mentor helped; always when I was quiet, she would ask questions that would make me say a more than one word answer. She would always make me talk about myself and stop asking me all the questions, and then I would ask her questions as well. I am more social now. She introduced me to a lot of people from her job, her family, her friends. Yes it [introducing me to people] helped me open up to her friends and whoever she was with.

Mentor 6: I think she was confident, but still had some esteem problems. She was always well-behaved, just very shy and quiet. She was not very outgoing; she was shy but would talk. She would initiate contact with me. I would introduce her to my friends. She's not as shy now. She's a lot more talkative. She will initiate conversation with you or anybody at this point; she is much more outgoing.

Parallel Statements: Developing Aspirations

Successful people are goal-oriented. They recognize the need to develop a plan for their future and the steps needed to achieve it. The mentees are on the cusps of the major life transition from adolescence to adulthood. These young women are developing academic plans that will serve as the foundations for their future careers. The mentors all recognized the importance of this life transition and have served to provide experiential opportunities to view various career options. They also have guided their mentees in developing their own life plans which are aligned to their talents and interests.

Four of the five mentors clearly identified the careers that their mentees were currently interested in pursuing. All of the mentors recognized their mentees' plans for college and were

dedicated to assisting them in the pursuit of higher education. One mentor has assisted her

mentee in college preparatory courses. The mentors are dedicated to supporting their mentees

with this next step in building their mentee's future success. The parallel statements corroborate

the role the mentors have played in building academic and career goals in their mentees.

Mentee 1: Well I'm still in high school, but I'm graduating this year, and I want to attend Barry University, and I want to be a nurse because I want to help people and visit people. Mentor goes to Barry, and that's why I was kind of looking at Barry and she helped me decide. I want to be an R.N. I want to help little kids and give them shots and stuff

Mentor 1: Mentee plans to go to college, and she wants to be a nurse; she wants to give people the care her mother didn't receive which I think is a wonderful thing, and I have told her I admire and support her choice. I talked about my college plans, and we have talked about her college plans. I tried to guide her, but I didn't ever force her to sit down and think about colleges. She knows I'm in college, and we have talked about it.

Mentee 2: When I graduate from high school, I would like to go to Miami-Dade in the nursing program, and I want to be an R.N. After being an R.N., I want to be a pathologist. That's my future, a pathologist or forensic pathologist. When I graduate from high school, Medical Magnet program at Northwest, I will have my nursing assistant license. I've been in the Medical Magnet program at Northwest since 9th grade. Mentor really didn't really force me to any of my career goals. She wanted me to be what I wanted.

Mentor 2: She was very much boy-focused in the beginning. Everything was about a boy, and as we progressed in the last two years. She told me, "you know Mentor, I really want to go to college." She decided recently to go to Miami-Dade. So after she finishes high school she will be working as a nursing assistant and she'll go to nursing school which I think is excellent. She'll actually be in the setting to see if this is what she wants to do, or if she doesn't want to do, but it's a good thing.

Mentee 3: I want to be a pediatrician. Mentor told me to keep going on and doing what I need to do, and I will get there to be a pediatrician. Mentor helps; she prays through it. I will get there. Mentor keeps pushing me to go through what I have to do. Go to any kind of college, go to any kind of school, just get in there, put my foot in the door. That's what Mentor says.

Mentor 3: First, her plans for the future are to go to college and then become a pediatrician. She always talked about being a pediatrician. Then at one time her plans were to go into the service. That has changed. Presently her plans are to major in medicine because she really wants to be a doctor, and I am hoping that once she gets herself and family situations over, she will carry out that. The role that I played in [developing her future plans] was discussing with her that if that's what she wants to do. We talk about what that particular field entails, the things that she would have do. Also

the places she would have to go, the money that was needed, the time that was expected to make sure that she was a successful doctor, and now I think she really wants to pursue it. But she is waiting on some things that she has to correct before she can do it. She is getting adjusted with her mom, becoming a better person.

Mentee 4: I definitely want to be an actress -- a singer, a writer, an anime artist; an anime is a type of Japanese cartooning and a fashion designer. Well Mentor always tells me to try to achieve what I want to achieve. Mentor's very supportive of me, so I guess she has helped. I am interested in California Institute of the Arts and possibly New World College, and there is one in New York that I am interested into looking into it. These are the schools. She talked to me about colleges. She's like, I heard about this or this school has a good program and such a thing. She teaches at a college.

Mentor 4: They change [plans for the future] on a weekly basis. When I talked to her about it last week, actually she told me she still wants to go to college. She wants to go to an art school in California. I encourage her to go to college, and think about how to do it. I had an opportunity to ask my manager to give her a free SAT prep course, and she did take it, and it helped improve her scores enough to qualify for the 78% Bright Future scholarship through Florida. So I know if she goes to school in Florida, she has money available. I talk to her about what she needs to think about. I know how to work the system. I know she wants to do animation and drama, and she likes writing, so anything is possible.

Mentee 5: My career goals are to be become a pediatrician. After I finish graduating from high school, I plan to go to a 4-year university and then to med school. My mentor has influenced my career goals because before I wanted to be a regular teacher, and when she took me to her job; she has basically opened my eyes to different careers that I can be if I wanted to be. When the Bigs had to take the Littles to work, and I went and I saw that there are more careers than teachers. Yes, before I thought about Criminal Law like my Big, but I really am looking into medicine now. I am looking at going to Florida State, University of Miami, or FIU for medicine. Yes, Mentor has talked to me about going to college and finding the right college and scholarships, so I can go to medical school.

Mentor 5: First, a teacher, then a singer, then model, then a scientist, and so on. At one point, I took them to "bring your child to work day." I brought them (Mentee 5 and 6, the twins) to work, and I think they were actually able to see me work. I don't think they saw me in particular in trial, but I think they were able to see a trial. I speak to Mentee all the time about college. I said, I am here to tell you what you need to do is finish school. Go on to college. You are very bright girls (twins). You have plenty of time for boys later on. We have talked about it [the order of life] a few times because the sister brought that up a few times. With college, the issue is monetary as opposed to drive, and that is something that I will help her out with, looking for different scholarships. She has the drive, it's the economics, but I believe she will succeed.

Mentee 6: My career goals have changed. In the past, I had wanted to become a teacher. I had different goals; I wanted to become a teacher or a veterinarian. My goals have

changed now that I see that Mentor is happy in a job that she's in, and it really made me stop and think what I really want to do. Now I want to become a doctor -- a pediatrician. Because it is like I said, in Mentor's career environment some people have careers that they hate to get up in the morning and go to their job, and she is very optimistic about her job, and I realize that if I want to be like her, happy like her in her job, I need to pick something that makes me happy, like she did.

Mentor 6: I've always told them (twins) whatever it is you want to do, then it is something that's attainable for you. I explained [goal setting for careers] that the singer has a different set of goals. But first I'm sure you can be a singer without a degree, but first thing you need to finish high school. You need to go to college because you need something to fall back on. Not to say that you can't make it as a singer, but just in case you want to make sure you have a backup plan. Mentee wanted to be a teacher and a vet. And then and then they both were in Future Business Leaders of America at one point, so they wanted to be a businesswoman. I think now it is back into engineering. So the career choice, I've just told them to work hard at what they like, and be happy in what they choose to do.

Parallel Statements: Developing Positive Possible Selves

Possible selves are considered as a controller of behavior and an enticement for future behavior; this concept becomes a structure to assess and interpret the present view of the self. Possible selves provide the contextual framework of self-knowledge from past and present for people to perceive what is possible to achieve and the associated motivating behaviors. For the mentees, their mentors provided encouragement, understanding, a listening ear, and bolstered their self-esteem. Mentors provided guidance and assistance with the development of their mentees' future plans, serving directly with tangible support or indirectly as role models.

The encouraging and warm-hearted nature of the mentors impacted positive feelings of current selves within their mentees. These mentees stated that they had confidence and positive feelings about themselves. They also noted that the direct guidance and assistance, as well as the indirect role modeling provided by their mentors, helped to develop their future plans and the positive feelings regarding their futures. Mentees believe they could and will achieve their dreams.

Mentee 1: I'm kind of normal now, and Mentor helped. I know I will graduate from school and become a nurse and help kids some day. I want to get married and have a family. My mentor is a big part of my life, so without her helping me get good grades and supporting me, my future plans would not be possible.

Mentor 1: She has grown to be such an amazing person especially with the experience that she has been through. We have just developed a great friendship. Mentee is growing to know who she really is. Her self-esteem has increased a great deal, and she is more comfortable. During the years, we have both changed for the better, and our friendship has blossomed. I think her personality too has grown. Now she knows she can hold a conversation with someone she's not familiar with. She's more comfortable in situations than she was before. She sees that she's capable of anything she sets her mind to. I think she's seeing that she can meet her goals. I think she'll make an amazing nurse.

Mentee 2: She helped me learn that I loved doing research. So that is one of the main reasons that I want to be a pathologist because I like the research. I'm real excited about the things that I don't know. Mentor really is one of the highlights in my life. She helps me work towards the future. I am looking forward to the future and becoming a pathologist.

Mentor 2: She is not shy; she's willing to work hard. She's always willing to help. You know she's just phenomenal. I think she's great. I think Mentee has a bright future. I think that right now she is going to school, which is a great thing. She wants to get a car; she wants to get a job. I know a lot of people, and anyway I can help her get herself situated. I will always be there, and that is how I am with everybody in my family. So if she ever needs anything, if she's ever in a bind, she knows she can always come to me. I'll assist and help in any way I can. I think she has a bright future ahead of her. I think she has a good head on her shoulder; she'll do well.

Mentee 3: Mentor pushed for me to keep going towards my goals. She and I would talk about what I had to do next, then next, to get where I was going. At one point, I wanted to be a teacher like her [mentor], but as I went to high school in the medical magnet, now I want to be a pediatrician. I will be just like a teacher also; I'll be taking care of someone as well.

Mentor 3: I hope that the future will hold nothing but good things for her. I believe that one day she will be that doctor that she wants to be and that she will stay healthy and that she will become another successful citizen. At one given time, she wanted to be a whole lot of things. Then I would say to her," pick the one that you really think you want to do for the rest of her life. That's what really counts." She finally wanted to be a pediatrician working with little children because she loves little children. I believe she will be a great pediatrician in the future. I often brag about her.

Mentee 4: I've always [had goals] known that I wanted be an actress since 5th grade. Mentor's just making me want it more; it's like, she makes me believe in myself and what I want. Mentor inspires me to work harder for what I want to do. I am still with my

same dreams. She's just enhanced those, and she talks to me about them; she gives me opportunities to achieve those dreams.

Mentor 4: I just say as long as you are willing to work hard, you can do anything you put your mind to. But keep in mind, being an actor is not easy. She's always talked about being an actress, being a singer, and being a writer; I don't know how much our relationship helped build that. I think, I just continued to encourage her for it. She has goals; she knows what she wants to do, animation and drama, and she likes writing, so anything is possible for her.

Mentee 5: Yes, the mentoring relationship helped me to better achieve my goals because before I didn't believe in myself, but now I strongly believe that if I want to become anything I want to be, that I can do it just as long as I put my mind to it.

Mentor 5: She has greater belief in herself. It's not quite at the level that I would like it to be at, but she has grown. So I think our relationship has fostered that. I can't say that she wasn't goal-oriented before we met. Mentee is driven; she is persistent when she puts her mind to something. She seemed to be able to make goals for herself and tried to work toward them. Before we met, I don't think that was a deficiency. I've always told both of them (twins) that they need to go to school and do well, their best in school. I told them they need to continue their education, go to college. I've always told them whatever it is you want to do, you can do it, and all you have to do is set these small goals, mini goals in front of you. All the time I told them both that they are very young, intelligent, bright, articulate ladies; they need to understand that that's what they are.

Mentee 6: Before I used to try and try to make my mom proud, and I also used to have low self-esteem, but now after hanging out with Mentor and being with her and the person that she is, kind of made me want to work hard and attain and set higher goals for myself. I am confident now. I know I can achieve; I didn't know that before. The mentoring relationship has changed my desires to meet goals because now I am more determined to reach the goals that I set in myself. My goals are to become a mentor when I am 18 or of age and to go to college, go to medical school, and become a doctor. I want to have a family and a successful marriage. That's how Mentor did hers -- career then family.

Mentor 6: Mentee's self-confidence and belief in her capabilities has grown. She can easily have a conversation with you. She can look you in the eye. She can go out and meet new people. I believe she is more confident and believes in herself. So I think our relationship has fostered that. Mentee is better in school, and although she is not as driven as her sister, she set goals and works towards them. I have helped to build this by being a role model. I tell her, you don't have to depend on any man for anything. You don't have to depend, well right now, you are young so, and you're still in school, but your mother does not have to provide every single thing for you in your life. You are going to be an adult one day soon, you are going to move on, you are going to do things, and you are going to go to school. It's very, very possible for you to make it in school. I believe she is preparing herself for the future and will be successful in what she chooses to do.

Discussion

Congruent with the literature, the mentoring relationships in this study had positive effects on the self-efficacy, aspirations, and possible future selves of the adolescent girls (Bandura, et. al, 1996; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Patrick, Hicks, & Ryan 1997Pajares, 2002). The quality of the mentoring program played a significant role in those outcomes. Further, the emphasis on the importance of the commitment of quality time together helped to build nurturing relationships that fostered the academic, social and emotional skill development in the Little Sisters, thus building human capital (Putnam, 1995, 2000).

The building of self-efficacy was evidenced by the Little Sisters' statements of enhanced confidence and their ability to develop and execute plans which were reinforced by their Big Sisters. Little Sisters all perceived themselves as positive current selves and viewed themselves as successful in the future as did their Big Sisters. Their possible future selves were linked to feelings of self-efficacy and defined career aspirations.

Findings in this study substantiated the value of mentoring programs in the building of social constructs that foster successful future citizens. The prescreening and support provided by the Big Brothers/Big Sisters were instrumental in building the relationships and keeping the Big Sisters informed of opportunities for participation in community activities. The support information and the program focus on younger participants may be demographically appropriate, but unfortunately, this does not support the developmental needs of older adolescents. As mentees approach graduation, the program should seek to build community ties with institutions that provide postsecondary/college preparation. Social workers might link students and their mentors to organizations and information that will better prepare students at greater risk to meet

the challenges of Scholastic Aptitude Tests, to find scholarships, and to complete college applications.

The community-based programs would also benefit from receiving information on school programs and resources that might support mentees. Too often at-risk adolescents do not realize the resources available to them in their own schools and do not have parents who have the time, information, or experience to encourage children to seek the information available to enhance academic performance. Not intending to usurp the parental role, mentors can augment parental support if Big Brothers/Big Sisters provides the mentors with the information about available school resources. By working together with the schools, the Little Sisters could be better prepared to meet current and future challenges. It is important that school-site counselors and administrators are made aware of the benefits of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program and the inherent benefits of mentoring.

The intent of this study was to expand the knowledge base about mentoring. In light of the lack of literature on the phenomena of mentoring relationships and the development of self-efficacy, aspirations, and possible selves in high-risk adolescent females, this study has provided information that may be useful for the fields of education and sociology and for training and development in mentoring programs.

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Appendix A

Mentee Interview Protocol

The interview will initiate with social greetings and expressed appreciation for the participant's
      participation in the study. Background information will be confirmed and augmented if
      the researcher deems necessary.

What has the mentoring relationship meant to you?
Who was your mentor? What were his/ her characteristics?
What types of activities did you engage in?
Which activities were your favorites? Why?
What was your childhood like before the mentoring relationship developed?
At home – your family life
At school
With friends
Did the mentoring relationship change over the years? Please explain.
How has mentoring made a difference in your life?
What do you believe are your strengths?
What do you believe are your weaknesses?
What are your strongest characteristics as a person?
How do you handle unexpected challenges (difficult situations)?
How do you feel when you encounter a new person?
Tell me about your friends and the quality of your friendships?
What are your career goals?
How has your mentor impacted these goals?
What do you believe you can or will do in the future?
In your opinion, did the relationship change your belief in your own capabilities? Please explain.
In your opinion, did the relationship change your desire to meet goals? Please explain.
In your opinion, did the relationship change your ideas of what you might become, what one
      would like to become? Please explain.

Appendix B

Mentor Interview Protocol

The interview will initiate with social greetings and expressed appreciation for the participant's participation in the study. Background information will be confirmed and augmented if the researcher deems necessary.

What has the mentoring relationship meant to you?

How did you perceive your role as a mentor? Did it change over time? Please explain.

What were your goals for the relationship? Did they change over time? Please explain.

What types of activities did you engage in and who initiated them? Did that change over time?

What was the mentee like (characteristics: personal, behavioral, academic) when you began the mentoring relationship?

Did she change over the years? Please explain.

What do you believe are her greatest strengths?

What do you believe are her most prominent weaknesses?

How does she conduct herself when encountering new people or difficult situations?

What are her plans for the future?

Have you played a role in developing her future her plans? If so what role have you played?

What do you believe the future will hold for her?

In your opinion, did the relationship build:

Self-efficacy (belief in their own capabilities)

Aspirations (strong desire to meet goals)

Possible selves (idea of what she might become, what one would like to become)