

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MENTORING  
YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE:  
A GRANT PROPOSAL

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# Introduction

- Foster youth compared to youth in the general population face instability in their lives living in multiple foster homes and having numerous caretakers (Lawrence, Carlson & Egeland, 2006).
- Foster youth fared worse than youth in the general population in mental and physical domains, likelihood in engaging in delinquent and risky behavior and poor educational and employment outcomes (Ahrens et al., 2011).
- One protective factor for foster youth was having a mentor to help maximize the youth's opportunities for success socially, academically, and psychologically (Minnard, 2002).

# Social Work Relevance

- Development of a holistic mentoring program for foster youth is relevant to social work practice as the purpose of the social work profession is to devote time to empower people who are disadvantaged, oppressed, and/or living in poverty (NASW, 2008).
- In this case, social workers are promoting social justice and positive social change on behalf of foster youth.
- Social workers can serve in three capacities: (a) train people in the community with little or no experience to become mentors, (b) serve as mentors, (c) administrators of this holistic program.

# Cross-cultural Relevance

- African American and Latino children make up a disproportionate number of children in the foster care system (Center for Social Services Research 2013).
- African American and Latino adolescents were less likely to have mentors in their lives compared to white youth who were more likely to come from privileged backgrounds.
- It is important for social workers and mentors to be aware of cultural differences among youth and not unintentionally impose their middle class values on foster youth (Farrugia et al., 2011).

# Methods

## Target Population

□ Consists of foster youth and mentors, both are part of this holistic intervention. Foster youth are males and females ages 11-18 and mentors are at least 18 years old and passed a criminal background check and willing to work without financial remuneration

## Strategies used to identify and select a funding source

□ Internet searches on the Foundation Directory's on-line database at the Long Beach Non-profit partnership

## Identify the funding source selected

□ The Dwight Stuart Youth Fund since its giving is in Los Angeles where the recipient of the grant proposal, Power 4 Youth is located. The Dwight Stuart Youth Fund fits with the Power 4 Youth's vision to build strong communities by equipping young people with skills and confidence to become successful citizens.

# Methods

## Sources Used for the Needs Assessment

□ Data was collected using government websites such as the U.S. Department of Education, scholarly journal articles and search engines such as Psych Info, Social Work Abstracts, and Google Scholar.

## Project Budget and Range of Categories

□ Since Power 4 Youth was operating at a budget of \$127,900, then the amount requested for this small organization could only be a maximum of \$15,000. The funds would cover staff members' part-time salaries, field trips, refreshments and supplies.

□ There would be a Program Director, Social Worker and Instructors in this program.

# Grant Proposal

## Program Summary and Description

- The Power 4 Youth holistic mentoring program will be a 12-month program where mentors would meet mentees on a weekly basis and take them to holistic training classes that include learning proper diet, yoga and cross-fit training.

## Sustainability

- The Power 4 Youth receives grants from other foundations that could subsidize the costs of this holistic mentoring program. In addition, the agency had relied on individual contributions, local church support and in-kind goods and services.

# Grant Proposal

## Program Objectives

- The cross-fit, yoga and nutrition classes will help encourage youth to live a healthy lifestyle through regular physical activity and education about nutrition and engage in pro-social behaviors.
- Frequent interaction between mentors and mentees will help the mentee develop social skills
- Providing school mentoring for at-risk adolescents that will help them with their academic achievement and future career goals.

## Program Evaluation

- Qualitative analysis, 2 focus groups to discuss what worked and did not work in the program
- Quantitative analyses pre-assessment and post-assessment phase to determine whether foster youth have met the developmental outcomes from The Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness, Adolescent Version 5 (Karcher, 2011).
- Pre-and Post-test measures of blood measure, pulse rate and Body Mass Index (BMI to determine differences in physical health.

# Lessons Learned/Implications for Social Work

## Lessons Learned

- Grant writing
- Consulting with grant funders and director of agency
- Getting things done quickly

## Implications for Social Work

- Important for social workers to advocate for holistic mentoring programs for foster youth.
- Important for social workers to advocate for culturally competent mentors.
- Social workers could become more involved in writing grants and conducting research.

# References

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