

A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE



BESTFRIENDS

MENTORING PROGRAM

SINCE 1995

Procedures for Volunteers

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BEST FRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

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DEFINITION OF BEST FRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM

The Best Friends Mentoring Program refers to the formal organization, which commits to initiating and supporting “friend” relationships between at-risk children and adult community members who would otherwise be unlikely to share their lives. The Best Friends program staff is responsible for initiating and supporting the “friend” relationships. The Best Friends Mentoring Program is under the supervision of the Western Wellness Foundation Inc.

Best Friends Mentoring Program

Purpose and Goals

The Best Friends Mentoring Program is a youth serving, local, non-profit volunteer program. It offers the warmth of a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a school-aged child generally between the ages of 6 to 16. The program offers a young person the chance to build a trusting relationship with an adult volunteer. The Mentor provides the child with love, encouragement, praise, advice and guidance. The Mentors and Mentees are matched by mutual interests and compatible personalities. Quality is our goal, and the parents have final approval of the Mentor for their child. The Best Friends Program can offer additional support to children in a non-stigmatizing, informal, and non-institutional manner. The volunteer provides a special friendship, thus having a positive impact upon the mental health of the child. The target group will consist mainly of at-risk children referred by school personnel, counselors, social services agencies, teachers, parents, and incarcerated youth at Dakota Horizons Youth Center.

The Program Staff is responsible for initiating and supporting the “friend” relationships. The Best Friends Mentoring Program is under the supervision of the Western Wellness Foundation Inc.

CRITERIA FOR “MENTEE” PARTICIPATION IN THE BEST FRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM

Mentee participants in the Best Friends Mentoring Program will be school-age children generally between the ages 6 and 16 years who can benefit from a friendship with a caring adult. The child’s parent will have the final decision as to how the child participates in the Best Friends Program, and to whom their child is matched as a Mentor.

CRITERIA FOR MENTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE BEST FRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM

Mentor participants in the Best Friends Mentoring Program will be at least 16 years of age and enrolled in high school to be mentors in the school-based mentoring program and 18 years of age to be mentors in the community-based mentoring program. Each volunteer must be willing and able to devote one to two hours per week for at least nine months to being a friend to an at-risk child. The “Mentor” must be complete training before being matched with a Mentee. The Mentor must be able to provide the child with a positive one-to-one relationship.

MENTOR'S COMMITMENT TO THE BEST FRIENDS PROGRAM

Self-confidence and self-sufficiency correlate directly to whether or not we have people who care about us personally.

Human service employees come and go, making it difficult for persons to form strong, consistent relationships. Also, it is not appropriate to expect human service workers to be a friend to the clients they work with. This should come freely from members of the community. Therefore, Mentors agree to at least a nine-month commitment of four to eight hours per month contract with the Mentee.

PUBLICITY

In order to recruit new Mentors and present the Best Friends Mentoring Program to the community, photos, brochures, power point presentations, videos or other media may be developed. Mentors and Mentees and families may be asked to participate through photographs or speaking about the Program. A one-time signed release must be secured from the Mentee's parent or guardian and verbal permission for specific advertising or media interviews.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Mentors should treat all personal information received from the Executive Director, Program Coordinator or professionals working directly with the Mentees as strictly confidential. Mentors should also respect the privacy of the Mentee and not repeat things he or she tells in confidence, unless this would endanger anyone. In cases of suspected abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or other) the Mentor must report the information to the Executive Director or Program Coordinator, who will then take appropriate action.

Information a Mentor receives from the Mentee is not privileged in the sense that an attorney's, a priest's or a doctor's information is partly or wholly protected. If the Mentee should confide his or her involvement in a criminal act, the Mentor may seek advice through the Best Friends Mentoring Program Executive Director or Program Coordinator.

REFERRAL PROCESS FOR MENTEES AND MENTORS

The Best Friends Mentoring Program will maintain a working list of potential Mentors. This is necessary to prevent long waiting lists which cause frustration for potential Mentors, Mentees, parents and program staff. To obtain referrals, any of the following procedures may be used:

1. The pro-active approach is when the Best Friends Executive Director or Program Coordinator actively recruits persons according to priorities set in the goals and objectives for the Program. For example, if the executive director has an objective to match two children with a Mentor each month, the staff will actively recruit Mentors and Mentees.
2. Parents, guardians and any interested persons may contact the Best Friends Executive Director to refer a child to the Program. In these situations, the Executive Director or Program Coordinator will talk with the person making the referral to find out why they

feel a Mentor is needed. The staff will then visit with the parent to ascertain if the child is in need of a Mentor. The parent will complete an application with assistance from the staff if necessary. In all cases, a parent or legal guardian must give written permission on the application form for the child to be enrolled in the program and considered for matching with a Mentor. Any person may contact the Best Friends Executive Director or Program Coordinator and request information about becoming a Mentor. The Executive Director or Program Coordinator will follow-up on all requests and encourage interested persons, who meet the basic requirements, to submit Mentor application forms.

3. Service providers (counselors, social services, school personnel, etc.) may contact the executive director or Program Coordinator to provide names of children they know who are in need of a Mentor. In these situations, the Executive Director or Program Coordinator will seek information about the potential Mentor and will contact the parent in order to make decision as to whether a Mentor is needed. The Program Coordinator will assist the parent, if needed, in completing the Mentee application.

RECRUITMENT OF MENTORS

The major focus of Mentor recruitment is to find responsible citizens who are willing to commit to consistent, supportive relationships with at-risk children. The search for Mentors begins with the staff's own personal resources. The staff uses their network of contacts to obtain names of possible Mentors. The staff will continuously increase their personal network of connections to locate more people who have the resources to be Mentors. This may be done by visiting with individuals in the community in touch with people who would be potential Mentors, giving presentations about the Best Friends Mentoring Program, or by talking with church, professional, civic, education and social groups.

MENTOR SCREENING

In order to “match” or select Mentors who can best meet the particular needs of the Mentees, the staff must carefully assess each potential Mentor’s strengths and limitations as well as interest, motives, and expectations of a relationship. In order to do this assessment, the potential Mentor will complete an application. This application includes questions about a potential Mentor’s background, personal information, interests, times available and names of references. The potential Mentor is directed to return the application to the Best Friends Mentoring Program.

After receiving the completed application, the Executive Director first requests child protective services and law enforcement investigations, then contacts the applicant's references. The Program Coordinator then schedules a screening interview with the potential Friend. During this interview, the Program Coordinator asks a list of questions pertaining to being a Mentor. The Program Coordinator, with assistance from the Executive Director if needed, makes the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of the Mentor applicant.

ORIENTATION FOR MENTORS

Upon successful completion of the screening process, the Mentor is required to participate in a minimum of two hours of orientation. Orientation methods include a training packet with



reading materials and lecture time. Orientation may be done on an individual basis or in groups depending on the number of Mentors recruited at a given time. The Program Coordinator provides ongoing support after a match has been made. Mentors must attend two additional training sessions each year.

MATCHING MENTEES WITH MENTORS.

Matching is the process by which the Best Friends Program Coordinator facilitates a relationship between a Mentee and Mentor. The match process begins by the Program Coordinator reviewing both the Mentee and Mentor applications to insure that they are compatible and the potential for a long-term positive relationship exists. Prior to the match, the Program Coordinator will have had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Mentee and the Mentor. This is necessary in order to obtain information on the Mentee's specific needs. The Program Coordinator also talks to both the Mentee's parents and the Mentor to clarify expectations for the first meeting. Once both parties have had the chance to get to know one another, the Program Coordinator asks for a yes from both parties and clarifies the initial focus of the relationship and responsibility both people have to each other. The Mentee's parent(s) has the deciding say in all matters.

FRATERNIZATION

This agency prohibits volunteers from any fraternizing with any of the people served by our programs. Fraternizing is defined as pursuing a close friendship or intimate relationship with a current client. We also prohibit the transfer of money or goods between volunteers and persons currently or formerly served.

If evidence of nonprofessional, non-work-related interaction between a volunteer and any person served by this agency is found, we will conduct a thorough investigation to determine if there has been a violation. If a policy violation is proven, the volunteer will be dismissed, and a report will be filed with the appropriate authorities if children or vulnerable adults are involved.

Volunteers are further required to exercise good judgment in establishing nonprofessional, non-work-related relationships with persons formerly served by our programs. In general, we discourage such relationships at any time. If you have a concern about a potential personal relationship with a former client, please discuss it in confidence with our executive director or any member of the board of directors.

SAFETY POLICY

The Best Friends Mentoring Program expects its volunteers to work in a safe manner, to use good judgment and common sense in matters of safety, to observe all safety rules published and posted in various areas, and to follow all federal and state OSHA regulations.

We recognize that the safety, health, and well being of our volunteers as the top priority in the daily functions of our company's operation. Occupational injuries are needless, costly, preventable, and cause unnecessary pain and suffering to our volunteers. Success in reducing



and/or eliminating injuries in our workplace depends on commitment from all levels. The responsibilities listed in this safety policy must be followed and are essential to our organization's success. At the time of orientation new volunteers receive a safety orientation.

Safety responsibilities

Management:

1. Management is responsible for providing a workplace free of recognized hazards.
2. Management is responsible to file a claim with North Dakota Workers Compensation (NDWC) within 24 hours of notification.
3. Management is responsible for providing appropriate personal protective equipment to employees when necessary.
4. Management is responsible to provide sufficient information to allow employees to perform all tasks safely and to take immediate corrective action to eliminate hazardous conditions and/or practices.

Volunteers:

1. All Volunteers are responsible for reporting work-related injuries and illnesses to management immediately.
2. All Volunteers are responsible to know, understand, and follow company safety policies and procedures.
3. Volunteers are responsible for working in a safe manner at all times and are required to immediately report any unsafe conditions, equipment, or procedures to the Executive Director.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

In any environment, it's important to know how to protect yourself and others from blood borne diseases like AIDS and hepatitis B. At the same time it is important to safeguard the rights and dignity of children.

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Unlike Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS), hepatitis B can often be treated successfully. In fact, a vaccine is now available to help protect you against getting the hepatitis B virus. Yet, unless you're effectively vaccinated, hepatitis B is a bigger threat to you than AIDS because it is more contagious and much more common; but, like AIDS, it can be deadly. If you become infected with HBV, you may feel like you have the flu, or you may be so sick you have to be hospitalized. Each year, 4,000 to 5,000 people in the U.S. die from the chronic liver disease the virus causes.

Just by looking at someone, it's not possible to tell who is infected with a blood borne disease. Infected persons can be male, female, married, single, gay or straight. They can be students – or staff members. What's more, they may not even know they are infected! People can carry either disease for many years without showing any symptoms. Yet, since these people are contagious, they can unknowingly spread the diseases to others.

It comes down to this: to transmit HIV or HBV, there must be contact between broken skin or mucous membranes and infected blood.

Even though the risks of getting a blood borne disease are slim, it is important to be aware of how you might be exposed to potentially infectious material at work. Remember, HIV and HBV may be present in blood or any body fluid or substance that is visibly contaminated with blood. Some typical circumstances where blood is likely to be encountered include playground activities, fights, sports injuries, nosebleeds and accidents in shop class, home economics, science labs or any other setting where students use glass or sharp objects. As a precaution, any time you are faced with any body fluid, you should take the appropriate steps to protect yourself.

At times, you have to deal with other body substances such as nasal discharge, urine, feces or vomit. Any human body substances should be handled carefully because it could be contaminated with other infectious materials.

Use protective barriers to avoid contact with blood

Never touch blood or any moist body substance with your bare skin. When there is a bleeding injury, have the injured person, if possible, apply pressure on it. You can help the person, if necessary, but always use a barrier to avoid direct contact with blood. Disposable single-use gloves are best, but in an emergency you can use whatever is handy – a thick wad of paper, or a clean plastic bag. Never wash or decontaminate disposable gloves for reuse.

When removing gloves, be careful not to expose your skin to the outside of the gloves. Always wash your hands promptly and thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 15 seconds after contact with blood or other fluids or substances – even if gloves or other barriers were used. Dry with disposable towels.

If you're exposed to blood

If you come in contact with blood or body fluids, follow these procedures:

- In case of contact with skin, wash the blood or body fluid off immediately with non-abrasive soap and water.
- If blood or body fluids get in your eyes, immediately flush your eyes with running water for at least 15 seconds at a sink or eyewash fountain.
- If mucous membranes are contacted by blood or body fluids, flush them with water immediately.
- Report the incident immediately to your supervisor.

If you are exposed to a potentially infectious substance, seek medical advice and contact the Program Coordinator or Executive Director.

By taking a few sensible precautions, you don't have to worry about getting a blood borne disease. By making students aware of the facts about these diseases, you can dispel fear and give them a lesson to live by.

FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

The Best Friends Program Coordinator contacts the Mentor monthly to find out what is happening in the relationship and to offer support as needed. The Program Coordinator should have sufficient knowledge of what is happening in the lives of the Mentee in order to offer necessary support to the Mentor. Occasionally the Program Coordinator will send a note, copy of an article of interest, or make a personal visit to the Mentor. The Program Coordinator offers assistance, information, encouragement and contact. He/She encourages the Mentor to seek assistance and support among the people he/she knows and associations he/she belong to as well as from the Best Friends Mentoring Program.

The Best Friends Program offers opportunities for people in relationships to learn more about areas of importance to them, especially about child development. Information about upcoming workshops and orientation sessions will be made available to the Mentor. The Program Coordinator is available to the Mentor to provide information about relationships and alternative methods for working with problems that may arise in the Mentee-Mentor relationship.

The Best Friends Program Coordinator will contact the Mentee's parent monthly and the Mentee quarterly to evaluate the relationship from all angles. A follow-up plan for each Mentor or match may be developed if the Program Coordinator deems necessary. On occasion, the Best Friends Mentoring Program may sponsor a special event to provide recognition to people who have become involved with and supported the Best Friends Program.

ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

We recognize the widespread participation in online conversations and are committed to ensuring that Best Friends participate in online social media the right way.

These **Online Social Media Principles** are intended to outline how Best Friends should be demonstrated in the online social media space and to guide your participation in this area, both when you are participating personally, as well as when you are acting on behalf of Best Friends. Best Friends encourages all of its members to explore and engage in social media communities at a level at which they feel comfortable. **Have fun, but be smart.** The best advice is to approach online worlds in the same way we do the physical one -- by using **sound judgment** and **common sense**, and by adhering to the Best Friends policies. **Respect** of copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the online social media space, including with regard to user-generated content (UGC). How exactly you do this may depend on your particular situation. We ask you to make informed, appropriate decisions.

1. **You are responsible for your actions.** . We do encourage you to participate in the online social media space, but urge you to do so properly, exercising sound judgment and common sense.
2. **Be a "scout" for compliments and criticism.** If you come across positive or negative remarks about Best Friends that you believe are important, consider sharing them by forwarding them to the Best Friends staff.

3. **Be mindful that you are representing Best Friends.** As a Best Friends representative, it is important that your posts convey the same positive, optimistic spirit that Best Friends instills in all of its communications. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures; how you conduct yourself in the online social media space not only reflects on you -- it is a direct reflection of Best Friends.
4. **Keep records.** It is critical that we keep records of our interactions in the online social media space and monitor the activities of those with whom we engage. Because online conversations are often fleeting and immediate, it is important for you to keep track of them when you're engaging in topics regarding Best Friends. Remember that online statements can be held to the same legal standards as traditional media communications.
5. **When in doubt, do not post.** Volunteers are personally responsible for their words and actions, wherever they are. As online person, you must ensure that your posts do not reveal non-public information. Exercise sound judgment and common sense, and if there is any doubt, DO NOT POST IT. In any circumstance in which you are uncertain about how to respond to a post, contact Best Friends Mentoring Program to discuss the matter.
6. **Give credit where credit is due and don't violate others' rights.**
7. **Remember that your local posts can have global significance.** The way that you answer an online question might be accurate in some parts of the world, but inaccurate (or even illegal) in others. Keep that "world view" in mind when you are participating in online conversations.
8. **Know that the Internet is permanent.** Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later or attempt to make it anonymous. If your complete thought, along with its context, cannot be squeezed into a character-restricted space (such as Twitter), provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed completely and accurately.

TERMINATION OF MATCHES

Situations may arise where a Mentee and Mentor can no longer continue in a relationship or are not interested in continuing in a relationship. Examples of such situations may be moving out of the area, incompatibility, or a conflict of some kind. The Mentee's parents or the Mentor will be asked to inform their friend of the termination in cases where a move or conflict is involved. In the case of a move, time for a period of acceptance to the end of the friendship is recommended. In situations when incompatibility is the reason for termination of a match, it may be appropriate for the Program Coordinator to become involved to provide a smooth termination of this relationship, and possible rematch with another Senior and/or Mentee. All situations will be dealt with according to the needs of each individual. The Program Coordinator will consult with the Best Friends Executive Director and/or consultants for assistance and advice.

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