

Themes from a Week of SIYM

Thoughts on Mentoring Older Adolescents & Young Adults

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What it's like attending SIYM...

**At the beginning
of the week...**



During the week...





As you exit SIYM...

Themes & Potential Next Steps



1. It's going to take more than one mentor

- Webs of support/networks will bring a range of skills, opportunities, and helpful voices
- But youth need help mapping existing connections first
- The adults we add to these webs can benefit from some training or information on role (e.g., “everyday mentors”)
- Coordination across those adults (how can programs facilitate)
- Pay attention to the role of staff in mentoring, not just volunteers

Potential next step: *Development or curation of mapping resources for programs to utilize in their work*

2. Expect a winding journey

- This is true of trust at the individual relationship level
- Also true of pursuit of goals and accomplishments of youth
- Program services may want to offer flexibility in “coming and going” or in restarting the journey
 - Extend “grace” when youth make a mistake or go off-track
- To the degree possible, programs and mentors can remove barriers that make that road more winding than need be (money, paperwork, family dynamics, information sharing, practical challenges)
- Mentors should “cover all the bases” when checking in, whole person perspective (are there small, digestible versions of “the binder”?)
- Start talking about young adult transitions early!

Potential next step: *Development of check-in protocols or conversation-facilitating tools for mentors and youth*

3. Keep earning trust

- Projects and activities offer early stage “proving grounds” for the adult
- Bonding social capital might build this as much as bridging social capital
- Honor cultural context of youth and family, honor all forms of existing “capitals”
- Watch how you carry yourself, because youth are always watching
- Teach “weak tie” people how to build, or at least not weaken, trust

Potential next step: *Development of tips/guidance for mentors on trust building actions/activities. Could also develop a tool for “weak tie” mentors on how they can support the youth.*

4. Give the youth the keys to the car

- Teaching young people how to build their own networks might be the most sustainable model of all
- Mentors can build “asking” skills and offer emotional support as youth do this (acting as an “anchor”)
- Programs can focus on building “infrastructure” and institutional contexts where the adults can respond positively when youth reach out

Potential next step: *Development of tips/guidance for young people on how to identify and ask mentors (and plugging them into an overarching plan). Could also launch large public awareness campaign on how to step up when a youth reaches out to you!*

5. We need self-care in our profession

- COVID-19 is stretching us thin
- America's multiple simultaneous injustices are beating us down to a degree
- Stepping out of crisis mode can be helpful
- Collegiality is a great way of recharging our batteries



**But so
is vacation!**



**Thank you so much for
being part of this!**

