One to One Mentoring: Referral Consideration Guide

This document is intended to serve as a guide for community partners making referrals to One to One Mentoring. Our goal is to help ensure that youth, families, and volunteer mentors are set up for successful and sustainable mentoring relationships. While we know that every youth benefits from a positive adult mentor, we also recognize that not every youth or family may be the right fit for our mentoring model. Throughout the referral process, we always welcome conversation and collaboration.

Mentoring can be a great fit for youth who:

- Could benefit from increased confidence and connection
- Struggle socially, experience loneliness, or need an additional trusted adult
- May have moderate but not intensive behavioral challenges

Core Program Fit

A strong referral typically includes youth who:

- **Are between ages 5-18**
  Consider that our typical Mentor is comfortable being matched with ages closer to 10 years old – 16 years old. Younger referrals typically require targeted Mentor recruitment.
- **Want to have a mentor**
  One to One Mentoring will meet with youth in school to determine their willingness to participate.
- **Can meet consistently (weekly or biweekly)**
  Are willing communicators, and indicators like school or extracurricular activity participation show their willingness to show up.
- **Have a caregiver who is aware of and supportive of participation**
  Parent support is very important for success in a match. Depending on the age/maturity of youth, this is more or less important.

Important Program Boundaries

Our mentors are **trained volunteers**, not clinicians, case managers, or social workers. Please keep in mind that mentoring is **not a replacement** for:

- Therapy or mental health treatment
- Crisis intervention
- Intensive behavioral support

For youth that need this level of support, we recommend pursuing options with those trained professionals before seeking a volunteer mentor. Mentorship alongside these professional support options can be a very successful and long-lasting intervention.

Mentoring may not be the best fit if:

- Participation is mandated or youth is resistant
- The level of need exceeds what a volunteer mentor can reasonably provide, including:
    - Ongoing crisis situations or severe trauma requiring specialized professional support
    - If the primary need is academic intervention
- The family moves frequently or is currently experiencing instability
- There is a lack of communication from caregivers, with little family engagement or ability to coordinate (older youth, less of an issue)
- The student has frequent suspensions, ongoing attendance issues, or significant behavioral disruptions

Mismatches between youth needs and expectations and mentor training and expectations can cause premature match endings and potential harm to youth or mentors.

Not Sure? Let's Talk

We value your partnership and welcome collaboration. If you're unsure whether a youth is a good fit, we're happy to talk it through and explore the best support options. You can give us a call prior to referring or we will call you once we receive the referral. Keep in mind that finding the right match can take a lot of time. We consistently maintain a long waitlist of youth and are always seeking adult mentors.

We also encourage partners to visit our website to learn more about One to One Mentoring, our mentoring model, and current program offerings: onetoonetelluride.org

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