



## **SFFC MENTORING FAQs**

### **Who Will I Be Mentoring?**

Safe Families PLUS is custom-designed to meet the needs of youth aged 18-21 who are transitioning out of Foster Care. We also mentor teens aged 14-17 who may or may not be involved with child welfare. We know that mentoring is a unique and valuable way to connect and positively impact youth.

### **How Do I Know the Program Is Safe?**

Safe Families PLUS does everything we can to ensure the safety of both the mentee and the mentor. Issues of safety are central to our acceptance of any mentor. Safe Families PLUS does an official background check on mentors. Also, mentors undergo training in regards to appropriate behavior with their mentees, and regular professional supervision addresses this issue throughout their relationship.

### **What Is My Role in the Mentoring Relationship? With the Mentee? With the Safe Families PLUS staff? With the Youth's Parents?**

Optimally, the mentoring relationship should be between the mentor and the mentee. Teens and young adults need to feel that the relationship is private if they are going to develop trust and be able to express their feelings to the mentor. Parents should be aware of the schedule, but otherwise, express their concerns to the mentoring supervisor.

### **What if I Don't Like the Mentee or the Teen/Young Adult Does not Like the Mentor?**

Safe Families PLUS tries to take sufficient time, in the beginning, to find the right mentee/mentor so that this does not occur. We are aware that there needs to be "chemistry" with the child/young adult, and that everyone needs to feel that the relationship is a good one. Occasionally there may be a miss-match and the mentoring supervisor will work with you to help resolve the situation. We welcome feedback and want to work with families to make this a growth experience for the child.

### **What if the mentee wants to do an activity I disagree with? Or has values that I do not share?**

All mentoring relationships begin with a mentor/mentee match meeting. One of the primary purposes of this meeting is to help the mentor/mentee understand the guidelines. During this meeting, we will share a little about ourselves to help start the relationship process. If issues arise, please share that information immediately with the mentoring supervisor. Safe Families PLUS will work with the mentor to be respectful of the family's values and vice versa.

### **What About Gifts and Money? Can I Give my Mentee a Gift?**

In general, gifts should not be part of the relationship. There are exceptions around holidays and celebrations. We recognize that often a mentor is in a position to identify a real tangible need the teen/young adult has, we do have family friends who may be able to fill this need and we would like to utilize them first. On occasion, we have had mentors who work with their Safe Families PLUS Team, and have been able to fill this need secretly. We strive for the mentee to not see you as a source of tangibles and will take steps to protect the mentor/mentee relationship.

### **How do you Decide Which Mentee I Will Work With?**

When a teen/young adult applies for a mentor, they go through several initial interviews, and most youths are familiar to us or have participated in other programs that we know. Our goal is to have a reasonably clear idea of what kind of mentor would be a good match – and only at that point do we look for the mentor.

### **What are the Teen/Young Adult's Responsibilities in the Mentoring Relationship?**

Initially, the teen/young adult's only responsibility is to attend scheduled sessions and let the mentor know of any changes in his schedule. As in any committed relationship, the teen/young adult has the responsibility to be honest with the mentor.

### **What Types of Activities will the mentor and the Teen/Young Adult do Together?**

The activities will depend on the interests of the teen/young adult and mentor. Activities are a means of engaging the teen/young adult in a relationship; each mentee/mentor relationship will be different. Some teens/young adults may like sports or music, and others may like baking, scrapbooking, or other art projects.

### **Where will I Meet With the Teen/Young Adult?**

It is vital for the teen/young adult to feel that this is his or her exclusive relationship. The setting for the meetings should be private but not secluded. They could go for pizza, coffee, or other snacks, engage in a volunteer, sports or art activity, a walk in the park, or other similar activities.

### **How Often Will I Meet With the Teen/Young Adult Meet?**

Meetings will be face to face twice a month, at minimum, and phone/text contact twice a month. Face to face meeting three times a month is ideal with text/phone support as needed.

### **How are Mentors Screened for this Program?**

Safe Families PLUS mentors go through a comprehensive screening process, which includes a detailed and thorough interview as well as a written application process and a reference check. Any person accepted as a Safe Families PLUS mentor will need to go through a background check through the Oregon Department of Education.