



A Collaborative Training Effort Between a Continuing education Program do a Graduate School of Social Work and a Volunteer Mentoring Youth Service Agency

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A Collaborative Training Effort Between a Continuing Education Program of a Graduate School of Social Work and a Volunteer Mentoring Youth Service Agency.

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The role of continuing education in the profession of social work has been undergoing significant changes in recent years. These changes have come about as a result of the sometimes radical upheaval of human service policies—policies which have long been the basis for social work practice. To cite just one example institutionalization of mentally ill individuals has been sharply reduced by both Federal and State mandates. This policy of deinstitutionalization has resulted in the need for a widely expanded range of community-based services, and the concomitant need for recruitment and training of social work staff to provide these services. Social work continuing education programs have played a significant role in providing the specialized training necessary for individuals providing the direct services, some of whom have little or no formal social work education.

Based on the recognition of the need for enhancement of practice skills among human services staff working to meet the special needs resulting from changes in the socio-political environment, the Continuing Education Program of the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service has expanded its focus to include not only post-MSW or -BSW training and education, but also, collaborative training and education programs for staff providing direct services. Among the participants have been staff and supervisors from child welfare agencies, residences for individuals with mental illness, HIV/AIDS programs, and most recently volunteer mentoring programs for young people. Here is described the collaborative efforts of FUGSSS' Continuing Education Program and the Training Center of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City.

In the field of youth development, there has been an increasing emphasis on mentoring as an integral component of service provided by youth

agencies. The social and health problems of the nation's young people have been widely documented. At any one time, about 12% of the more than 63 million children and adolescents in the United States suffer from serious behavioral or emotional problems (Institute of Medicine, 1989). In addition, the number of adolescents seen in juvenile courts for delinquent offenses has more than doubled since the 1960s (Johnson & Fennell, 1992). These are just some of the negative youth outcomes which pose a serious challenge to social workers and others in the helping professions. The use of adult volunteers to provide one-to-one youth mentoring is gaining recognition as an effective strategy for both prevention and intervention in meeting the needs of young people.

Given the growth and popularity of mentoring programs, a need has increased for staff training and development. Field staff workers play an important part in creating and supporting successful mentoring relationships. By way of illustration, a recent nationwide study on mentoring reported dramatic positive outcomes and concludes that the service delivery standards utilized by Big Brothers Big Sisters are an important ingredient to mentoring success (Public/Private Ventures, 1995). In the child welfare field, the importance of an identified professional to manage volunteers has been underscored (Mech & Leonard, 1988) as well as the necessary staff infrastructure to help staff, recruit, train, support, and supervise volunteer mentors (Mech, Pryde & Rycraft, 1995). It has been noted also that mentoring relationships are complex and might benefit from professional involvement and mental health principles (Rhodes, 1994). As the mentoring field grows, there is a critical role to be played by graduate schools of social work to provide professional development to direct service staff who supervise mentors. In 1998, the

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Continuing Education Program of Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City's Training Center to provide professional development to social service staff in the area of youth mentoring.

The Growth of Mentoring

On the national front, both government and private sector leaders have hailed mentoring as a successful and essential intervention for at risk youth. In April, 1997, President Clinton, three former presidents, thirty governors, and corporate executives convened in Philadelphia for a three-day conference called the Presidents' Summit. The Summit promoted volunteerism with low-income youth and placed emphasis on mentoring as one of the proven examples of a program that works. In fact, the Summit leaders called for an increase in mentoring to an additional two million American children.

Mentoring with a case management approach appears to have a strongly positive effect on improving social, psychological, and behavioral outcomes for at risk youth. The results of a 1995 study by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) have contributed greatly to the widespread interest in increasing mentoring opportunities for at risk youth. This "watershed" study's findings are much acclaimed in the mentoring field and have been frequently cited by the news media especially in coverage of the Presidents' Summit (DeParle, 1997; Gerson, 1997). The study used an experimental design to look at 959 at risk, 1016 year old youths from eight different Big Brothers Big Sisters organizations throughout the United States. It was hypothesized that 487 youth paired with a one-to-one adult volunteer mentor would experience better outcomes than the 472 youth on the waiting list to be paired with a mentor. Random assignment was used to place youth in the experimental or control group. All of the youth were from single-parent households; 55% were ethnic minorities; and 40% lived in families that received income assistance. Compared to the control group after 18 months, the

mentored youth were: 46% less likely to initiate drug use; 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use; one-third less likely to hit someone; were skipping half as many days of school; improved their grades modestly; and experienced more positive relationships with parents and peers.

According to Rhodes (1994), hundreds of programs have been modeled after Big Brothers Big Sisters and have identified special populations of youth who might benefit from mentoring such as pregnant adolescents, disabled youth, African American males, and students at risk for high school dropout. It has been reported that the number of youth served through non-Big Brothers Big Sisters programs is increasing and is about the same as the number served by Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates (Freedman, 1993). It is difficult to get an exact number of volunteer mentors, as there is no central clearinghouse by which to track mentoring programs or volunteers. The total number of mentors may indeed be far greater than 200,000 as Freedman suggests. As a case in point, a nationwide survey found that 1.2% of Americans who volunteer are counselors defined as Big Brother/Big Sister or substance abuse helpers (Independent Sector, 1996).

A growing body of social work research has been documenting the growth and interest in using adult volunteers to mentor special populations of high-risk youth. Blechman (1992) asserts that adults who are bicultural in mainstream and inner city culture can help minority youth to also become bicultural and avoid negative outcomes such as delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and unemployment. Haensly and Parsons (1993) claim that adult mentors can help at-risk children from dysfunctional families who have problems in their school and community by providing them with previously absent guidance. Zippay (1995) surveyed twenty formerly-mentored, low-income teen mothers and concluded that women who have more education and higher socio-economic status can help low-income teen mothers by accessing resources and helping them reach educational goals and

increase employment skills. Another set of researchers assert that mentors can help adolescents in foster care to reach higher educational and employment goals as well as help with problem solving (Mech, Pryde, & Rycraft, 1995).

A recent Census Bureau report indicates that a large number of young people in America face significant risk factors associated with negative outcomes. One-fifth (21%) of the nation's children under age 18 continue to live in poverty, and 28% of American children live in a home with only one parent present (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1997). In an age of managed care, time-limited welfare benefits to poor families, and decreased federal discretionary funding for social welfare programs, the use of volunteers to engage in one-on-one helping relationships with youth in community-based settings has significant appeal as a cost-effective service capable of profound impact. With widespread interest from professionals and the public in using adult volunteers to help at-risk youth, there is a strong need to provide professional development to staff so that they are adequately trained to determine suitability of appropriate volunteers and supervise volunteers in their roles as mentors.

The Development of a Unique Partnership Model

According to Beiswinger (1984), formalized mentoring began in 1904 with Big Brothers of New York City, the first structured program in the country to pair at risk youth with caring adult volunteers. The Big Brothers organization was started by Ernest Coulter, a court clerk who mobilized members of a men's club to mentor immigrant boys who were being penalized in the court system for petty crimes. Big Brothers eventually became Big Brothers Big Sisters in 1989 and is now part of a federation, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, with over 500 affiliates nationwide, headquartered in Philadelphia. The federation serves approximately 100,000 youth and has an additional 30,000 youth on active waiting lists.

With a ninety-five year experience of mentoring service delivery, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New

York City has evolved into a professionalized service agency which uses case managers who carefully screen adults who are interested in spending approximately 6-10 hours a month to a school age child primarily from a single-parent family. Accepted volunteers are matched for a minimum period of one year. Parents and guardians are included in service delivery through orientation sessions and interviews and ongoing monitoring of the mentoring relationship.

A parental assessment of the New York City's Big Brothers Big Sisters program reveals positive results. One hundred and thirty-five single parents were surveyed by mail about their child having a big brother or sister. Seventy-six (56%) of the parents responded to the survey. Children were matched with same-sex adult volunteers on a one-to-one basis. Two-thirds (63%) of the parents reported that their children had greatly improved since program participation. The percentage of youngsters improving in various areas was: self esteem, 83%; getting along with friends, 70%; being more responsible, 60%; staying out of trouble, 58%; getting along with family members, 55%; school attendance, 49%; and school grades, 47% (Frecknall & Luks, 1992).

With positive outcome studies and political support stimulating an interest in the expansion of mentoring, the demand for mentoring programs is great and exceeds the services Big Brothers Big Sisters alone can provide. In 1991, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City (BBBS) established its Center for Training to train youth-serving organizations in its service delivery model with the goal of serving more youth with one-to-one adult volunteers. The Center hosts workshops, conferences, and lectures, to promote standards in services to mentor youth. The Center's curriculum is based on the Big Brothers Big Sisters case management one-to-one model and is taught to staff from a variety of youth-serving agencies so that they can establish and/or improve a mentoring program in their agency's catchment area. Since the Training Center's inception, it has trained over 700 staff

from various organizations including: colleges, corporations, schools, afterschool programs, professional organizations, religious institutions, foster care agencies, juvenile justice programs, governmental agencies, and volunteer associations.

Up until the partnership with Fordham's Graduate School of Social Service (FUGSSS), the Training Center had traditionally used its own resources to provide these organizations with the tools to develop and implement youth mentoring programs. For example, the Training Center initially offered a one-day workshop that taught comprehensive service delivery methods including program design, youth intake, volunteer recruitment, screening, supervision, child abuse awareness, youth-volunteer matching procedures, case planning, relationship closure, record-keeping, evaluation, and recommended activities. After each session, participants completed evaluation forms that measured the effectiveness of the 7-hour training. The evaluations revealed that participants desired further mentoring knowledge and were somewhat overwhelmed with the large amount of information provided in only a one-day session. The feedback was utilized to improve and expand the training curriculum into a semester long course. Given the extensiveness of the curriculum, the benefits of building a relationship with a graduate school of social work became apparent.

A Collaboration Between a Graduate School of Social Work and Training Center of a Mentoring Agency

In 1997 Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service Continuing Education program and Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC's Training Center began to foster a relationship based upon a shared interest in the promotion of continuing education to human service professionals and the importance of standards in the mentoring field. Allan Luks, Executive Director of BBBS of NYC, and Mary Ann Quaranta, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Service at Fordham University, scheduled meetings to discuss potential ways to

expand the Training Center's curriculum to include the expertise of an institution of higher education.

The Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service had three main reasons for getting involved in such a collaboration. First, the School was able to extend its reach by training full-time social service professionals interested in professional development in the primary area of mentoring. In addition, through collaboration with a non-profit volunteer mentor agency, the Graduate School was able to augment its continuing education course offerings in a new and growing practice area. Lastly, the School recognized the contributing value in developing and promoting professional standards in the screening, training, and supervision of adult volunteers who work with children and adolescents in need.

In response to the growing demand for mentoring knowledge by social work students and an increasing number of communities developing mentoring programs, the two entities launched the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program in September, 1998. The Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program was funded through BBBS's Training Center which obtained grants from the Altman Foundation, American Express Foundation, The Clark Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, The Educational Foundation of America, The Edward & Ellen Roche Relief Foundation, Laura B. Vogler Foundation, The Louis Calder Foundation, Stella & Charles Guttman Foundation, and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

Together, the Graduate School's Continuing Education Program and the volunteer mentoring organization addressed the training needs of mentoring field staff by combining BBBS professional trainers and social work faculty to deliver a 16-week program in Mentoring Supervision. Infusing academic conceptual theory with experiential learning techniques strengthened the teaching methods previously taught by the BBBS Training Center.

A Collaborative Training Effort

After the two parties agreed on a curriculum, the BBBS Training Director and the Director of the FUGSSS Continuing Education Program decided that six sessions would be taught at Fordham University and ten sessions at the BBBS Training Center (Table 1). The Program operated on a similar schedule to the University's academic semester, and the classes alternated between the Fordham University campus and the BBBS Training Center in Manhattan. The 16-week Program in Mentoring Supervision was intended for human services and social work professionals, youth counselors and workers, mentoring program coordinators, and other adults who work with youth. The Continuing Education Director of FUGSSS selected faculty that had the expertise, time availability, and interest in youth mentoring to teach the six sessions.

Components of a Successful Program and Overview of Program Models

The first session provides an overall framework with which to develop a mentoring program and covers 14 essential components needed to design and implement a youth mentoring program, including the development of a mission statement, program structure, focus, and modality.

Identifying Protective and Risk Factors in Youth and Families

This session presents the strength perspective model in youth development as an alternative to focusing on pathology and risk. Participants explore ways to integrate the model into mentoring practices and their everyday work with youth and families by focusing on strengths and resiliency.

Table 1

Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program Session Title and Location

Session Descriptions

Session Number	Session Title	Fordham or BBBS
1	Components of a Successful Mentoring Program and Overview of Program Models	BBBS
2	Identifying Protective and Risk Factors of Youth and Families	Fordham
3	Volunteer Recruitment	BBBS
4	Interviewing and Assessment Skills	Fordham
5	Volunteer Screening: Tools and Techniques	BBBS
6	Volunteer Training: Train the Trainer	BBBS
7	Issues in Volunteer Supervision	BBBS
8	Cultural Competency Skills	Fordham
9	Group Work with Children and Adolescents	Fordham
10	Child and Adolescent Development	Fordham
11	Working with Parents and Guardians: Gaining Sanctions and Meeting the Needs of Parents	BBBS
12	Matching Youth with Adult Volunteers: Successful Strategies	BBBS
13	Program Evaluation: Measuring Outcomes	Fordham
14	Liability and Insurance Issues	BBBS
15	Fundraising Skills	BBBS
16	Closure Issues: Ending Youth-Volunteer Relationships	Fordham

Typical client case studies of “at-risk” youth are presented so that participants are able to practice applying the model.

Volunteer Recruitment

This session cultivates abilities to recruit quality volunteers and motivates participants to meet the important challenge of volunteer recruitment. Participants learn to create their own volunteer job description, practice marketing skills, identify appropriate volunteer eligibility requirements, identify at least five places in their communities to find potential volunteers, and take part in a volunteer recruitment slogan contest.

Interviewing and Assessment Skills

This session combines social work interview skills and techniques with the BBBS interview protocol to teach about the importance of in-depth interviews and assessment processes. Participants learn the importance of interview questions designed to help screen out potential child molesters. By practicing interview techniques and consulting the actual BBBS interview form, participants gain the tools to implement a comprehensive interviewing process in their own agency in order to ensure appropriateness of the clients and volunteers for the mentoring programs.

Volunteer Screening Tools and Techniques

This session underscores the importance of a thorough screening process so participants will incorporate adequate screening methods into their own mentoring program design. Participants learn to identify ten screening tools, determine the effectiveness of various screening techniques, and select appropriate screening tools for their particular programs.

Volunteer Training: Train the Trainer

This session equips participants with the skills and knowledge to train their own mentors. Participants learn at least five adult learning principles, describe four training competencies, learn strategies to manage training groups, and identify at least two of their own areas for growth as a training facilitator.

Matching Youth With Adult Volunteers

This session helps participants to devise a thorough matching strategy to promote the quality and duration of mentoring relationships. Participants learn about the importance of cultural considerations in matching and begin to understand how to use the information collected in the intake process to make optimal mentor-youth matches.

Cultural Competency Skills

A theoretical model for understanding culture is presented to develop an understanding of cultural background and patterns of volunteers, youth, and families in mentoring programs. Participants assess their own cultural beliefs, assumptions, and openness to multicultural issues and learn the importance of incorporating cultural competency skills into all phases of the mentoring process.

Group Work with Children and Adolescents

This session introduces a variety of group activities that can be used for mentees, mentors, and mentoring pairs. Participants identify four phases of group development and establish age and developmental-phase appropriate activities for their individual programs.

Child and Adolescent Development

This session presents the Eriksonian stages of human psychological development, promotes self-awareness, and introduces the concept of the “good-enough” family. Participants are encouraged to reconnect with their own experiences as children and adolescents and apply developmental theory to mentoring practice.

Working with Parents and Guardians: Gaining Sanctions and Meeting the Needs of Parents

This session reinforces the importance of involving parents and guardians into every phase of mentoring service delivery. Participants learn how to include guidelines for parents and guardians and how to create group activities that have been successful in engaging parents in mentoring programs.

Issues in Volunteer Supervision

This session highlights the importance of volunteer supervision in the retention of volunteers and the development of positive mentoring relationships. Participants gain an understanding of effective ways to monitor and maintain contact with volunteers in a routine schedule of supervision. The role of the volunteer supervisor is explored and methods of supervision are practiced with the use of common case scenarios.

Program Evaluation

This session introduces the Program Outcome Evaluation model, a retrospective outcome evaluation model developed by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Participants learn to write outcome indicators, plan data collection and assessment, and integrate the Program Outcome Evaluation tool into their agencies.

Liability and Insurance Issues

This session teaches about the potential risk involved in mentoring programs for the volunteers, clients, and agency. Participants learn seven potential areas of risk for mentoring programs, ten common liability exposures, tips for purchasing a liability insurance policy, and areas to look at when evaluating a liability insurance policy. Overall, participants gain the ability to identify areas of risk, minimize risk, and manage risk effectively.

Fundraising Skills

This session helps mentoring coordinators build a strong case for support from foundations, corporations, government agencies, and individuals. Participants practice their fundraising skills by critiquing actual grant proposals and looking at both strong and weak mentoring program proposals.

Closure Issue

This session examines the mentor coordinators' feelings about closure through the use of parallel process comparing the termination of mentoring relationships to the completion of the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program in order to demonstrate the importance of implementing formal closure for mentors and youth whose relationships come to an end. Participants learn about behaviors common at the end of a mentoring relationship, procedures that assist with a positive relationship closing, and pointers for facilitating proper closure.

The Model

The Certificate candidates were recruited via direct mail promotional materials that were mailed to the Executive Directors of various organizations throughout New York City. The application procedure for potential candidates included submitting a standard registration form, current resume, and a 150 word personal statement describing why the candidate was interested in enrolling in the Mentor Supervisor Certificate Program. The BBBS staff reviewed the candidates' information and selection was based on direct service experience, dedication to the mentoring field, and educational background. Candidates were required to have at minimum a high school diploma.

Each accepted candidate was required pay a nominal \$250 registration fee to ensure commitment to the training program and defray administrative costs. As mentioned previously, BBBS used grant support to subsidize the total cost of running the Program in conjunction with Fordham. If participants could not afford the registration fee, full- and half-scholarships as well as flexible payment

plans were made available so as not to deter program participation. In addition to the application process and registration fee, candidates could not miss more than two of the 15 two-hour sessions if they wanted to receive the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate. If more than two sessions were missed, the Certificate would not be conferred until the sessions were made up the following semester. Candidates were required to attend four mandatory reflective sessions, each hour in duration. The reflective sessions were intended to address questions and comments that were not discussed in the previous sessions. Typically, participants sought the group's advice about current problems or situations that were occurring in their mentoring program. These scenarios fostered group discussions and debates that often resulted in problem solving and suggestions for the participants seeking assistance.

The last requirement for receiving the Certificate was the successful completion of a multiple-choice examination or submission of an 8-10 page final paper. The final paper was a detailed description and breakdown of the components of the mentoring program at the participant's agency. The paper included specific information about the proposed or actual mentoring program's mission, external needs assessment, measurable objectives, methods and structure, volunteer and family screening techniques, evaluation procedures, and program budget. A passing grade was given if all components were clearly defined and thoroughly described according to mentoring standards taught in the course. Each participant was required to receive at least a 70 percent on the final exam or a "Pass" on the final paper in order to be eligible for the Certificate. Once the sessions were completed and the final paper or exam received a passing grade, the candidates were invited to a closing graduation ceremony at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service. At the ceremony, candidates received a Certificate in Mentoring Supervision signed by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC.

Thus far, the Certificate Program has been offered in the Fall of 1998 and the Spring of 1999. A total of 55 participants were enrolled. The participants were recruited via direct mail from a list of youth-serving organizations throughout New York City, provided by city agencies and the United Way. The profile of the participants varied in terms of educational and direct service experience. Out of 55 Program Participants enrolled: 44% had received a Bachelor's Degree, 29% a Master's Degree, 20% a High School Diploma, 4% a Doctoral Degree, and 4% an Associate's Degree as their highest level of education. Participants who had a high school diploma were accepted, based on their previous direct service experience. Combining the number of years, these professionals have worked an average of 6.5 years per person in the human service field.

The first semester graduates were surveyed about the reason for enrolling in the Mentor Supervisor course. Many surveys cited several reasons including: 72% for professional development, 61 % to set up a new mentoring program, 59% due to personal interest, and 50% to improve an existing mentoring program. As indicated, the most common response was to seek professional development. This information implies that, despite these differences in educational and professional backgrounds, participants sought the opportunity to expand professionally and enhance their knowledge base in supervising volunteer mentors. The majority of participants were given leave time and were sponsored to enroll in the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program by their workplace, indicating that the Certificate is recognized by agencies as an important professional development activity. In addition, a few agencies reported that they have included the Certificate credential in their staff biographies in funding proposals.

Participant Satisfaction Responses from Survey of Participants

A survey was distributed to the first semester participants to assess the Program's quality. The impact was measured by inquiring how equipped and confident individuals felt after the Certificate Program to improve an existing program or develop a new mentoring program. Participants were asked to rate each session to determine appropriateness and usefulness as well as overall content of the Certificate Program.

Survey results and comments were utilized to enhance the curriculum. The final survey showed that not enough time was dedicated to practical issues and techniques related to supervising mentors. Therefore, the curriculum was expanded to include an additional class on volunteer supervision to extend the time frame from 15 weeks to 16 weeks. Four one-half hour Reflective Sessions were also instituted as mandatory sessions. As stated previously, the purpose of the reflective time is to encourage dialogue and questions about the classes or issues that are occurring in participants' mentoring programs.

The feedback also indicated that the class size was too large; therefore, it was decided to limit the class size to 20 participants. The larger class impeded some of the participants' ability to raise questions and participate actively in group discussions.

The final evaluation of the course showed favorable results and proved the program to be beneficial for participants in many areas. Eighty percent of participants who did not have mentoring programs claimed the Certificate Program was very helpful and 20% quite helpful in providing the skills to start a mentoring program. Out of the remaining population of participants that already ran mentoring programs prior to enrolling in the course, 85% responded that the certificate program was quite (46%) or very (39%) helpful in assisting the participants to improve their existing programs. Overall, when rating the satisfaction with the program 88% of participants reported that they were highly satisfied with the entire Certificate Program.

Qualitative remarks revealed the specific areas participants found most helpful. First, participants commonly gave tribute to the practice related written materials for example, "Materials provided are very detailed. One could start a program with the handouts alone." Several respondents also stated that "networking with other programs and professionals" was yet another strength of the Program. Participants commonly demonstrated satisfaction with the diversity of program facilitators and presentation format: "The varied lecture styles and the abundance of pertinent and educational information and materials distributed were most helpful." "All lectures were positive, motivated, and skilled, and had very good teachers."

Conclusion and Directions for the Future

The Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service was able to reach an entirely new population by offering the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program. The University expanded its Continuing Education division by tapping into and appealing to full-time social service professionals interested in professional development in the primary area of mentoring. Prior to the collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Graduate School did not offer any courses on mentoring specifically and, therefore, was able to expand its continuing education course offerings by linking with a non-profit volunteer mentor agency. This expansion makes the Continuing Education division attractive to a growing audience of mentoring professionals.

The Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service and the Training Center gave Certificate Program participants knowledge from academia and the mentoring field. Program participants were able to apply the theories and tools directly to their mentoring programs. This new partnership model that combines research and theory with direct service and practice provides participants with a balanced educational experience. The model provided Certificate candidates with exposure to University faculty who related research in the field of youth services to upgrade the curricu-

lum. The participants were also afforded access to the Fordham University library. The theoretical conceptualizations presented by Fordham faculty were undergirded by a bibliography of relevant articles and other publications.

The Training Center provided a highly interactive training session that allowed for role playing, small and large group exercises, and discussion of real-life mentoring case studies. Participants learned practical standards developed by BBBS. They were encouraged to meet with the Training Center staff to assist with the development of their own mentoring programs. Ongoing technical assistance in the form of site visits and phone consultation was also made available for all program participants. Furthermore, plans are underway to conduct a 12-month follow-up study of the training participants to ascertain further the benefits of program involvement.

As indicated above, this cooperative training program was rated very highly in the participants' final evaluations. The FUGSSS faculty who participated in this part of the School's Continuing Education Program were able to provide broad based theoretical material, comparable to that included in MSW-level courses, but focused specifically on the field of mentoring. This focus in an in-service training program had aspects of consultation. While the content was general and predetermined, it also had relevance to the work problems of the participants, particularly in the experiential aspects of the teaching. All participants shared similar responsibilities in the same field of practice - namely, volunteer mentoring, making such sharing of techniques of problem resolution possible. Thus, the Continuing Education Program of FUGSSS was able to work toward making a contribution to the improvement of direct service delivery - a significant contribution to meeting the needs of at-risk young people. In addition, the linkage between Fordham's Continuing Education Program and a nonprofit volunteer organization added to the School's training offerings.

This cooperative training program also resulted in stimulating the interest of some of the participants in working toward the Master of Social Work degree. The School's Director of Admissions met with the group of participants after one of the sessions to provide information regarding this opportunity and to offer further private discussion, along with application material.

The reaction of each of the Fordham faculty members teaching in this program was very positive. The group members were described as eager to learn and highly committed to working in the field of volunteer mentoring. None of the faculty raised the issue of the validity (or appropriateness) of teaching social work skills, even on a beginning level, to a group whose participants had differing educational backgrounds, ranging from a high school diploma to a MSW and a doctoral degree. At the same time, those responsible for the planning of this Certificate Program recognized the fact that there are both inherent problems as well as advantages in the training of staff providing similar services with different educational backgrounds. An area for future consideration is the possibility of research regarding this. As the volunteer mentoring movement has grown and evolved, the importance of training to improve service delivery has been accentuated. Related to this is the recognition of the need for the development of standards of practice and the means for providing assurance.

BBBS of NYC has taken a leadership role in working toward a statewide credentialing of supervisors of volunteer mentors. The training program developed cooperatively by this agency and the Continuing Education Program of FUGSSS might well serve as a model curriculum for such credentialing. As the two institutions continue to work together in this training program, the development of such a curriculum would be a major contribution to the field of volunteer mentoring.

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