

Frequently Given **Excuses** for not Mentoring

It takes too much time to mentor – Mentoring does take some time but it's the consistency of contact with the youth that is most important. In many community based mentoring programs, you can go about your normal daily activities and just include your mentee in things such as dinner, Sunday football games, trips to the barber shop, etc.

You have to have a college degree to mentor – For most mentoring programs, all you need is a desire for the positive development of a young person and a commitment to stay in a mentoring relationship for 6 months to a year. Young people are constantly disappointed by people who pledge to be there and disappear from their lives. Mentors are there to break this cycle and must show they are committed to the young person and the relationship

I can't mentor because I don't even spend enough time with my own children – By becoming a mentor you have an opportunity to make a difference in two people's lives. Also, depending on the age of your child(ren) you can include him/her in *some* of the activities you do with your mentee.

Mentoring is for bad kids - Mentoring is not a punishment. Most successful people have had caring adults to help them navigate their paths through life. Though some young people who are having challenges are assigned a mentor to help them make more positive choices in their lives, all young people can benefit from a mentor.

Background checks are an invasion of privacy – The safety of our young people are of highest concern. Background checks are necessary to inform relevant program staff of precautions that may need to be considered. However, confidentiality is very important and only relevant program staff are privy to certain information. In many programs, individuals with prior records are still able to mentor but may be limited in the kinds of activities they do with young people. For instance, activities done in group settings with program staff present are often okay.

You need money to mentor and with today's economy that is just not happening – There are a variety of programs that can meet your budgetary limitations. In site-based programs, the coordinator supplies you with the materials you need for the majority of your activities. Your biggest duty will be showing up. For community-based mentor programs, your coordinator will be able to provide you with a list of **free** activities around the city. While you may sometimes spend money out of pocket, it should be minimal as the relationship is not about things, but about connections.