

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Become a Mentor?

"I became a mentor because I wanted to give. The thing I didn't realize was how much I'd get."

Give a little time. Get a lot in return.

Mentoring helps create healthier futures for teens and for yourself. Do your part in the fight against childhood obesity - mentor a child to make healthier eating and fitness choices.

Mentoring helps students plan for high school graduation, college, and careers.

Inspire a child to dream and reach his or her full potential by planning for the future.

What is Mentoring?

A matter of trust. Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. A mentor is an adult who, along with parents, provides a young person with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there. A mentor is not a foster parent, therapist, parole officer, or cool peer.

All young people have the potential to succeed in life and contribute to society. All children have the potential to succeed in life and contribute to society. However, not all children get the support they need to thrive.

By all estimates, an astounding 17.6 million young people - nearly half the population of young people between 10 and 18 years of age - live in situations that put them at risk of not living up to their potential.

Without immediate intervention by caring adults, they could make choices that not only undermine their futures, but ultimately the economic and social well-being of our nation.

How does Mentoring Help?

Mentoring - the presence of caring adults offering support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive examples - has proved to be a powerful tool for helping young people fulfill their potential.

Mentoring can help by:

- Improving young people's attitudes towards their parents, peers and teachers

- Encouraging students to stay motivated and focused on their education
- Providing a positive way for young people to spend free time
- Helping young people face daily challenges
- Offering young people opportunities to consider new career paths and get much needed economic skills and knowledge

By using your influence and resources as a decision maker, you can bring new hope to young lives through the power of mentoring. And you'll be surprised how much you will benefit, as well.

Examples of Mentor Qualities:

- Good listener
- Accepting
- Role Model
- Empathic
- Sees solutions, not barriers
- Coach
- Non-judgmental
- Cheerleader

A mentor may help a young person:

- Plan a project for school
- Set career goals and start taking steps to realize them
- Make healthy choices about day-to-day life, from food to exercise and beyond
- Think through a problem at home or school

A mentor should:

- Keep promises
- Treat mentee with respect
- Be consistent
- Foster critical thinking
- Foster personal responsibility
- Expect that mentee will do his/her best
- Keep confidentiality
- Ask for help, guidance, and support

How will I know where and when to report?

After contacting SOSMentor and submitting an application, mentors will be sent an email with information regarding the time of the workshop, the dates to attend, and directions to the school.

Will someone be available to walk me to my car after each session?

Yes, feel free to ask a fellow mentor or the instructor.

Is there a carpool program for Mentors to drive to the program together?

As of now, there is not, but mentors are welcome to coordinate such a program with each other.

Will there be an orientation or training program?

Yes, the first date of each program is the orientation where mentors and students will be introduced to each other and the program objectives.

Are any special skills or prior training required to serve as a Mentor?

A mentor needs to be a good listener, have a positive attitude, and be willing to "walk the walk" by following ShapeUp recommendations in his or her personal life. A background in nutrition is not required since an instructor will always be present to lead the class and all mentors will attend a training session.

Is there any age requirement to serve as a Mentor?

Mentors must be over age 18.

May I bring snacks or gifts for the students that I mentor?

No, please do not bring snacks or gifts for students unless you clear them first with the program instructor.

Will a prior felony conviction or physical disability disqualify me from serving as a Mentor?

According to policies enforced by LAUSD, we cannot permit an individual with a felony conviction to serve as a mentor in our program. Physical disabilities will not disqualify one from serving as a mentor.

Will being overweight disqualify me from serving as a mentor?

The SOSMentor ShapeUp Program utilizes a tiered mentoring approach in which everyone is learning together. The workshop instructor serves as a mentor to the adult mentors; adult mentors serve as mentors to high school students; and high school students mentor elementary school students. Being overweight will not disqualify one from serving as a mentor. However, we ask that mentors be positive role models and mention positive lifestyle changes they made since joining the ShapeUp Program.

Will training materials be provided to me?

Yes, all mentors and high school students are given training manuals.

May I serve as a mentor for more than one program?

Yes, mentors can serve for more than one program.

What do I do if a student asks me a question and I do not know the answer?

A registered dietitian or health professional will always be present to lead and instruct the class. Mentors are welcome to ask the instructor for answers to questions they do not know.

Other than the orientation and the 5 sessions, what other opportunities are available for me to further participate in SOSMentor?

Mentors are encouraged to attend the elementary workshops and the Mentor Appreciation Event in May. Once at the elementary school, mentors should be aware that the high school students will be mentors to elementary students. Thus, adult mentors attending the elementary workshops would be there to observe and help out.

Other than the orientation and the 5 sessions, am I required to attend or participate in any other event or activity?

No, however mentors are strongly encouraged to attend the Mentor Appreciation Events in December. The Mentor Appreciation Event allows students to reconnect with their mentors and share their own experience as mentors.

Must I stick firmly to the curriculum or may I also relate my personal experiences to the students?

It is important that mentors build relationships with their students. If a personal experience is positive and applicable to the lesson, mentors should share this experience. However, the focus should always be on the students. Although they can bring in some personal information, mentors shouldn't talk about themselves too much - they should listen and coach instead.

May I mention vegetarian or other special diet plans to the students? Or is it better to leave these topics to the Instructor?

We are teaching the basic scientific principles of good nutrition, so we prefer that mentors stick to the curriculum. It is better to leave such topics to the instructor. If students have questions that mentors are unsure of, please ask the instructor.

Is there a list of topics that I am prohibited from discussing with the students?

No, however we ask that mentors keep their relationships with students professional and encourage them to lead healthy lives.

What if I must miss one or more of the sessions due to an emergency due to a previously scheduled appointment? Will I be provided with a contact person and contact information?

Yes, please email the instructor with the date of the workshop session that you will miss. This is to ensure that your students will always have a mentor present in your absence.

May I give the students my personal contact information for them to use if they have a question during or after the program session?

We ask mentors to limit contact with students to the supervised mentoring sessions at the school. Mentors may speak to the instructor if they desire additional contact with a student outside of program workshops.

Will there be an opportunity for me to share my experience as a mentor with the organization and/or other Mentors? How can I communicate any suggestions or comments that may arise?

After every workshop, mentors will have a chance to make comments or ask questions on the daily workshop response form. All mentors will also debrief together for 5-10 minutes and share their comments, questions, and support for each other. This is the opportunity for mentors to report responses of students during mentoring time.