

Activity: Talking About the Power of Mentoring with Young People

This activity is designed to help you apply insights from the [Striving to Thriving](#) research to more effectively communicate with young people about the power of mentoring.

STEP 1: REVIEW THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF STRIVING TO THRIVING

Consider which implications you find most compelling or most actionable for your organization.



Young People Experience Identity as an Asset

Potential Implications

1. Develop tools and communication materials that shine a spotlight on Black and Hispanic young people and the strength and pride they derive from their racial and ethnic identities.
2. Use asset-based framing that mirrors the way young people speak positively about themselves and reflects the potential outcome of mentoring as building on their existing assets and strengths.
3. Build messaging that describes mentoring as mutually beneficial, transparent and equitable.



Young People Aspire to Live a Good Life and Are Optimistic About Reaching Their Goals

Potential Implications

4. Shift messaging targeted at young people to reflect their understanding that a good life is the desired goal, and a good job or career is one critical element of reaching that goal.
5. Understand the implications of word choice — *job*, *work*, and *career* — and choose words that intentionally reinforce program or policy objectives and consider how they will be interpreted by young people.



Young People Are Empowered by Connections

Potential Implications

6. Be intentional about use of words like 'social capital,' 'networking' and 'connections.'
7. Tell stories that enable young people to see themselves as valuable contributors to an asset-rich community to which they already belong.
8. Describe mentorship as a tool that balances young people's need to pursue goals independently while also working to develop relationships with adults and peers who can broker information and support.

STEP 2: ANSWER EACH OF THE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Create a plan for shifting your messaging or communications approach with young people.

- Which of the potential implications felt most compelling or actionable for your organization?
- Who is the audience that you need to reach with your messaging? Be as specific as you can in describing who they are (e.g., age, geography, racial or ethnic identity, gender, etc.)
- What actions do you want your audience to take?
- What messaging or communications strategy have you used in the past that you want to change?
- What is the new messaging or communications strategy you want to try?

STEP 3: RECORD YOUR NEW STRATEGY IN THE ACTION PLAN

Check out the examples for some inspiration.

Action Plan

When communicating with **AUDIENCE** we used to **PREVIOUS MESSAGE OR STRATEGY**
 and now we want to **NEW MESSAGE OR STRATEGY**.

NEXT STEPS

1. Where will you put your new messaging into practice? _____
2. Who do we need to involve to make this change? _____
3. When will we do this by? _____

Examples

When communicating with **the young people we want to recruit to our mentoring program in ABC City**
 we used to **say that a benefit of the program was building your social capital** and now we want to
share stories of young people in our programs developing the peer relationships and career connections
they need to pursue their goals.

AUDIENCE

PREVIOUS MESSAGE /STRATEGY

NEW MESSAGE/STRATEGY

When communicating with **potential funders or other adult stakeholders** we used to
describe mentoring as an opportunity for adults to help young people who don't have opportunities
or resources to get ahead and now we want to **highlight the strengths that young people already have**
before they build a mentoring relationship and how there are mutual benefits to the young people and
the adults who participate in our programs.

AUDIENCE

PREVIOUS MESSAGE /STRATEGY

NEW MESSAGE/STRATEGY