



Consistency is Cool

In formal mentoring relationships, consistency is connected to the longevity and quality of relationships. One of the greatest things an adult can do when working with young people is to be consistent. Young people are learning the nuances of the world and can often be confused by mixed messages. They value and need consistency in their relationships with adults. It can be difficult to build trust in relationships that lack this important quality. Knowing what to expect can help make them feel safe. If mentors do not have regular contact with a young person, it is extremely difficult to develop a strong relationship that results in positive youth outcomes.

So, what is consistency? Consistency in relationships can mean doing what you say you are going to do. It can also mean that your actions match your words. Many young people have been disappointed by adults who promised to do something or be somewhere and failed to deliver. While it might be unintentional, the message the youth receives is that they are not valuable. Sometimes a change in plans is unavoidable. On those rare occasions, every effort should be made to help the young person understand and to ensure the youth hears very clearly that they are important and matter. Your conversations may take more time and explanation, but ultimately can result in a deeper, relationship and more benefits for the youth AND mentor.

Here are a few tips to increase consistency in your relationships with young people:

1. Only make promises you can keep and work hard to deliver on promises.
2. Ensure that your words and actions match.
3. Make time for them on a regular basis.
4. When inconsistencies occur, acknowledge your absence and apologize. Make sure your mentee knows they are important.
5. If Seedling notices that you are having trouble keeping your commitment, we will check in with you to ask how we can help you find your way back to those weekly visits.

Excerpted from The Power of Consistency by Lisa Bottomley. The full article can be read here:

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/the_power_of_consistency