What topics achieve the greatest impact? Group Mentoring in Project Arrive: Topic Application and its Relationship to Student Resiliency

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Group mentoring is a new and developing field, however, there are various research findings which highlight different benefits that mentoring programs have on youth in an academic setting (Dubois et al, 2002). Group mentoring programs vary in size and topic, with each having different preventative or intervention goals. However, most of these end goals in school programs overlap with the desire to improve students’ resiliencies, within academics and relationships, through the improvement of promotive factors such as their personal internal assets and their external relationship assets (Zimmerman et al., 2013). Several programs such as Karcher et al.’s elementary school intervention for low-scoring students have shown success at improving not only the students’ achievement scores, but also improving their sense of connectedness with their parents and teachers (Karcher et al., 2002). Gordon, Downey, & Bangert (2013) found that school based mentoring programs led to improved behavioral outcomes, such as reduced school absences and fewer discipline referrals, and social outcomes including a connectedness to people like family, peers, and teachers as well as places like school and neighborhoods. Project Arrive is a school-based group mentoring program aimed at providing resources and support for high school freshmen at risk of dropping out. Goal-oriented and relationship-oriented topics styles are covered within this program; more specifically, mentors reported the most frequent application of topics being academic achievement (71.88% reporting almost every session and every session), peer relationships (65.63%), goal setting (57.58%), and family relationships (53.13%). Based on the recurrent research on improved resilience within these programs, using mentor surveys and mentee surveys we investigated the relationship between topic application frequency and style with mentee’s overall sense of cohesion and academic achievement scores after the program.

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