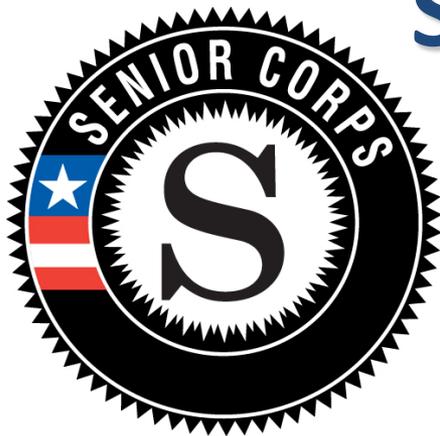


Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers



Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs

Trainer:

Date:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- ▶ Key special needs of children/youth that volunteers serve
- ▶ Situational or family circumstances that can contribute to challenges that children and youth face
- ▶ How volunteers can help children and youth build resilience

Children and Youth with Special Needs

- How is it different than when you were in school?
- What concerns do you have?



Special Needs

- ▶ Learning Disabilities are disorders that affect the brain's ability to receive, process, store, respond to, and communicate information.
 - Do not reflect how smart a person is (IQ)
 - Can impact how someone learns to read, write, hear, speak, and do math.
 - May affect social skills and behavior
 - Can range from mild to severe and are lifelong
 - No cure, but there are ways to overcome challenges (specialized instruction, accommodations)

Special Needs

- ▶ Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADHD)
- ▶ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ▶ Intellectual Disability
- ▶ Emotional Disturbance (mental health)
 - Depression, Anxiety
- ▶ Physical Disabilities
 - Hearing, Sight, Speech, Mobility



Special Needs

Examples of Challenging Circumstances

- ▶ Children/Youth in Poverty
- ▶ Family Trauma
 - Domestic abuse, parent substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, divorce
- ▶ Active Duty Military Families
- ▶ English Language Learner
 - Migrant, new immigrant, refugee



Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back after difficult times.



Traits of resilient people:

- ▶ Social competence
- ▶ Problem-solving skills
- ▶ Autonomy
- ▶ A sense of purpose and the future

© Creative Mentoring® (2008). *The Power of One: Tools, Tips, and Activities for Building an Effective Mentoring Relationship*

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back after difficult times.

What makes the difference?

- ▶ A positive connection with another person
- ▶ Caring relationships
- ▶ High expectations
- ▶ Support
- ▶ Opportunities to contribute

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration, *Roadmap to Seclusion and Restraint*
Free Mental Health Services



Role Play Exercise

Instructions:

- ▶ Get together in pairs for this role play. You should each have one Role Play Card.
- ▶ One person will be the mentor; the other person will be the child/youth described in the Role Play Card.
- ▶ After 5 minutes, switch roles with your partner. The person who was the mentor should use their Role Play Card and be the child/youth described.
- ▶ Be ready to discuss your experience.

Role Play Debrief

Participants who played the “**mentor**” role:

- ▶ Which tip from the handout did you try out? How did it work?
- ▶ What would you do differently? What more did you want to know to help the child/youth?

Participants who played the “**child/youth**” role:

- ▶ What did the mentor say or do that helped? What is the message that you got from the mentor?
- ▶ What would have improved the talk?

Keep in mind...

- ▶ Be a cheerleader. Let the child/youth know you believe in him/her.
- ▶ Know his/her strengths and interests and build on them.
- ▶ Provide encouragement but let the child accomplish things on his/her own.
- ▶ Create an environment where s/he can talk honestly with you; don't judge.
- ▶ Talk to your supervisor to find out how best to assist the child/youth.
- ▶ Talk to your supervisor if you need help or advice.

Who believed in you during a difficult time?

What did that person do or say to help?



The future is completely open, and we are writing it moment to moment.

-Pema Chodron

