Leadership Mentor Program

March 2009
Acknowledgements

The Virginia Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership (CSAL) staff wishes to acknowledge the following resources used/adapted to compile this guide:

Leadership From the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life, Kevin Cashman

Making of a Star Mentor, the Mentoring Pilot Project of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind

Military Leadership, U.S. Army Handbook

Leadership Theories, www.about.com

Discover Your Learning Style Graphically, www.learningstyles-online.com

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INTRODUCTION

One of the activities of the Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership (CSAL) is its Leadership Mentor Program. We believe leadership is not something we do, it comes from a deeper reality within – our values, principles, and life experiences – it is our whole person in action. In other words, we lead from who we are.

We also believe that mentoring is a key piece to developing leadership skills and abilities amongst self-advocates. It is a primary tool for promoting self-confidence and for sharing the goals, values and capabilities we have with our community. Mentoring helps make possible the progression of leadership from a place of self-determination and individual accomplishments to more widespread systems change.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the CSAL Leadership Mentor Program is to provide training and mentoring opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities who want to take a more active role in their current life interests and who want to work towards reaching personal leadership goals.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote individual learning experiences that develop self-advocacy, self-determination and leadership skills;

- To provide multiple opportunities to gain and practice skills such as independent decision-making, education planning, self-direction, transition planning, career development and civil rights advocacy.
**PHILOSOPHY**

Individuals have an inborn human right and responsibility to make choices about their own lives. People with disabilities are best able to determine their own needs and speak for themselves. Self-advocates possess unique talents, abilities and opinions. They can learn and successfully master the skills and abilities necessary to become adept leaders. Skilled self-advocates effectively speak up for themselves and the rights of others in the community.

**LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Youth and young people with disabilities will participate in developing an individual leadership plan that assesses their strengths and their short term and long term leadership goals, as well as the supports, skills and time table necessary to reach those goals.

The self-advocate will participate in seminars and educational learning experiences on particular topics such as:

- concepts of leadership,
- self-advocacy,
- self-determination,
- communication,
- time management and organizational skills,
- knowing your legal rights,
- special education and transition planning,
- healthy lifestyles,
- teamwork and networking, and
- public policy and voicing your opinion.

Participation of self-advocates in these voluntary workshops will be determined as appropriate based on their individual leadership plans.
The self-advocate will complete an independent assignment that directly correlates to their individual leadership plan and the skills they determine are needed to reach their goal(s). The self-advocate will also participate in group work in order to discover the role that best suits their abilities and dreams, and to develop and demonstrate their ability to work successfully as a member of a team.

The self-advocate will complete a skills assessment tool that will document targeted areas of self-development and progress towards the goals of their individual leadership plan. This document will provide proof of the work they accomplish and the skills they gain.

**MENTORSHIP PROCESS**

Once a self-advocate has developed his or her leadership plan, they will be matched with an appropriate individual who is well prepared to mentor them as an emerging leader. The mentor will possess the personal and professional experience, character traits and skills necessary to assist the self-advocate (known as a ‘mentee’’) in accomplishing their leadership plan goals.

The self-advocate will acknowledge that mentoring involves a shared promise between the mentor and the mentee.

- The mentee will agree to honor the mentor's time and efforts by agreeing to active participation in the leadership plan, openly communicate with the mentor, attend workshops and complete assignments on time.

- The mentor will agree to assist the mentee in reaching their leadership goal(s) and to be in touch with the mentee 2 to 4 times a month through face to face, telephone or email contact.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.*

John Quincy Adams
The mentor and mentee will agree to meet for an initial period of six months. The mentoring relationship can continue beyond this scope if mutually agreed upon. As mentioned above, the mentor and mentee will meet 2 to 4 times per month as best supports carrying out the individual leadership plan goal(s). Meetings can take place in person or through email or phone contact, based upon time limitations and the communication needs of the mentee. Mentors and mentees will initially meet in person, and should continue to meet in person at least once every 2 months.

The self-advocate will keep a journal throughout the course of the leadership mentoring program to record the progress they make towards their goal(s). Journal entries made on a weekly basis will include their thoughts and feelings about the personal growth they are experiencing, successes and accomplishments, areas for improvement and the supports that are needed to do so, insights they discover, and conclusions they reach about leadership and any questions that may arise.

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In everyone’s life at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

Albert Schweitzer
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Leadership is a state of being and behaving, not about being the head of an organization. Remember: good leaders are made not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience.

Know yourself and seek self-improvement - Seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This means you must know who you are, what you know, and what you can do. This can be accomplished through self-study, workshops, reflection, and interacting with others.

Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions - When things go wrong -- they always do sooner or later -- do not blame others. Study the situation, take action, and move on to the next challenge.

Make sound and timely decisions - Use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools to make decisions that honor your self and your life.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Researchers believe that there are three different styles of leadership:

Authoritarian Leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the people around them. If you are an Authoritarian Leader, people may call you controlling or bossy.

Democratic Leaders offer guidance to the people around them -- they also allow input from the people around them. If you are a Democratic Leader, people may say that you are motivational and creative.
Delegative leaders leave all decision making up to the people around them. If you are a Delegative Leader, people may say that you do not cooperate and that you are not able to work independently.

When you think of some of our world’s great leaders like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Ghandi, and Alexander the Great, they all have something in common – they have vision, passion, and character; they are trustworthy; and they are able to make decisions.

- Paint a picture with words. Speak it, write it, draw it, touch it. Whatever methods you can use to create a picture, do it. As they say, "A picture is worth a thousand words."
- Passion is infectious: When you talk about your dreams for your life, let your passion for your vision shine through. Others will feel it and want to get on board with you.
- Be quick about making your decisions, but not hasty – be thoughtful and committed to what you decide.

*We must become the change we want to see.*

Mahatma Gandhi
WHAT IS MENTORING?

Simply put, mentoring refers to a relationship in which a more experienced person (called a mentor) helps a less experienced person (called a mentee) develop in a specified capacity.

The goal of the Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership’s Leadership Mentor Program is to pair the mentee with a mentor who has life and leadership skills. The mentor and the mentee agree to work on the goals of helping the mentee grow and develop specific leadership skills. The program is designed for mentors to develop a lasting relationship with their mentee and assist their mentee in succeeding in his/her life goals, especially educational and career goals. An effective mentoring program can in many ways be considered a training program for leadership.

THE MENTOR’S ROLE

- Set high expectations of performance
- Offer challenging ideas
- Help build self-confidence
- Encourage professional behavior
- Offer friendship
- Listen to personal problems
- Confront negative behaviors and attitudes
- Teach by example
- Provide growth experiences
- Offer quotable quotes
- Coach their mentees
- Offer wise counsel
- Encourage winning behavior
- Trigger self-awareness
- Inspire their mentees
Share critical knowledge
Offer encouragement

Good mentors possess emotional intelligence, intuition, a drive to keep learning, and a desire to bring about change. The mentorship is especially productive when the mentor believes he or she can learn from the mentee, and the relationship is based upon mutual respect.

We can help a person to be himself by our own willingness to steep ourselves temporarily in his world, in his private feelings and experiences. By our affirmation of the person as he is, we give him support and strength to take the next step in his own growth.

Glen Moustakas

For the purpose of this project the mentor will keep a Mentoring Log to be turned in at the end of the mentoring period. The mentor uses the log to keep track of when conversations with the mentee take place and the nature of the contact.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR

A DESIRE TO HELP ~ Individuals who are interested in and willing to help others.

HAVE HAD POSITIVE EXPERIENCES ~ Individuals who have had positive formal or informal experiences with a mentor tend to be good mentors themselves.

GOOD REPUTATION FOR DEVELOPING OTHERS ~ Experienced people who have a good reputation for helping others develop their skills.

TIME & ENERGY ~ People who have the time and mental energy to devote to the relationship.
UP-TO-DATE KNOWLEDGE ~ Individuals who have maintained current, up-to-date technological knowledge and/or skills.

LEARNING ATTITUDE ~ Individuals who are still willing and able to learn and who see the potential benefits of a mentoring relationship.

DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVE MENTORING SKILLS ~ Individuals who have demonstrated effective coaching, counselling, facilitating and networking skills.

The following are the four primary tasks a mentor can employ to perform his/her role. While some programs may have more specific tasks for their mentors, at minimum, they all include the following four primary tasks.

1. Establish a positive, personal relationship with the mentee:
   - Establish mutual trust and respect;
   - Maintain a relationship unique to each mentee;
   - Maintain regular interaction and consistent support; and
   - Make it fun.

2. Help the mentee to develop or begin to develop life skills:
   - Work with the mentee to accomplish specific program goals, such as decision making skills, goal setting skills, conflict resolution, money management, and so on.

3. Assist the mentee in obtaining additional resources:
   - Provide awareness of community, educational and economic resources available to youth and their families, and how to access these resources. Act as a resource “broker” as opposed to resource “provider;”
   - Act as a guide and/or advocate, coach and role model;
   - Avoid acting as a professional case manager; and
   - View the role of a mentor as a friend rather than a counselor.

A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could.  

Unknown
4. Increase the mentee’s ability to interact with people from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds:

- Respect and explore differences among people from various backgrounds;
- Do not promote values and beliefs that elevate one group as superior over another;
- Introduce the mentee to different environments, including workplaces; and
- Discuss differences in behavior, attitude and style of dress.

**THE MENTEE’S ROLE**

The mentee must assume the role of one who is committed to learning, and who will take responsibility for reaching the goal(s) that is agreed upon. The leadership plan can include specific goals at first and other goals may be added over time.

The mentee’s roles include making the best estimate of his or her current leadership skills, and considering how he or she can strengthen those skills. The mentee should also identify new leadership skills and abilities that are needed to reach his or her goals.

The mentee must commit to follow through on his or her action plan, including re-addressing matters that don't appear to be working well.

The mentee will receive a notebook to keep a written journal over the course of the mentoring experience. The notebook is more for their private thoughts and ideas. The mentee will also keep a log in which they will record a summary of main points from their journal experience. The mentee will share the log entries with the mentor in order to discuss ideas, priorities and issues that surface while journaling. The mentee will share their journaling log throughout the mentoring program. The mentee will turn in the log at the end of the mentoring period.
MATCHING MENTORS AND MENTEES

There are several various methods of matching a prospective mentee with an appropriate mentor. Often the matching comes about because of an existing relationship. Or the mentor may have skills, expertise or connections that are of particular interest to the mentee.

The CSAL Leadership Mentor Program emphasizes mentoring relationships that have come about fairly naturally though the course of self-advocacy work, leadership events and networking. As often as possible, our mentors are self-advocates themselves.

Our mentees range from youth to young adults. Their short term leadership goals are varied, based upon their season of life. Many are pursuing educational and/or employment opportunities. Often they want to increase particular leadership or practical skills and many desire additional social opportunities.

MENTORING A-Z: TIPS FROM MENTORS

A. Drop the authoritative teacher role. Be an interested human being.
B. Communicate by transmitting attitudes and feelings. Do this by being real; it is more effective than simply using words.
C. Arrange the physical setting to be close to the mentee. Do not sit behind a desk or across a table. Rather, share a table by having the mentee sit beside you.
D. Ideally talk for about one third of the time when the mentee discusses problems.

You do not lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.   
Dwight D Eisenhower

This gives the mentee the opportunity to do most of the talking and show that you are interested.
E. Ask questions that cannot be answered with yes or no. Instead of saying, “Do you like the class?” say “What do you like or dislike about the class?”

F. Ask questions that show a personal interest in the mentee—without sounding like an interrogator.

G. Do not interrupt the mentee when he or she is talking. This communicates that what is said is important. However, if your mentee wanders off topic, say “How does this apply to the topic we started talking about?” or “What does this mean to you?”

H. Give the mentee silence in which to think. Realize that there will be periods of silence when thinking occurs. This takes practice: for some people silence produces a feeling of awkwardness. Realize there are different kinds of silence. Pause before talking. The mentee may wish to make additional remarks. A pause of a few seconds may enable conversation to continue.

I. Move the focus from intellectual thought to emotional responses when feelings are being discussed. Ask such questions as, “What does this mean to you?” and “How did you feel about that?”

J. Observe and interpret non-verbal cues. Notice body movement, finger tapping and other obvious cues. It is important to understand how non-verbal cues relate to the topic being discussed.

K. Be alert to notice the change in the rate of speech, a change in the volume of speech, or a change in the pitch or tone of voice. Such changes may indicate that there are emotional feelings connected with the subject being discussed and that the subject needs further exploration.

L. Use brief remarks. Don’t confuse your mentee with long, complicated questions or comments.

M. Don’t give lectures on ways to behave. Ask the mentee to suggest alternatives. But allow the mentee to make the decision. Together look at other options. Information, possibilities and alternatives may be presented, but only for consideration. There is a big difference in telling people what to do and suggesting other options.

N. Share common experiences with your mentee, focusing more on the mentee and the mentee’s needs.
O. Clarify and interpret what the mentee is saying. Use such remarks as, "What you are saying to me is...". At other times, make a summarizing remark. But be sure to make these brief explanations only after the mentee has presented the idea.

P. Do not be alarmed at remarks made by the mentee. Instead, focus on the reason behind what was said or done.

Q. Do not make false promises or reassure the mentee that things will be alright. This will be recognized as superficial. Instead, communicate feeling for the mentee, and a desire to see and understand the problem; Do not appear to assume the mentee's problem.

R. Do not make moralistic judgments. Instead focus on what is behind the mentee's behavior. Ask yourself, "What is there about this person that causes the behavior to occur? As a mentor, do not blame the mentee for failures; Try to understand why there has been failure, accept failure and go on from there.

S. Be sincere in your praise of the mentee. Always encourage the attempt as much or more than the right answer.

T. Do not reject the mentee through your remarks or non-verbal cues, but instead attempt to be accepting. Try not to show impatience! Do not threaten or argue.

U. Keep track of issues discussed at each session and what the mentee has revealed about him or herself. Being able to refer back lets the mentee know you were listening and that you respect his or her opinions.

V. Be flexible. If your mentee has a real need to talk about a certain issue, put this need before your plans.

W. Do not ignore a problem. Seek help from the Leadership Mentoring Program staff.

X. Do not become quickly discouraged. Some of the mentee’s behavior patterns have taken a long time to develop. What you interpret as a negative behavior may serve as a survival skill in a different environment.

Y. Do not complete assignments or activities for your mentee. If you do, your mentee will always need you. If you help your mentee develop skills, independence will come.

Z. Focus on fun: this will be more enjoyable for you and your mentee.
MENTORING STYLES

Prescriptive Style

Volunteer driven and based on the mind set of transforming the youth. These volunteers already have an idea of how they were going to do this and a timetable (usually 1-2 years) before they even met the youth.

- Did not accept or follow the youth’s interest
- Tried to force the youth to disclose
- Criticized the youth
- Preached to the youth
- Did not attempt to understand the youth’s family, social class or culture
- Was overly involved with the youth’s family

Developmental Style

Youth driven and based on a mind set of filling in the blanks, providing opportunities, resources and serving as an adult role model.

- Understood the youth’s reluctance to trust
- Viewed his/her purpose in the program as being available to give, understanding that at least initially, the relationship would be one-directional
- Identified the youth’s interest and took them seriously
- Did not force disclosure
- Offered reassurance
- Offered help to solve problems on the youth’s own terms
- Attempted to relate to the youth’s family
- Maintained distance from family disputes, selecting interaction with the youth’s family carefully, and not allowing the family to shape the relationship.

MENTORING METHODS

One-on-One Mentoring

Allows the mentee to build a one-on-one, personal relationship with a role model, who is focused specifically on their development and growth. This is probably the most common type of mentoring relationship.
Following are some ways to foster a one on one mentoring relationship. Remember that self-advocates with disabilities might need alternate formats and methods of being mentors/mentees.

- **E-mentoring**: Provides flexibility to both the mentor and mentee. Online programs lift geographical constraints often felt with face-to-face mentoring and remove time constraints that allow mentors and mentees the opportunity to communicate spontaneously.

- **In-Person**: Visiting or going on an outing to get better acquainted, or to visit places to work toward mentee’s goals.

- **By Phone**: For those who may not have computer access, this is a good way to keep in touch in between visits.

**Group Mentoring**

Group Mentoring in the context of this program, involves all the mentors and mentees getting together for leadership trainings, interactive exercises and fun. These are all great learning tools. Because group mentoring involves more than two individuals, it promotes diversity of thinking, practice and understanding. The diversity of perspectives that emerge from group mentoring interaction is a powerful motivator for personal and professional development.

**Group Mentoring Activities: Presentations**

It is valuable to provide a general overview of the topic to be discussed. Then go more in depth on key points. If individual instruction can also be provided, that’s even better. It’s also important to have opportunities for social interaction, such as breaking into small groups and/or role playing. This encourages greater participation and built in networking opportunities. Participants also benefit from exercises that allow them to apply their new knowledge right away, such as hands on experience. Participants are much more likely to retain new information if they engage with it in some way. This
also builds their confidence and sense of mastery and ownership of the new information.

**ONLINE MENTORING AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Advancements in information technology amongst other technological advances present a many opportunities for self-advocates to obtain higher education and pursue greater inclusion in society.

Technological advances continue to produce smaller, cheaper, more mobile and complicated pieces of technology. Schools, businesses, individuals, students and public facilities, such as libraries, will be able to make use of these innovations. Increasingly, emerging technology will become part of our daily activities. This will increase accessibility.

Any successful mentoring program will employ some online technology. The Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership’s Leadership Mentor Program has a duty to address issues of accessibility, such as assistive technology that the mentee may need as an accommodation in order to pursue their educational goals or experience equality on the job.

Accommodations may include the use of assistive technology and equipment, note takers or interpreters, large-print formats, additional time to complete assignments, alternative information delivery systems or other techniques. The purpose is to adapt academic work in order to increase accessibility of information to people with disabilities to better indicate academic progress.

The more information, comfort level and access the mentoring program can provide to its participants regarding available technology, the more confident and prepared they will be to engage in the community. Technology is constantly changing so it’s important to stay up to date.
Increased use of online services in recent years has provided greater educational and employment opportunities. Distance Education is on the rise and its use is becoming more mainstream. More and more communication and learning take place online.

To the world, you may just be somebody. But to somebody, you just might be the world.

Unknown
DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL MENTORING PLAN

Use the Individual Leadership Plan form to assess the short term and long term leadership goals and accommodation needs of the prospective mentee. The mentor’s job is to prioritize those goals and pick a few that can be achieved during the six month time period. It is important that you choose leadership goals that can be tracked and documented, and that the mentor can assist the mentee with.

The mentor does not have to be an expert in every area. The Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership staff will have opportunities for mentees to participate in group presentations.

POINTER FOR CREATING A CUSTOMIZED LEADERSHIP PLAN

Most mentees need guidance knowing where to start. A successful mentor is able to provide the mentee with the practical resources they need to reach their leadership goals. Primarily, the mentor helps the mentee know how to get started. The mentee may know they want to learn certain skills or live more independently, but they may not know how to get there. The mentee needs to share their hopes, their dreams, their goals and their ambitions -- Whatever they would like to learn or do. The mentee should provide the mentor with a list of goals and desired pursuits. The more information they can provide, the better. This information helps the mentor know where to start to connect the mentee with the resources and people needed to help him or her reach specific goals.

The leadership instinct you are born with is the backbone. You develop the funny bone and the wishbone that go with it.

Elaine Agather
RESOURCES

1. Individual Leadership Plan
2. Personal Attribute/Skills Assessment Tool
3. Mentoring Agreement
4. Pursuing your Dream and How to Get There
5. Learning Styles
6. Mentor Log
7. Mentee Journal
8. Web Resources
Pursuing Your Dreams, and Planning How to Get There

The following exercises will help the mentor and the mentee decide what goals they want to work on. It will also facilitate getting to know one another better.

Ask the Mentee to create two lists:

1. List all the jobs they are interested in (give them a link to a job list/description website)

2. List their dreams, things they want to learn, places they want visit, and where they would like to live…and so on.

Exercise: The Mentor could list jobs they have had or would love to have and create the second list - dreams they have fulfilled and things they still would like to do. This makes the discussion more interesting and helps the mentee better visualize what steps they need to take to get started. Then list goals to get from here to there, and decide what goals need to be worked on first over the course of the mentoring program. Remember, you may be setting the stage for the mentee to become a mentor themselves someday.
Learning Styles

Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are your styles fixed. You can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that you already use well.

Using multiple learning styles for learning is a relatively new approach. This approach is one that educators have only recently started to recognize. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mainly linguistic and logical teaching methods. It also uses a limited range of learning and teaching techniques. Many schools still rely on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and pressured exams for reinforcement and review. A result is that we often label those who use these learning styles and techniques as “bright.” Those who use less favored learning styles often find themselves in lower classes, with various not-so-complimentary labels and sometimes lower quality teaching. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is “smart” or “dumb.”

By recognizing and understanding your own learning styles, you can use techniques better suited to you. This improves the speed and quality of your learning.

The basic learning styles are:

- **Visual (spatial).** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- **Aural (auditory-musical).** You prefer using sound and music.
- **Verbal (linguistic).** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- **Physical (kinesthetic).** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
• **Logical (mathematical).** You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.

• **Social (interpersonal).** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.

• **Solitary (intrapersonal).** You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

Exercise: Go to [www.learningstyles-online.com](http://www.learningstyles-online.com) and explore it together with your mentee to find his or her best learning style. Discuss how the different styles work for different situations. How might knowing one’s learning style facilitate learning and reaching one’s goals?
ONLINE MENTORING RESOURCES

Peer Mentoring
http://www.washington.edu/doit/Transition/index_pdf.html

Emerging Leadership Site
http://www.emerging-leaders.com/

Job Assessments/ Trying on Jobs

Volunteer Assessments/ Matching
www.volunteermatch.org

Going to College (VA)
http://www.going-to-college.org/

Vision Building
http://kidstogther.org/vision.htm

My Voice, My Vote (MN)
http://www.myvoicemyvote.org/

Smart Futures (PA)
http://www.smartfutures.org/


Leadership Stories by Challenge

Getting Things Done
http://www.amazon.com/Getting-Things-Done-Stress-Free-Productivity/dp/0142000280/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1232996188&sr=8-1

Ready For Anything

Partners in Policymaking Online Courses
http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/online.html

TED Talks
http://www.ted.com/
Getting Things Done Review and Actions
http://smerino.bol.ucla.edu/gtd/gtd-2.html

Goals: Free Tutorial & Top Resources
http://www.about-goal-setting.com/

My Life Organized
http://www.mylifeorganized.net/