

DREAM's Guided Mentoring for High School Youth

DREAM staff will lead high school students through a mentor-in-training curriculum to kick off a two year mentoring relationship. High school mentors will gain the tools, resources, and confidence to provide mentorship to elementary school-aged youth, and they will be mentored by a young adult Guide throughout their experience. They will explore how their identities intersect with their community and be empowered to create social change - and they'll have a blast doing it!

The two-tiered, guided mentoring approach highlights that, throughout our lives, we are both mentors, those who provide guidance to others, and mentees, those who learn from and lean on others. Often we find ourselves in both roles. It is important for youth to learn when and why to shift between these two roles, and to explore how they can show up authentically. Spending meaningful time with peers in growth-experiences optimizes this learning.

The curriculum focuses on developing powerful mentoring relationships, a deeper understanding of identity, a stronger sense of place, and greater meaning and purpose. With layered support and an increased sense of connectedness, youth will have a newfound confidence in working together to make their community a better place so *all* young people feel safe, supported, and connected. The DREAM experience begins with a mentoring retreat to establish a foundation for the journey ahead, introducing the curriculum and beginning to learn about best mentoring practices. The experience culminates with a capstone project designed to have a lasting impact on their communities and reflect their learning about their communities and the roles they play.

The Guided Mentoring program is an exciting leadership and learning opportunity for high school mentors, and it is an invitation to celebrate, empower and give back to their communities. It is also meant as an inclusive space for both mentors and mentees alike, one in which differences are celebrated, and within which issues of diversity, equity and inclusion can be explored openly and safely.

Utilizing reflective practice and metacognitive skills will be a key component of this work, whether that be personal (e.g. a journal entry, individual artwork, etc.), or done in a group setting (e.g. facilitated discussion). Equally important to building a habit of reflective practice for high school mentors' learning will be to focus on providing a positive experience for their mentees and on connecting with the people and places in their broader communities. Playfulness and fun are core components too! When content or interpersonal demands are challenging, beginning with positive group energy helps build the capacity of the group to tackle weightier issues.

The particular activities and learning experiences will cater to different learning styles and include place-based learning, interacting with visitors and guest speakers, and

engaging in days of service within youths' communities. Each group will be empowered to make this program their own, based on their community context, and the strengths and interests of the group.

There are four program themes:

- Mentoring
- Identity
- Sense of Place
- Meaning and Purpose

Mentors and mentees will have the chance to explore the personal, community, and societal aspects of each theme. These overlapping scopes will give the mentors and mentees many different points of engagement, and help them see the ways in which they are connected to — and can have influence upon — broader systems.

The themes are meant to interact with and inform one another. Activities and sections of themes can be connected and compliment one another without all parts of a theme being first completed. Each theme is a framework for thinking about a strong community and one's role within, and they necessarily overlap. For example, what may be an activity about sense of place may lead to questions of identity, both of which might inform one's sense of purpose. A visit to a place within the community or discussion with a community stakeholder might touch on multiple — or even all four — themes.

More important than any specific content is that this experience intends to build strong mentoring relationships and layers of support between elementary aged youth, high school youth, and their young adult Guides. The goal is for youth to recognize their capacity to be agents of change and work together to strengthen their communities, while also helping themselves and their mentees self-identify as valued members of the community.

Mentoring

In many ways, mentoring will function like an overarching framework or center-point. Creating positive mentoring relationships among the two tiers of mentors and younger mentees is the main focus of the program.

Mentors will understand the role of mentoring and ways that it can positively affect individuals and communities, learning and applying best mentoring practices to their work.

Goal: Mentoring	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Learners Will Know...	Learners Will Be Able To...
<p>Youth will develop the skills and confidence to build positive mentoring relationships and cultivate a sense of belonging as both mentors and mentees.</p>	<p><i>As a result of the course, learners will understand that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring mutually benefits both mentors and mentees and positively affects broader communities. • Utilizing best mentoring practices creates strong, sustainable mentoring relationships. • They have unique insights and wisdom worth sharing with others. • They are capable mentors, leaders and agents of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the value of mentoring? • What is the value of a two-tiered approach to mentoring? • What do strong, sustainable mentoring relationships look like and how do they positively affect broader communities? • What creates a group culture and sense of belonging? • What impacts does bringing your unique skills and interests into your relationships have? • How does your positionality impact your mentoring relationships? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of mentoring. • how to build upon their experiences as a mentee to foster mentoring relationships that are mutually beneficial. • how to leverage their mentoring relationships to explore their meaning and purpose within their communities. • how to apply best mentoring practices to structure safe and positive relationships. • ways to incorporate their unique skills and interests into their mentoring relationships. • ways to mitigate positionality-based power imbalances within mentoring relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilize reflective practice and metacognitive skills to understand and evolve their role as mentors and mentees. • apply best mentoring practices to structure safe and positive relationships. • use their unique skills and interests to strengthen their mentoring relationships. • plan and facilitate weekly learning activities, games, site visits, and adventures that engage their mentees. • carry out a capstone experience with their mentees.

Identity

Exploring identity is a critical part of any youth program. The identity theme is the primary place for mentors and mentees to wrestle with challenging issues in a way that helps them develop not only a positive self-identity, but also provides them with a supportive group environment and encourages them to define the community they want to be.

Youth will build a culture of trust and vulnerability that will allow for challenging conversations and to dive deeply into issues of social justice, power and privilege, and systemic forms of inequality.

Goal: Identity	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Learners Will Know...	Learners Will Be Able To...
<p>Youth will build an understanding of their positionality and develop skills and abilities that will allow them to step into various leadership roles.</p>	<p><i>As a result of the course, learners will understand that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories of identity and belonging are fundamental to the definition of self. • They have a unique role and identity within this group and their larger communities. • There are various lenses through which they perceive themselves and are perceived by others. • There are many challenging issues that individuals and society face because systemic forms of inequality underpin society and societal norms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What identities inform your circumstances, experiences, and worldview to make you the person you are? • Which aspects of your identity feel especially meaningful to you and why? • What skills, interests, and abilities do you have and does the group hold collectively? • What positions do you hold within various groups? • How do the issues that arise when there is an absence of diversity, equity and inclusion impact individuals and society as a whole? • What role do you play in raising awareness of and combating systemic inequality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to explore their identities and positions within the context of the group and communities as a whole. • the aspects of their own personal and social identities that are especially meaningful to them and how to celebrate themselves. • how to feel connected to and in community with their identity groups. • what systemic forms of inequality underpin society and societal norms, and their impact on individuals and society as a whole. • how to step into various leadership roles that will allow them to address challenging issues and strengthen their communities together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilize reflective practice and metacognitive skills to determine and evolve their identities and roles within groups and communities. • recognize the positions they hold within various groups and connect their experiences to broader contexts and critical issues. • think globally and act locally to raise awareness of and take action to combat systemic inequality. • recognize and harness tools they are equipped with to practice various leadership roles and make change.

Sense of Place

This theme seeks to help youth develop positive relationships with their home places that they themselves define.

Mentors and mentees alike will discover — on their own terms — the assets and opportunities that exist within their own communities. They will not just be able to identify the critical issues facing youth in their community, but also celebrate the community’s strengths and their central roles within it.

Goal: Sense of Place	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Learners Will Know...	Learners Will Be Able To...
<p>Youth will be able to identify their communities’ strengths and areas for growth, and engage with those communities’ resources; they will be able to envision their roles in nurturing those strengths and addressing critical issues facing their communities by partnering with community leaders and stakeholders.</p>	<p><i>As a result of the course, learners will understand that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their mindset regarding their communities shapes how they see and feel about them. • There are assets, resources and opportunities that exist within and strengthen their own communities. • They are valuable members of their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your mindset shape your sense of place? • How do/can you learn from and about a place? • What makes your communities and region special and unique? • What are your communities’ assets, resources and opportunities for growth? • What critical issues are people – particularly youth – facing in your communities? • What opportunities and pathways exist for young people in your communities? • What are your roles within your communities? • What contributions can you offer to strengthen your communities for generations to come? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the mindset through which they view their communities. • the assets, resources, and opportunities for growth present in their communities. • how to utilize their communities’ resources. • critical issues facing their communities. • key people, organizations and institutions influencing and making change in their communities. • their roles within and the pathways through which they can contribute to their communities. • the value they bring to their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the mindset through which they view their communities. • form connections to their communities by utilizing reflective practice and metacognitive skills to map their communities’ various assets, resources, opportunities and critical issues. • empower the use of their communities’ resources, assets, and opportunities. • identify relationships they have within their communities to build upon and strengthen. • share knowledge and insights about the key people, organizations and institutions making change within their communities. • identify their roles within and the value they bring to their communities.

Meaning & Purpose

Youth will discover the ways in which their skills, abilities, and interests intersect with broader community needs. They will practice a variety of leadership roles, gaining self-efficacy, and they will interact directly with local people who have found ways to make positive change within their own communities, and who can serve as role models and guides.

Through looking at several different frameworks for understanding social change, what the various roles are within these change models, and how they might be applied to a local community context, youth will develop a shared understanding of how we can define and recognize community needs.

They will envision their present and future roles within their communities, both how they can make their places better and how they can find satisfaction and meaning.

Goal: Meaning and Purpose	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Learners Will Know...	Learners Will Be Able To...
<p>Youth will understand how their skills, abilities, and passions intersect with community needs and with the attributes of other community members, developing a strong sense of agency and enduring sense of purpose to make change within their communities.</p>	<p><i>As a result of the course, learners will understand that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are current and future opportunities within their communities. • They are agents of change empowered to practice various forms of leadership. • Social change is rooted in collective action and can be guided by different models and frameworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you leverage your individual and group identities to a.) nurture and sustain community assets and b.) make necessary changes within your communities? • What factors contribute to your sense of meaning and purpose? • What meaningful roles and opportunities do you have within your communities? • What are some of the various models and frameworks for social change? • Who are the current change-makers within your communities and what lessons can be learned from their work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to recognize and develop a shared understanding of their communities' needs as they arise. • how to use their agency to advocate for a meaningful future for themselves and their communities. • the various roles within models and frameworks for social change and how they might be applied to a local context. • how a variety of community leaders and stakeholders have made positive change within their own communities. • different kinds of leadership styles and what forms of leadership they are drawn to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • envision how they can find satisfaction and meaning locally. • utilize reflective practice and metacognitive skills to develop a strong sense of agency to make change. • connect their experiences to broader contexts and critical issues. • partner with current community leaders to make change. • plan and implement a culminating service project based on various models and frameworks for social change.

Transferable Skills

Activities and experiences throughout the M² Guided Mentoring program offer multiple opportunities for participants to develop and demonstrate proficiency in several areas of the Transferable Skills.

Clear and Effective Communication:

- ★ Demonstrate organized and purposeful communication.
- ★ Integrate information gathered from active speaking and listening.
- ★ Adjust communication based on the audience, context, and purpose.
- ★ Use technology to further enhance and disseminate communication.
- ★ Collaborate effectively and respectfully.

Self-Direction:

- ★ Integrate knowledge from a variety of sources to set goals and make informed decisions.
- ★ Apply knowledge in familiar and new contexts.
- ★ Demonstrate initiative and responsibility for learning.
- ★ Demonstrate flexibility, including the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn.
- ★ Collaborate as needed to advance learning.
- ★ Persevere in challenging situations.

Creative and Practical Problem Solving:

- ★ Observe and evaluate situations in order to define problems.
- ★ Identify patterns, trends, and relationships that apply to solutions.
- ★ Identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration.
- ★ Persist in solving challenging problems and learn from failure.

Responsible and Involved Citizenship:

- ★ Participate in and contribute to the enhancement of community life.
- ★ Take responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
- ★ Respect diversity and differing points of view.
- ★ Demonstrate a commitment to personal and community health and wellness.

Informed and Integrative Thinking:

- ★ Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from multiple sources to build on knowledge.
- ★ Apply systems thinking to understand the interaction and influence of related parts on each other, and on outcomes.
- ★ Use evidence and reasoning to justify claims.