"No Fooling Around":
The role of play, activities, and pressure
to succeed academically in SBM outcomes

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PART I: GOING CRAZY

Urie Bronfenbrenner, the famous developmental psychologist, when asked what his 40 years of research reveals about the key ingredients of successful youth development, replied:

"Someone's gotta be crazy about the kid."

"Crazy"

- Urie Bronfenbrenner might also have added that there need to be these "crazy" people outside the kids' family and neighborhood, and specifically in their schools and the work world.
- These "crazy" people can help bridge the family and non-family worlds, which can be especially important for youth in ethnically homogeneous and disenfranchised communities.

A redefinition of SBM

The key goal of program-based mentors is to help youth learn how to recruit those people in the world who are "crazy about them." After having a mentor who the youth feels is "crazy about me" the youth will continue to look for other, similar folks outside their families, knowing now that such folks exist.

So, how do we get mentees to say

A great CBM definition, but perhaps not crazy-making in SBM

Mentoring refers to:

"a **relationship** between an older, more experienced adult and an **unrelated** protégé—a relationship in which the adult provides **ongoing** guidance, **instruction**, and **encouragement aimed** at developing the competence and character of the protégé" (Rhodes, 2002, p.3)

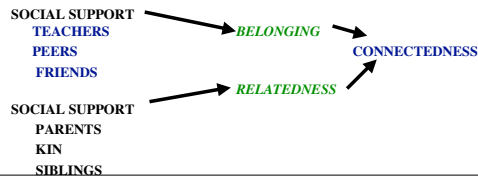***When applied to SBM may allow people to view mentors as tutors.***

Mentors as Relationship Coaches

In this way, program-based mentors are *relationship coaches* who teach *through modeling* and instilling confidence by *building a strong relationship* with a youth.

By providing empathy (concern), praise, and attention in the context of clear, <u>consistent</u> structure, youth can develop self-esteem and both social and work skills that they can rely on as they venture into foreign relationships and contexts outside the family.

One Outcome, Connectedness:
(a) results from social support (e.g., mentor),
(b) leads to feelings of relatedness to others
(e.g., teachers) and belonging (e.g., at school).
In response to these feelings, youth connect
through greater activity in and more positive
feelings towards the people in those places.

SOCIAL SUPPORT
  TEACHERS   → *BELONGING* →
  PEERS   CONNECTEDNESS
  FRIENDS

SOCIAL SUPPORT   → *RELATEDNESS* →
  PARENTS
  KIN
  SIBLINGS

New SBM definition hypothesis:

Program-based mentors are best when serving as *relationship coaches,* teaching *through modeling* and instilling confidence by *building a strong relationship* with a youth.

Part II: Getting crazy by more fooling around

Question: How do you make someone crazy?

And, how does a kid know a mentor is crazy about him or her?

Haven't we known it is better to be a little bit crazy, do a little more playing around. Maybe, but not in SBM.

David DuBois et al. (2002) found (a) mentors were influential when **viewed by youth as important** adults in their lives; and (b) the use of **developmental/ social activities and discussions** increased* the mentor's importance to the youth after mentoring.

*non-experimental finding

MENTORING A CHILD 34 USA
VALUES · GOALS · SKILLS

SMILE   The CIS Study of Mentoring in the Learning Environment:

Begun, in 2003, SMILE at CIS is the 1st large-scale, multisite, randomized study of school-based mentoring.
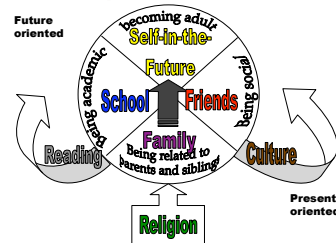
Followed 550 youth (½ mentees; ½ comparison) across 20 elementary, middle and high schools for two years.

The only SBM study to include large numbers of Latino mentees and mentors as well as high school aged mentees.

Conducted through Communities In Schools of San Antonio, so it can tell us about AMIGO: **A**dding **M**entoring for **I**ndividuals **G**etting **O**ther **S**ervices (e.g., tutoring, counseling)

Tells us, for kids already receiving services provided by CIS Case Managers, who benefits most from receiving a mentor?

Connectedness as caring for and time spent involved with...

Future oriented

becoming adult
Self-in-the-
Future
School   Friends
Family
Being related to parents and siblings
Reading   Culture
Religion

Present oriented

Go to www.adolescentconnectedness.com to download free copies of the short and long youth forms (in several languages) as well as parent and teacher forms; sample research/reports.

Slide 1

Outcomes: Mentoring improved self-esteem, connectedness, & social skills

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Girls (only female mentors)	No change	No change	Greatly improved
Boys	Greatly improved	No change	Some got worse
Sex of Boys' mentors	Male & Female Mentors	Male & Female Mentors	Same Sex Mentors

However, some groups benefited more

Slide 2

Maybe what the matches did affected whether the kids felt valued or not
Mentor Activity Logs

- After each visit, mentors completed an Activity Log to note what **they did & talked about** with their mentees

Slide 3

Academics (discussion) (Grades, school, testing, etc.)

Tutoring/Homework (activity) (Helped with homework, did tutoring, helped with reading, library, computer work, etc.)

Behavior (Behavior that lead the youth to detention, misbehavior, etc.)

Attendance & Stay-in-School

Future (College, career, goals, dreams, etc.)

Casual conversation (Discussion of sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, Fiesta, etc.)

Conversation on Social Issues (Current events/news, poverty, crime, religion, race-related issues, etc.)

Conversation on Relationships: About whom?
❏ **Family**   ❏ **Teachers**   ❏ **Friends**   ❏ **Romantic Friend**

Listening & Learning (Mentee's hobbies & interests, feelings, etc.) – Mentee talked most of the time while mentor listened.

Sports or athletic (activity) (Played basketball, soccer, catch, tennis, etc.)

Creative activities (Drawing, arts and crafts, reading for fun, photography)

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12 Focus Codes--Key code A to L

Instrumental conversations	Developmental conversations	Activities: Inst. & developmental
Academic (talk) (A)	Casual conversation (E)	Tutoring/ Homework (I)
Behavior (B)	Social issues (F)	Sports or athletic (J)
Attendance & Stay-in-School (C)	Relationships (G)	Creative activities (K)
Future (D)	Listening & Learning (H)	Indoor games (L)

Slide 5

How the field has viewed activities

Styles & Morrow's describe *Prescriptive* (directed, heavy handed) *vs. **Developmental*** (relationship-based, youth focused)

The Hamiltons' ***Instrumental*** (goal-oriented) *vs. Psychosocial*

Activities

*Karcher, Kuperminc et al (2006). *American Journal of Community Psychology*
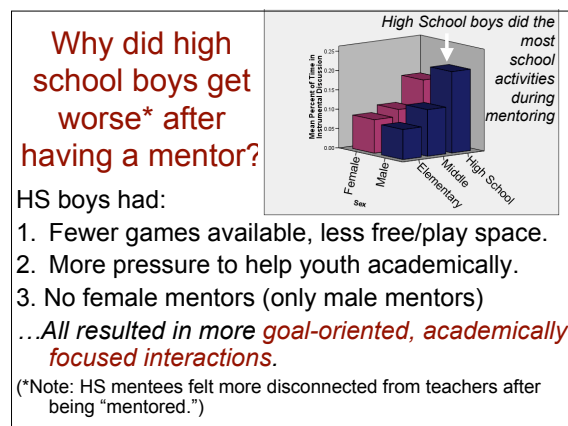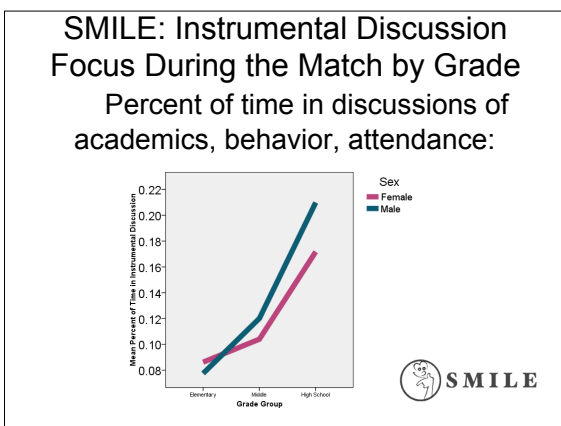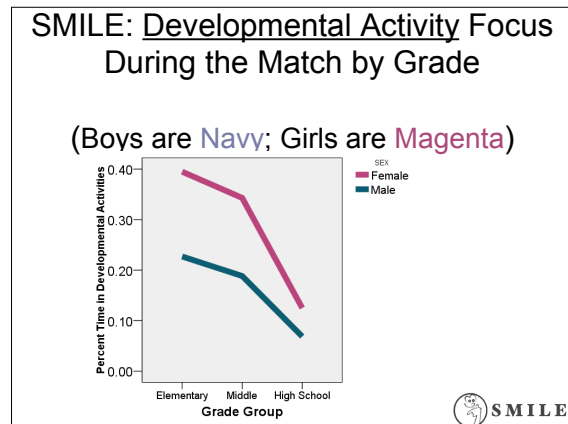
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Grouping Activities

Academic discussion about kid's behavior, attendance, dropping out, and importance of future; Tutoring/Homework

Generally "Instrumental" Or goal-oriented activities. (Instruments to leverage change in the mentee)

Discussion of social issues and relationships, casual discussion, playing sports, games, creative activities

Generally "Developmental" activities that strengthen the mentor-mentee relationship and promote youth development

Weekly Activity Logs Completed by Mentors
Record Developmental and Instrumental Activities
YOU ENTER: WHAT HELPED/HURT MENTEE **BOYS**

Instrumental conversations	Developmental conversations	Activities: Inst. & developmental
Academics (A)	Casual conversation (E)	Tutoring/ Homework (I)
Behavior (B)	Social issues (F)	Sports or athletic (J)
Attendance & Stay-in-School (C)	Relationships (G)	Creative activities (K)
Future (D)	Listening & Learning (H)	Indoor games (L)

S M I L E

SMILE: Developmental Activity Focus During the Match by Grade

(Boys are Navy; Girls are Magenta)

S M I L E

SMILE: Instrumental Discussion Focus During the Match by Grade
Percent of time in discussions of academics, behavior, attendance:

S M I L E

Why did high school boys get worse* after having a mentor?

High School boys did the most school activities during mentoring

HS boys had:
1. Fewer games available, less free/play space.
2. More pressure to help youth academically.
3. No female mentors (only male mentors)

…All resulted in more goal-oriented, academically focused interactions.

(*Note: HS mentees felt more disconnected from teachers after being "mentored.")

Why younger Latino boys benefited while older Latino boys did not

Finding: Younger Latinos benefited most from SBM.

Interpretation 1: Elementary mentors tended to be more playful and less "instrumental".

Interpretation 2: The absence of opportunities to "have fun" with a mentor may result in more "goal-focused: discussions. But these interactions suggest to mentees' peers that the mentee if failing, flawed, and needs help; Older boys often less open to "help".

Implication: Target mentors to younger Latinos unless training of mentors and school support (staff and ample developmental activities) are available.

PART IV: Understanding the difference between Tutoring vs. Homework is like Process vs. Outcome

- Development is a process. Developmental activities and talk focus on the general processes of youth development (e.g., skills)
- Outcomes reflect achievements, tasks completed correctly or incorrectly. Similarly, instrumental activities are tools used to achieve successful (correct) achievements.

BBBS Mentoring Activities Report (by Hansen and Corlett 3/07): Tutoring vs. Homework

- Good news: When less than half of the match time was spent on <u>general</u> tutoring, mentors reported **greater** relationship satisfaction.

Bad news: *Core subject* tutoring and homework occurred at higher rates in the **failed matches**, and were especially problematic in Elementary School.

Bad news: The use of moderate amounts of general tutoring (good) declined between Elem. and Middle School.

What's sex got to do with it?

- Men were 50-60% more likely to report helping mentees with homework—a task that is either completed correctly or not.
- Women were up to twice as (100% more) likely to help through general tutoring on topics, which emphasizes learning new skills more than getting specific tasks done.

Who tends to do "goal-oriented activities" ? Deborah Tannen suggests:

- Men tend to want to effect change when posed with a problem. Approach: "Okay, your grades are bad. Uh, where's your homework? Let's take care of this."
  (Homework emphasis)
- Women tend to place attention on the process. Approach: "I can see you are really frustrated. You feel like you can't get better grades. Tell me what you're struggling with."   (Tutoring emphasis)

School-level Patterns to Consider

- While academic activities tend to predict poor outcomes for boys, they may be okay for girls if done from a developmental approach (general tutoring).
- In Middle School (but not Elementary) there may be increased benefits of matches engaging in social interactions (games) with other matches.

School-level Patterns to Consider

- Game playing in Elementary should not exceed 50%. Balance of talking and doing seems best.

- Mentors can be told what helps most and least at each grade level and of the problematic declines in developmental activities and conversations in HS.

PART V: Another way to encourage more developmental, youth-driven interactions?
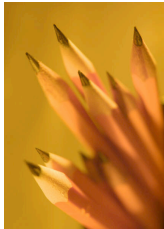
People typically remember the first 3-4 items on a list only.

Therefore… put most important (most effective) activities first in the Mentor Activity Log.

Also, reframe (or reword) in a positive way those activities that can *do harm--that is, if you must keep them.*

First, move up those activities that help mentees the most

	The mentoring activities below have been found to promote youth development, self-esteem and social skills	15 min	30 min	45 min	60 min
E	**Casual conversation** (Discussion of sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, Fiesta, etc.)				
F	**Conversation on Social Issues** (Current events/news, poverty, crime, religion, race-related issues, etc.)				
G	**Conversation on Relationships: About whom?** ☐ Family ☐ Teachers ☐ Friends ☐ Romantic Friend				
H	**Listening & Learning** (Mentee's hobbies & interests, feelings, etc.) – Mentee talked most of the time while mentor listened.				
J	**Sports or athletic (activity)** (Played basketball, soccer, catch, volleyball, tennis, etc.)				
K	**Creative activities** (Drawing, arts and crafts, reading and writing for fun, photography, etc.)				
L	**Indoor games** (Board games, playing cards, chess, computer games, puzzle, etc.)				

Reword the goal-focused activities to emphasis their use only when suggested or requested by mentees

	The below activities work best when suggested by the mentee (and can lead to poor mentoring outcomes when suggested by mentors)	How long and suggested by whom?				
A	**Academics (discussion)** (Grades, school, testing, etc.)					Mtor mtee
I	**Tutoring/Homework (activity)** (Helped with homework, did tutoring, helped with reading, library, computer wor.)					**Mtor mtee m**
B	**Behavior** (Discussed youth's behaviors related to problems with peers, teachers, adults = misbehavior)					Mtor mtee
C	**Attendance and "Stay-in-School" discussion**					Mtor mtee
D	**Future talk** (College, career, goals, dreams, etc.)					Mtor mtee

Reframe the log sheet so that the mentors are reminded of this point each time they complete the form

New SBM definition hypothesis: Relationship coaches in SBM are most effect when acting developmentally than instrumentally

Program-based mentors are best when serving as *relationship coaches,* teaching *through modeling* and instilling confidence by *building a strong relationship* with a youth.

How to promote a new definition of SBM: Induct mentees and mentors

Just as psychologists are not doctors, mentors are not tutors.

It may be especially important to "train" or orient mentees (and mentors) to this "crazy person" change process model.

The mentoring model, viewing mentors as "relationship coaches", is one that may not be immediately clear to those from communities with historically different parenting and healing methods.

The same approach was taken in the 1960's for "psychotherapy" to cross-cultural divides.