

# How Group Mentoring Promotes Belonging in Racially Minoritized Youth

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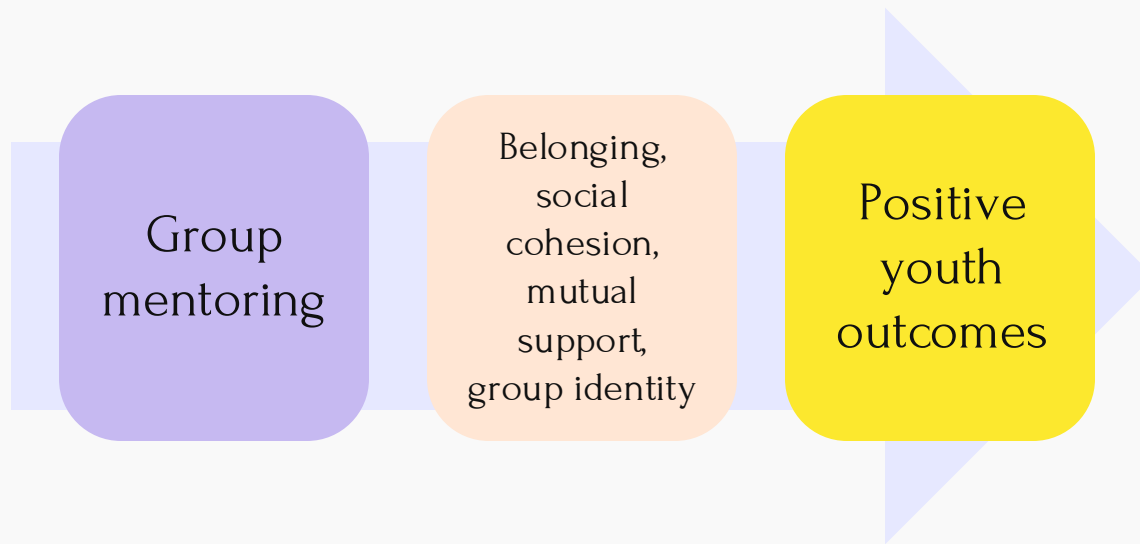
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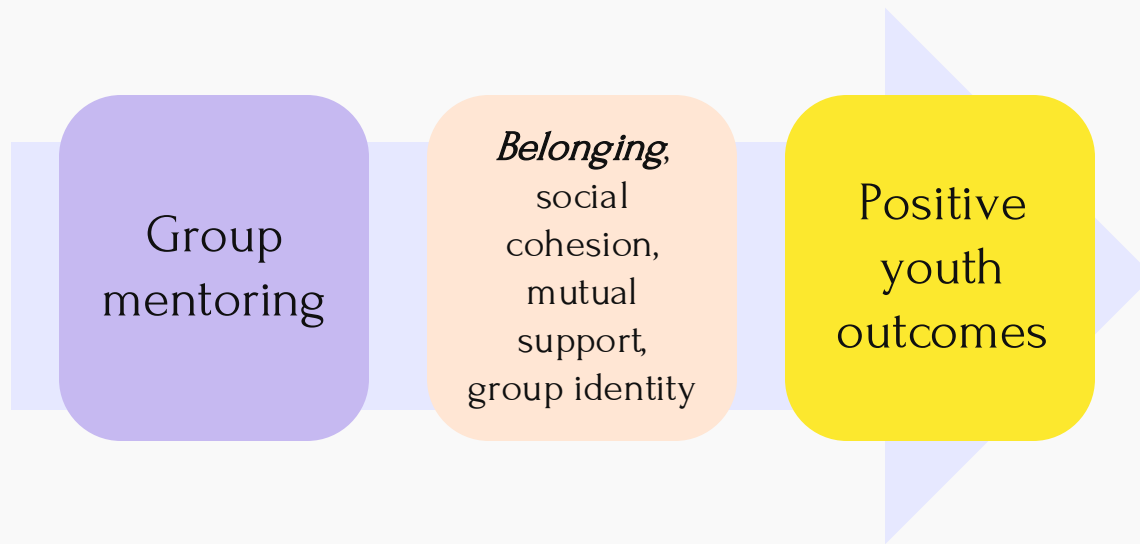
●  
Group mentoring  
programs as a  
promising  
intervention  
strategy to promote  
positive youth  
development



# Group mentoring promotes positive outcomes through social and relational processes



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# Study Aim

How does group  
mentoring promote  
belonging in youth?

# Science X Club



- Out-of-school science-focused group mentoring program for grades 4-8
- 1-2 mentors with 3-6 youth per table
- Various hands-on project-based curricula

# Procedures



Naturalistic Observations:

307

semi-structured observations

2

years of observations

2

sites were observed

10

mentoring groups



Qualitative Interviews:

69

semi-structured in-depth

one-on-one interviews

2

years of interviews

2

sites participated in interviews

# Participants



## Naturalistic Observations:

### 59 Youth:

- 53% Hispanic/Latinx
- 37% African American, African, or Black
- 10% Asian American or Asian
- 54% female, 36% male, 3% non-binary, 7% self-describe

### 32 Mentors:

- 43% White
- 29% Asian American or Asian
- 19% African American, African, or Black
- 14% Hispanic/Latinx
- 72% female, 24% male, 4% self-described



## Qualitative Interviews:

### 20 Youth:

- 55% Hispanic/Latinx
- 40% African American, African, or Black
- 55% female, 30% male, 15% non-binary

### 14 Mentors:

- 42% White
- 21% African American, African, or Black
- 21% Asian American or Asian
- 14% Hispanic/Latinx
- 86% female, 14% male



# Reflexive Thematic Data Analysis

**Familiarizing yourself with  
the dataset**

**Coding the Data**

**Generating initial themes**

**Developing and reviewing  
themes**

**Refining, defining, and  
naming themes**

**Writing up the  
analysis**

How youth and  
mentors describe  
a sense of  
belonging in their  
group and  
program



Comfort



A safe space



Feeling included



Trust



Group identity



Comfort

**"...making sure they feel comfortable. So the current group that I have now, they're really enthusiastic about reading out loud, but I've had groups before where the kids would rather do anything else than read out loud. Don't make them do that because then it just makes them uncomfortable. I try to make sure that they're comfortable, that I show that I care about the same things they care about, that I want to listen to how their day was, just small things like that I found are really helpful."**- Rachel (Mentor, female)



A safe space



Feeling included



Trust



Group identity



A safe space



Comfort

“... If he does, reassure youth that you ask me the question, there's no reason that you shouldn't ask that question kind of thing. **So no shaming, no shaming, like, oh, you don't know this kind of thing. Just having that space to just say whatever they want and be accepting of it.**” –Alexa (Mentor, female)



Feeling included



Trust




Group identity



Comfort



A safe space



Feeling included

**Youth:** When someone doesn't really share any of their ideas, sometimes they would call out their name and wanted to pull them out, because sharing ideas is very important when you're in a group...

**Interviewer:** So when [mentor] picked you and shared some ideas, then what was your feeling or reaction to that?

**Youth:** Not angry, not sad. I would say I'd feel important, kind of. Yeah."

-Willow (Youth, female)



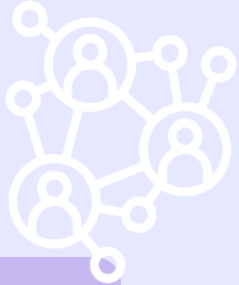
Trust



Group identity

# Group processes that promote a sense of belonging among youth

**Relationship Building**



**Youth-centered  
pedagogical  
approaches**



**Teamwork**



# Group processes that promote a sense of belonging among youth

## Relationship Building

- Relational group focus and caring interactions
- Fun & joy
- Relatability
- Shared commonality

## Youth-centered pedagogical approaches

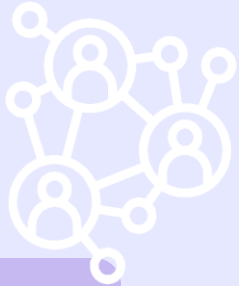


## Teamwork



# Group processes that promote a sense of belonging among youth

## Relationship Building



## Youth-centered pedagogical approaches

- Ask youth questions
- Youth contribution
- Encouragement & positive reinforcement

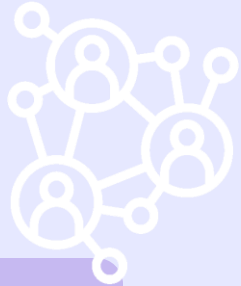
## Teamwork





# Group processes that promote a sense of belonging among youth

## Relationship Building



## Youth-centered pedagogical approaches



## Teamwork

- Collaboration
- Consistency in group
- Co-mentoring approach

**Youth: We're pretty chill, but we're also funny and talkative. It's a group where it'll be a lot [of talking], but it will also be funny. We laugh a lot.**

Interviewer: What makes you think your group is chill?

**Youth: Sometimes we just chill and we get ready to work. But it's not all the time, but we're still chill.**

- Niara (youth, female)

(Mentor) replied, "Nice." She then went to both youth, smiling and asking, "How are you?" ... (mentor) consistently smiled at the children throughout the session. **When one youth said, "I know what pretty is. Pretty is..." and started telling a story, (mentor) looked at her with great fondness... Also, I could observe that (mentor) knelt on the floor, placed her arms on the table, put her heads on arms, and engaged in a conversation with youth, maintaining close proximity.**

# Relationship Building

Interviewer: Can you describe a time when you felt like you were a part of the group?

**Youth: When we were actually writing, when I was actually being a part of it a lot more.**

-Kitty (youth, non-binary)

## Youth-centered pedagogical approaches

The first part of the observation was spent **planning how they were going to run their tests and both mentors asked them questions to figure things out. They asked what they wanted to test, what data they wanted to record, the distance they wanted to shoot at and also what variables they wanted to work with.** The youth were responsive to these questions and gave input when they could...

Youth: **Mostly working together with the group because it helps build on one idea and build it into something greater** with other people and get to hear out their ideas as well and get to see their ideas from a different perspective.

-Zero (youth, non-binary)

# Teamwork

(Mentees and mentors) showed great teamwork and fully engaged in the activity. ...**They divided into teams and threw balls at each other, as well as individually trying to hit each other with the ball, showing a dedication to this activity. Additionally, when (mentors) faced off, the kids giggled and screamed 3, 2, 1 together to start the game... youth stood in front of (mentor) to cover him and prevent him from getting hit by the other mentor's ball, which showed a positive teamwork dynamic among them, and that they were fully enjoying the activity together.** Also, I could observe (mentor) and youth high five during the game.

# Implications

Mentoring programs can use these insights to tailor programs and offer more intentional training to foster belonging and promote positive youth development in group mentoring programs.

## Limitations:

- Did not interview youth who left or probe enough when asking about sense of belonging in Science Club
- Difficult to elicit a lot of detailed information from this age group

## Future Directions:

- Quantitatively assess which processes promote more belonging
- Conduct interviews in a more creative way ( e.g., focus group, use pictures/images/art)



# Thank you!

Have any questions?  
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