

Mentor Screening for Success & Safety

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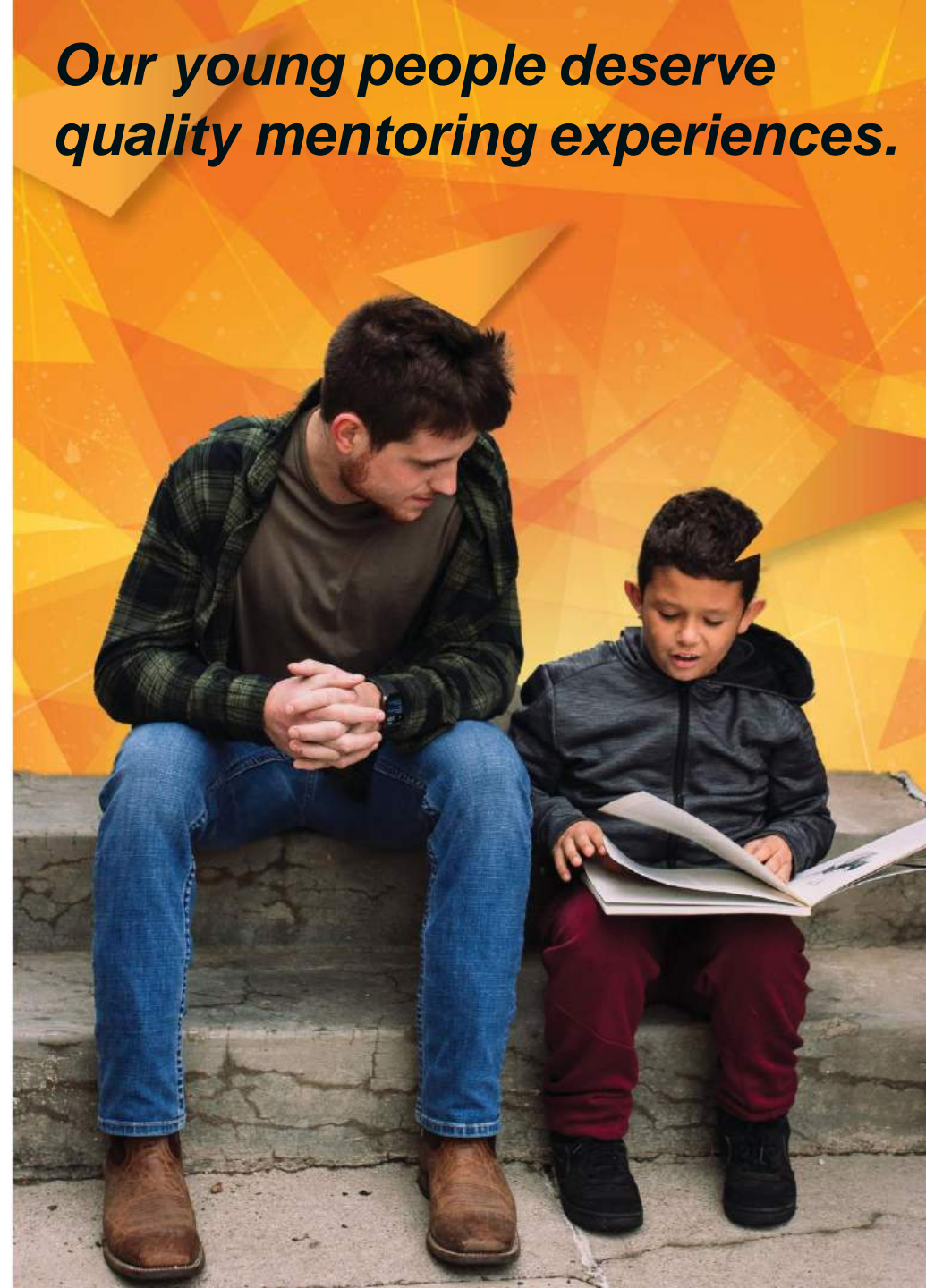
Since Maryland's affiliate of [MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership](#) launched in 2018, **MENTOR Maryland | DC** has sought to uplift the urgency of a march toward quality mentoring. We officially expanded into DC in 2021.

With the mission and vision to increase the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships across the country and to **close the mentoring gap**, we know programs can only do this when they feel supported, empowered and have the tools and resources to sufficiently carry out safe and effective mentoring relationships.

[MENTOR Maryland | DC](#) is a non-partisan organization that galvanizes the Maryland mentoring movement. We serve as community-based experts and create statewide infrastructure to expand quality relationships for young people.

We fulfill this role through our unique role as a unified clearinghouse for training, research, public awareness, mentor recruitment, and advocacy. MENTOR Maryland | DC provides the critical link between MENTOR's national efforts and local organizations and programs that foster and support quality mentoring relationships across the state.

Our young people deserve quality mentoring experiences.



Offerings from MENTOR MD|DC

Connection to National Mentoring Partnership; resources, best practices, trainings, etc. (including National Mentoring Summit) – www.mentoring.org

FREE Program Consulting/Technical Assistance via NMRC (National Mentoring Resource Center) – www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org

Access to Mentoring Connector – <https://mentormddc.org/mentoringconnector/>

Local, customized trainings, roundtables, communities of practice – <https://mentormddc.org/events/>

Promotion of mentoring best practices: [The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#)

Access to NQMS (National Quality Mentoring System) / Soon MM Quality Program Partners

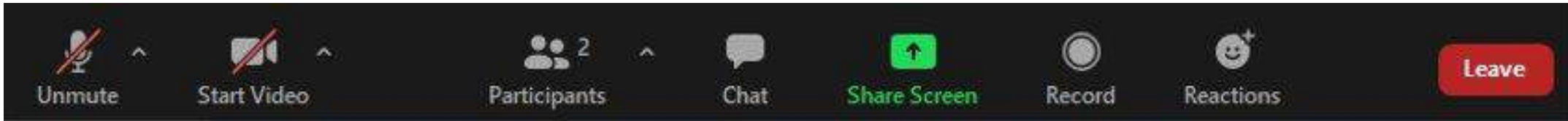
Connection to funding opportunities – www.grants.maryland.gov

Access to <https://www.mentoring.org/resource/start-a-program/>

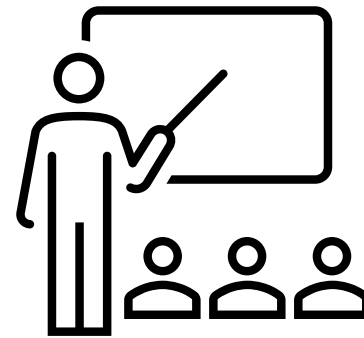
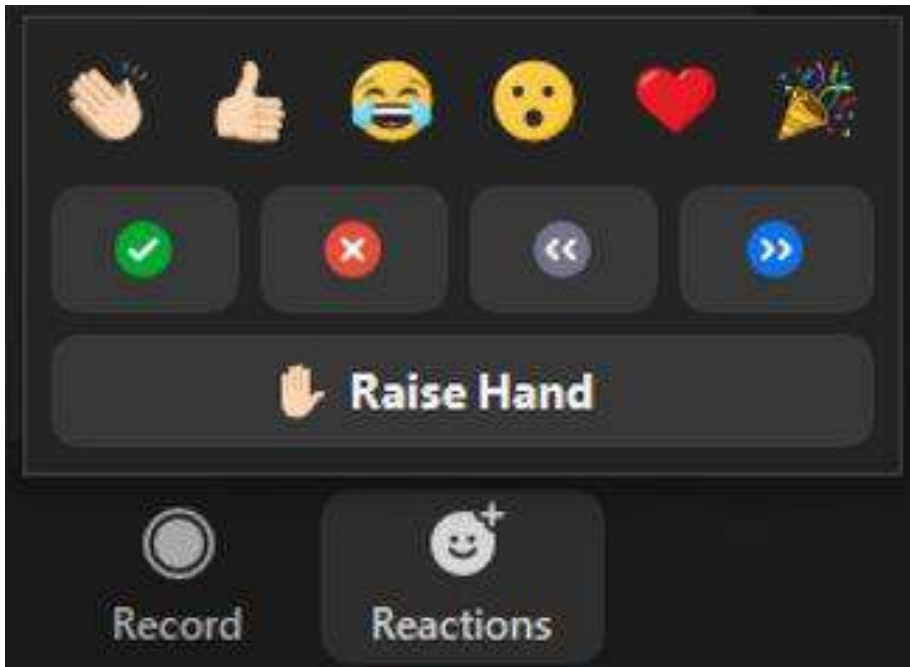


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Webinar Logistics



We appreciate your space and grace in this virtual environment!





Community Standards



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MENTOR MD|DC Community Standards

- Our community is open to ALL - but we also acknowledge the deep-seated racism, sexism, homo and transphobia, misogyny, and ableism that is pervasive in our country. We stand against these isms and actively work to this aim, especially with our youth. This means we must acknowledge that we also approach our work differently and beautifully.
- Share openly. Listen more openly. But be open when your sharing might hurt.
- Be generous with positive assumptions but don't be afraid to ask genuine questions.
- No matter your role here today, be a host.
- We don't endeavor to create safe or comfortable spaces, but rather brave spaces where discomfort can be explored, and beliefs and practices challenged.
- We want this community and experience to be supportive and educational, but also fun! Please bring your full (present) self - it is welcome!
- No fixing, saving, advising or correcting each other.

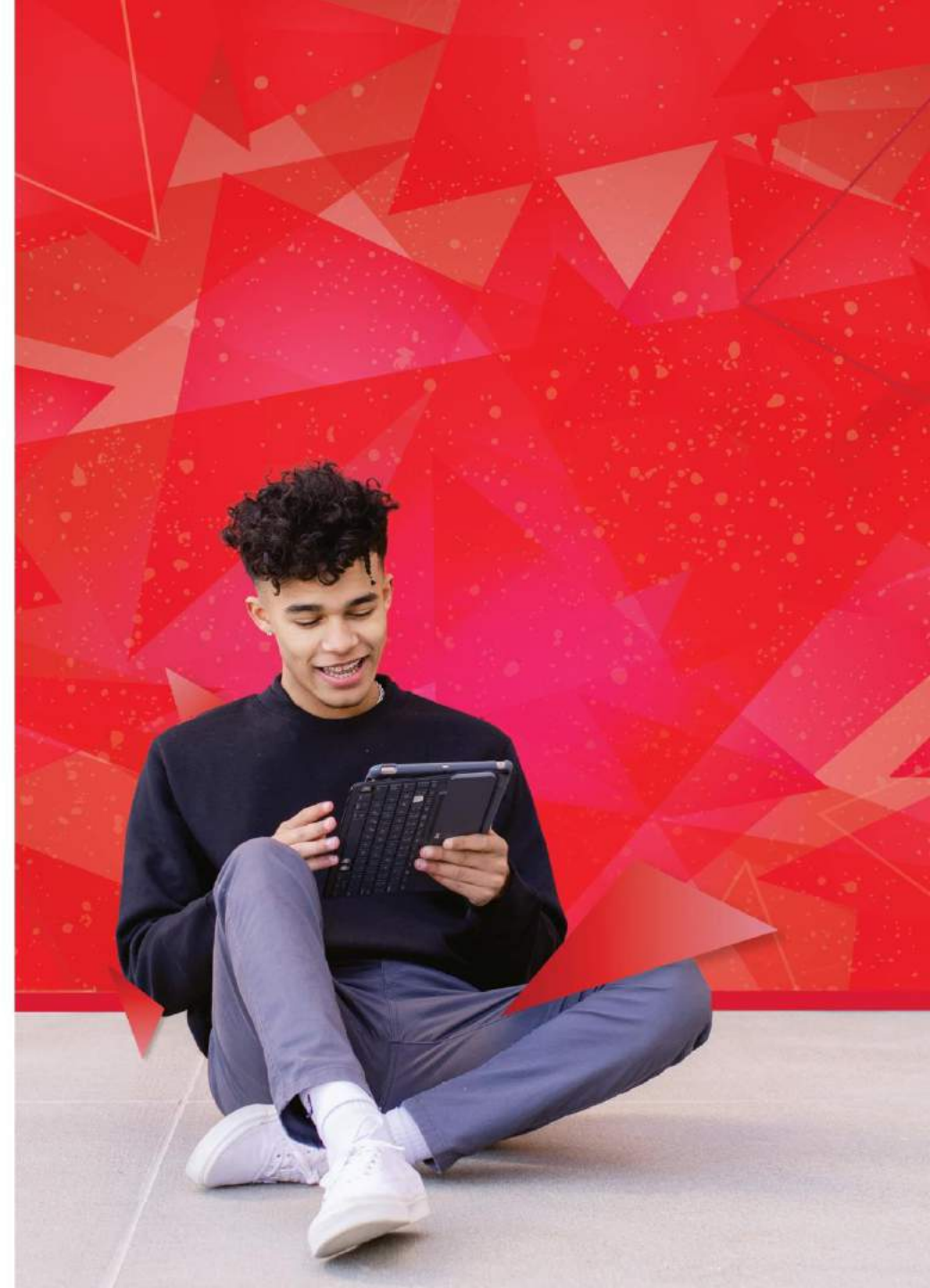
Kianna Bermudez

- Program Outreach & Support Manager – Greater MD Region
- 6 years working in youth development & mentoring
- Originally from SC, but have been in Baltimore for 6 years
- AmeriCorps Alum, 2017-18
- 1st generation American-born
- 1st generation high-school and college graduate



Agenda

- I. Icebreaker
- II. Session Outcomes
- III. Intro to EEPM
- IV. Standard 2 Benchmarks & Enhancements
- V. Why Do We Screen?
- VI. Screening Principles & Processes
- VII. Background Checks
- VIII. Review & Reflection



Icebreaker!

- Introduce yourselves (name, pronouns, program)
- Jamboard: Share an essential question you have regarding this topic
- We will revisit this list throughout the session

Disclaimer

This training should not be viewed as the rendering of legal advice and programs are strongly encouraged to consult their legal counsel and state/local laws prior to implementing the recommendations from this training

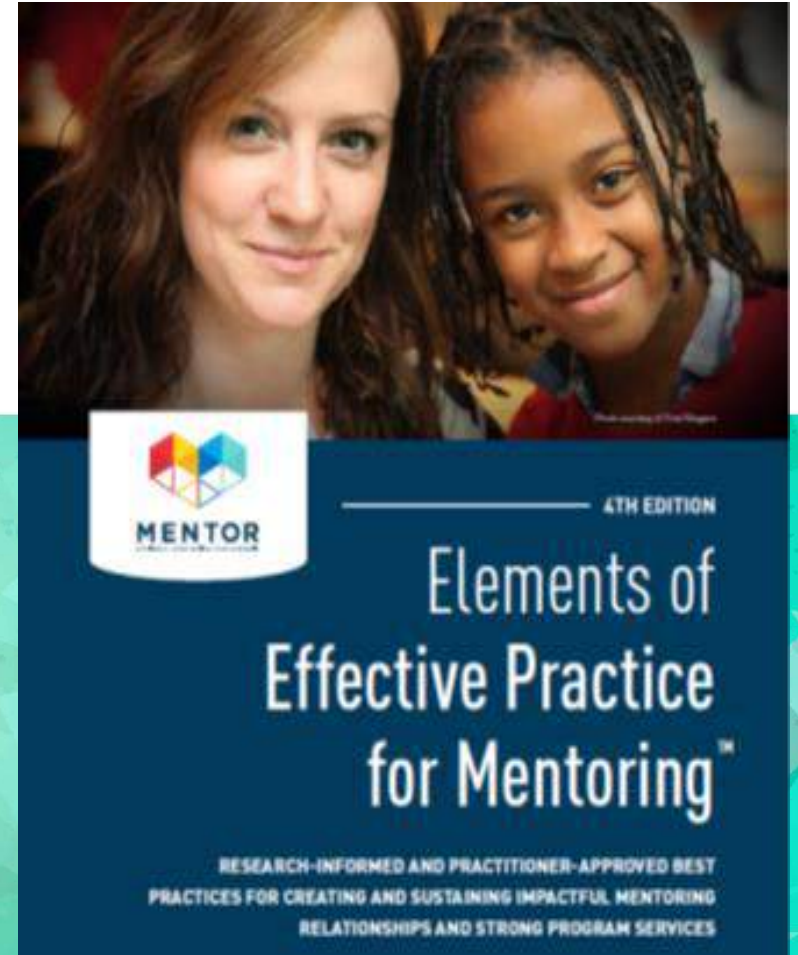
Session Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Summarize the screening benchmarks for mentors and mentees
- Identify screening practices to determine if mentor applicants will have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to effectively mentor
- List the key components of a comprehensive criminal background check process
- Translate screening requirements to their program setting
- Apply the training standard from the 4th Edition of the Elements of Effective Practice to program practices

What are the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™?

- Research-informed practices
- Evidence-based Standards and Benchmarks
- Enhancements that can promote relationship quality and strong outcomes
- Recommendations on program management, leadership, evaluation, and core principles youth mentoring organizations



Standard 2: Screening Mentors

B.2.1* Program has established criteria for accepting mentors into the program as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.

B.2.2 Prospective mentors complete a written application that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.3 Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with each prospective mentor that includes questions designed to help the program assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.4 Program conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on prospective adult mentors, including searching a national criminal records database, along with sex offender and child abuse registries and, when relevant, driving records.



Standard 2: Screening Mentors

B.2.5 Program conducts reference check interviews with multiple adults who know an applicant (ideally, both personal and professional references) that include questions to help assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.6* Prospective mentors agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or a minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

B.2.7* Prospective mentors agree in writing to participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentees that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by their mentoring program.



Standard 2: Screening Mentees

B.2.8* Program has established criteria for accepting youth into the program as well as criteria that would disqualify a potential youth participant.

B.2.9 Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application or referral form.

B.2.10 Parent(s)/guardian(s) provide informed permission for their child to participate.

B.2.11* Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

B.2.12 Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by the mentoring program.



Standard 2: Enhancements

Screening Mentors

- **E.2.1** Program utilizes national, fingerprint-based FBI criminal background checks.
- **E.2.2*** Program conducts at least one home visit of each prospective mentor, especially when the match may be meeting in the mentor's home.
- **E.2.3*** Program conducts comprehensive criminal background checks on all adults living in the home of prospective mentors, including searches of a national criminal records database along with sex offender and child abuse registries, when the match may meet in mentors' homes.
- **E.2.4** School-based programs assess mentors' interest in maintaining contact with their mentees during the summer months (following the close of the academic school year) and offer assistance to matches in maintaining contact.
- **E.2.5*** Programs that utilize adult mentors prioritize accepting mentor applicants who are older than college-age.
- **E.2.6*** Program uses evidence-based screening tools and practices to identify individuals who have attitudes and beliefs that support safe and effective mentoring relationship



Standard 2: Enhancements

Screening Mentees

- **E.2.7*** Mentees complete an application (either written or verbally).
- **E.2.8*** Mentees provide written assent agreeing to participate in their mentoring program.



Why Do We Screen?

Why Do We Screen?

- Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor and screen prospective mentees, and their parents or guardians, about whether they have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored.

Why Do We Screen?

Suitability

Safety

Why Do We Screen?

- **Keys for Mentors:** time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor
- **Keys for Mentees:** time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored
- **Safety** in mentoring relationships – young people, mentors, and programs

Why Do We Screen?

Effective Screening Reduces Risk

- Identifying those who would create an un-acceptable risk given unsupervised access to youth
- Preventing placement of individuals who lack time, judgment or necessary skills and attitudes
- Reducing liability exposure
- Ruling out potentially dangerous individuals with a history of violent or exploitative behavior

Screening Principles

- Look for ways to "**screen in**" as much as "**screen out**"
- Organizations have the **legal right to accept, reject, or terminate**
- **There are no limitations on what information you can ask** from volunteers; there are more limitations on who can view and how to store information
- **Every candidate must go through the same process**, regardless of who referred them or their standing in the community

Screening Principles (cont.)

- Volunteer **application process** should be **completed** and documented before candidate is accepted
- Final determination should be **supported and respected by all staff**
- Once matched **interactions must continue to be monitored** to ensure youth safety

The Screening Process

Step 1: Orientation Session

Step 2: Application Packet

Step 3: Formal Interview and Reference Checks

Step 4: Criminal History Record Checks (FBI check highly recommended)

Step 5: Interpreting the Results of Record Checks

Step 6: Additional Screening Mechanisms

Step 7: Pre-Match Training and Moving Toward the Match

Step 8: Match Supervision



Screening for Commitment & Suitability

Screen to discover how a mentor will:

- Deal with adversity
- Manage conflict
- Manage their time
- Solve problems
- Approach communication
- Manage stress
- Adapt to new situations
- And more based on your mentees and program model

Screening for Commitment & Suitability

Key Questions:

- What does suitability mean for your program?
- How will you gauge whether mentors and mentees are a good fit for your program and model goals?
- How might you get a sense of commitment from mentors and mentees?
- What are your program's eligibility requirements for both youth and adults?

Unsafe Applicants are Wondering...

- What is the agency's screening process?
- What are the demographics of children served?
- How many staff members are dedicated to monitoring the match?
- How often do program staff contact mentors?
- When will monitoring end?
- Do I really need to meet with my mentee every week?

Informed Intuition

- Judgment that appears quickly in consciousness
- May not be fully aware of underlying reasons
- Strong enough to act upon when...
 - In conjunction with having relevant knowledge

Comprehensive Screening Process

GROUP ACTIVITY:

- 1. Review** the “Elements Benchmarks” and “Enhancements”
- 2. Jamboard** a list of practices and tools for screening mentors and mentees (and parents)
- 3. Note** “why” or “why not” that you would include one or more of the “Enhancements”
- 4. Report out** by adding something that was not already mentioned by the previous group

Background Checks

- State criminal records
- **National criminal records**
- **Sex offender registries**
- **Child abuse registries**
- **Driving records (when relevant)**
- Fingerprint-based FBI background check*



Criminal History Checks in Maryland

- Maryland Background Checks
- Fingerprinting Locations and Rates
- Child Protective Services
- NETCheck, a discount background check:
 - State and FBI checks for only \$15 from any Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) facility through the Y in Central MD



Permanent Disqualifiers

- History of abuse of children, sexual or otherwise
- Conviction of any other crime in which children were involved
- History of extreme violence or sexually exploitative behavior
- Termination from a paid or volunteer position cause by misconduct with a child



Putting it all Together

- Compile screening information available from **ALL** sources



Review:

Back to Jamboard!



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Reflection

- 3 Learnings/Practices you will take back to your agency and/or would like to implement
- 2 Learnings/Practices that you would like to strengthen
- 1 Learning/Practice that you want more information about

Resources

- [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#)
- [EEPM FAQs](#)
- [EEPM Checklist](#)
- [Maryland Background Checks](#)
- [Fingerprinting Locations and Rates](#)
- [Child Protective Services](#)
- [NETCheck](#)
- [FREE Mentoring Program Technical Assistance](#)

Questions?



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**MENTOR MANIA
WEEK**

IS

COMING!



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Thank You



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