



*St. Leonard's Society of Canada*  
*Société St-Léonard du Canada*

## **Literature Summary: Promising Practices for Train the Trainer Peer Mentoring Workshop**

**St. Leonard's Society of Canada**

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## Acknowledgements

Peer mentoring is a deceptively simple concept that requires great skill to provide. Reduced to its basic elements it is about listening and sharing lived experience. It is an acknowledged best practice in many settings, and has had particular success in prisons. Historically, mentors came from the community into the institutions to mentor. In an informal way, peers inside prisons have long offered each other support and encouragement on their carceral journey.

The purpose of the current project was to design a workshop template to support those in prison who wished to develop mentoring skills. Integral to that workshop and underlying its development was the literature review and summary presented here.

St. Leonard's Society of Canada is deeply grateful for the excellent research and writing by Carleton University student Rebecca Hawthorn. Her enthusiasm for our work and the breadth of the review which she conducted has resulted in a summary which will prove extremely useful to those interested in the topic. Supervision and editing were provided expertly by Anita Desai, Research and Policy Advisor of St. Leonard's Society of Canada. It has been a pleasure working with both of them.

Our sincere appreciation goes to Public Safety Canada for funding this work and, in particular, to Cliff Yumansky and Dariusz Galczynski for their advice and support throughout.

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St. Leonard's Society of Canada

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## Introduction

St. Leonard's Society of Canada (SLSC)<sup>1</sup> is pleased to have the opportunity to present this literature summary as an accompaniment to the *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop*. SLSC would like to thank Public Safety Canada for supporting the development of the workshop.

Research on peer mentoring and effective training models indicate that certain practices and methods of training stand out as the most promising. Most relevant research suggests that an effective peer mentoring training model consists of: carefully choosing trainers/mentors; providing high quality training for the trainees; ensuring trainees know their roles/responsibilities; focusing on building communication skills; and, providing interactive, flexible training. This report examines these areas in further detail while expanding on additional research results that were investigated as evidence based approaches to peer mentor training. These results have helped to inform SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* and will ensure its effective implementation.

## What is Peer Mentoring?

In order to understand the concept of peer mentoring it is important to provide a definition. As explained in the literature, peer mentoring can be described as having a mentor (an experienced person) interact with a mentee (a less experienced/vulnerable person) in order to help facilitate personal growth and provide support for the mentee.<sup>2</sup> Peer mentoring is primarily characterized by face-to-face contact between the mentor and mentee in which both parties are equal.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between the mentor and mentee is one that encourages learning and personal development with a high level of commitment to the relationship.<sup>4</sup> Although both of the parties can benefit from the relationship that is built through the mentoring process, the main goal of peer mentoring is to assist the mentees in their growth/transition and provide them with positive support.<sup>5</sup> Peer mentoring is also a concept that entails some degree of flexibility in which the needs and goals for both parties can change and expand over time and space.<sup>6</sup>

## History

Beginning in 1991 Correctional Services Canada (CSC), the National Parole Board (NPB), and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), particularly St. Leonard's House-Windsor,

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<sup>1</sup> Incorporation #12894 06600 RR0001. Online: [www.stleonards.ca](http://www.stleonards.ca). SLSC is not a religious organization.

<sup>2</sup> Sambunjak, D., Marusic, A. (2009). Mentoring: What's in a Name? *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 302(23), 2591-2592.

<sup>3</sup> Holbeche, L. (1996). Peer Mentoring: the Challenges and Opportunities. *Career Development International*, 1(1), 24-27.

<sup>4</sup> Sambunjak, D., Marusic, A. (2009).

<sup>5</sup> Sambunjak, D., Marusic, A. (2009).

<sup>6</sup> Sambunjak, D., Marusic, A. (2009).

partnered to create the LifeLine™ program.<sup>7</sup> This program focused on recruiting and training In-Reach Workers to assist life and long term sentenced persons in making their incarceration period more productive.<sup>8</sup> The main goal of the LifeLine™ program was to ensure that people would successfully reintegrate into the community.<sup>9</sup> Although contracts for LifeLine™ ended in 2012, it had become the benchmark for peer mentoring within corrections and remains an excellent example of a program to inform promising practices. A 1991 Task Force Report investigated correctional practices specific to long term sentenced persons and made recommendations for the LifeLine™ program that are still relevant for peer mentoring today.<sup>10</sup>

The Task Force recommended that potential In-Reach Workers should be credible and should have effective verbal and written communication skills, problem solving skills and relationship building skills.<sup>11</sup> It further recommended a six week training period where training sessions are split up into multiple sessions so that the trainee can adjust into their role more easily.<sup>12</sup> The recommendations also took into account cultural and gender sensitivities and suggested that Aboriginal populations and women have special needs that should be considered.<sup>13</sup> Given the success of LifeLine™ and its historical significance of more than twenty years of practice, it is important to consider these recommendations in the following literature summary and to help inform SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop*.

## Research Results

Through an investigation of research on peer mentoring, three main components emerged as relevant facets to developing a train the trainer approach. These include: choosing the right trainer; using an effective training technique; and, considering appropriate training structures and topics. Each of these components is taken up in the following section.

### 1. Choosing the Right Trainers

One part of the peer mentoring training process that was regarded as highly important by researchers is that choosing the appropriate trainer is critical. The person selected to train future mentors should show positive results in terms of dealing with their own life

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<sup>7</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998). *Implementing the LifeLine™ Concept: Report of the Task Force on Long Term Offenders*. Pg. 1-101. Note: This report can also be accessed online at: <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/lt/10-eng.shtml>

<sup>8</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

<sup>9</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

<sup>10</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

<sup>11</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

<sup>12</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

<sup>13</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (1998).

sentence and reintegration into the community.<sup>14</sup> The candidate should show stability and motivation and demonstrate a personal commitment to a changed lifestyle.<sup>15</sup> Not only this, but the candidate's motivation for participating in peer mentoring should be sincere and based on a drive to help other people in similar situations.<sup>16</sup> The candidate should also possess some of the core skills needed for teaching others how to help lifers. These include interpersonal, problem-solving, and relationship building skills.<sup>17</sup> Other important skills that trainers should have are honesty, reliability, patience, understanding, and caring. All are key to effective peer mentoring.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. Using an Effective Training Technique

Through the multiple research sources investigated for this summary, it is clear that hands on, interactive learning is more effective than lecture style training sessions.<sup>19</sup> Not only this, but utilizing flexible, multi-modal training methods is very important in order to accommodate all learning styles.<sup>20</sup> Having a mixture of expert led discussions and hands on learning exercises like role playing and modelling, are proven to effectively train the trainees.<sup>21</sup> As Morrison et al. discussed in their report, it is important that training involves demonstrations and provides the opportunity for the trainees to practice their skills before working independently.<sup>22</sup> Another important aspect of the training is ensuring that adequate time is given to the training process as this will help solidify the trainees understanding of their role, the goal of the program, and build their skills.<sup>23</sup> Most research has suggested that multiple sessions should be utilized in order to guide the learning of the trainee.<sup>24</sup>

## 3. Considering Appropriate Training Structures and Topics

Research suggests that the program itself and the training criteria for future mentors should be structured and well-defined.<sup>25</sup> Although the goals, criteria, and expectations of the program/training model should be structured, the training itself should be flexible to the environment and catered to the needs and characteristics of the trainee in order to help them become an effective mentor. Overall, the research conducted outlined several

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<sup>14</sup> Morrison, W., Doucet, C., Murray, J. (2006). *Ex-Offenders as Peer Volunteers: Promising Practices for Community-based Programs*. Toronto: Imagine Canada.

<sup>15</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>19</sup> Nakamura, B.J., Selbo-Bruns, A., Okamura, K., Chang, J., Slavin, L., Shimabukuro. (2014). Developing a systematic evaluation approach for training programs within a train-the-trainer model for youth cognitive behaviour therapy. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 53, 10-19.

<sup>20</sup> Nakamura et al. (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Nakamura et al. (2014).

<sup>22</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>23</sup> Nakamura et al. (2014).

<sup>24</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006)

<sup>25</sup> Lumpkin, A. (2011). A Model for Mentoring University Faculty. *The Educational Forum*, 75, 357-368.

important topics that should be discussed and included in the training process. These topics are outlined below:

**a) Provide Clear Explanation of Roles, Responsibilities, and Goals**

It is commonly agreed that it is crucial to ensure that the trainee is clear about the goals of the program and what their individual role includes.<sup>26</sup> Morrison et al. (2013) and Sottie et al. (2013) also agreed that providing clear, well defined expectations of the responsibilities, goals, limits, and boundaries of the trainee's role is very important in effective training practices. After the goals of the program have been discussed, conducting an analysis of needs would be beneficial in order to focus on personal strengths of the trainee and any skills that need positive growth.<sup>27</sup> This part of training is important as it ensures that the trainee knows what they are supposed to be doing and how to effectively reach these goals. Within this, it is also worthwhile to train future mentors on the issue of confidentiality, ensuring that they understand the importance of ethical behaviour and appropriate boundaries that their role entails.<sup>28</sup>

**b) Relationship Building Skills**

Research also suggests that focusing on how to build quality relationships in training is very important as well. The trainee should be taught how to build trust and how to maintain a good relationship with the person they are mentoring.<sup>29</sup> This area of training helps ensure that the mentor and mentee can create a meaningful and trusting relationship in which the mentee feels comfortable confiding in their mentor. In order to build these skills, the training session would focus on communication skills, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills.<sup>30</sup> Conflict resolution skills are very important in order to prepare the trainee for possible conflict situations and ensure that trainees know how to maintain a healthy and safe relationship with the people they mentor.

**c) Interpersonal Skills**

Similar to what is suggested above; training should also include activities that help trainees build collaboration skills and effective interpersonal skills that allow positive and productive conversations. Building good interpersonal skills include practicing and improving on listening skills and also demonstrating how to have a discussion without acting as a counsellor.<sup>31</sup> It is important the trainee knows the difference between active listening and counselling. If the mentor acts as a counsellor, the mentee may feel controlled and obliged to follow the advice that the mentor gives. Acting as a counsellor does not provide the mentee with the unconditional support and independent decision

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<sup>26</sup> Nakamura et al. (2014).

<sup>27</sup> Nakamura et al. (2014).

<sup>28</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>29</sup> Sottie, C., Dubus, N., Sossou, M. (2013). Enhancing student outcomes through mentoring, peer counselling and parental involvement. *Prospects*, 43, 377-391.

<sup>30</sup> Sottie, C. et al. (2013).

<sup>31</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

making that is being promoted. A very important skill that should be targeted through this training topic is active listening. In order to develop active listening skills, emphasis should be put on facing the mentee, maintaining eye contact (where culturally appropriate), removing external and internal distractions, keeping an open mind, focusing on what the mentee is saying, and ensuring engagement so that the mentor truly understands the feelings of the mentee, as well as the point that the mentee is making.<sup>32</sup> All of these areas are important in improving active listening skills for trainees and focusing on these skills will help secure the trainees ability to show that they are listening and respond in the appropriate manner.

#### **d) Crisis Management/Health Management Skills**

Another important research finding is the emphasis of training in the area of crisis management and health management. In terms of crisis management, it is largely agreed upon that some training should be dedicated to ensuring trainees understand what a crisis situation is, how to identify it, and the correct procedure to follow when a crisis arises.<sup>33</sup> The importance of this training is that it would provide the trainee with an understanding about how much they are responsible for, and when to ask for additional support from other people/services. This training may reduce the chance of the mentee engaging in negative behaviours as the mentor will be trained on recognizing a crisis. In terms of health management skills it is also important for the trainee to be knowledgeable about how to promote a positive lifestyle and how to be an example of physical and mental wellness.<sup>34</sup> This will help train the person on what a positive role model looks like and how this helps the mentee follow down the same path.

## **An International Example**

### **The Listener Scheme**

The listener scheme is a project developed by Samaritans, an organization that offers a national helpline for emotional support in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.<sup>35</sup> The listener scheme was developed in order to address the rising number of suicides inside jails and prisons which became an important concern in the 1980's.<sup>36</sup> This program consists of trained volunteers who go through a six week training period in

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<sup>32</sup> Power to Change. (2014). *10 Tips to Effective & Active Listening Skills*. Power to Change: <http://powertochange.com/students/people/listen/>.

<sup>33</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>34</sup> Morrison, W. et al. (2006).

<sup>35</sup> Samaritans. (1990). *A Listener Lives Here: The Development of Samaritans' Prison Listener Scheme*. Retrieved March 2014 from:

<http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/The%20development%20of%20Samaritans%20listener%20scheme.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

order to be become “listeners” for vulnerable people in prisons and jails.<sup>37</sup> After the volunteers are trained, they visit prisons and select other incarcerated people to become “listeners”.<sup>38</sup> The role of the “listeners” is to provide emotional support to vulnerable people within institutions who may be at risk for committing suicide or engaging in other negative behaviours.<sup>39</sup> The Listener Scheme showed great success and research found that the emotional support provided by “listeners”, helped to reduce distress among incarcerated people.<sup>40</sup> Similar programs have been developed and implemented in Scotland and Northern Ireland.<sup>41</sup>

The Listener Scheme provides an example of the positive impacts that supporting incarcerated people can have on their future paths and also shows how important effective training is. The training that prisoners receive to become a “listener” is suitable for those who have issues with literacy and provides consistent training guidelines and goals that keep the need for flexible learning methods in mind.<sup>42</sup> This international case study is a valuable example that demonstrates how important peer support is and how some of the training considerations mentioned above have been successfully utilized in the past and present.

## Special Considerations

### Cultural Awareness and Considerations: Aboriginal Populations

The fact that Aboriginal populations are overrepresented in the criminal justice system is well documented and researched. There is also a general consensus that Aboriginal people who are incarcerated have different needs than non-aboriginal people.<sup>43</sup> Research has suggested that Aboriginal people are at a higher risk of being abused, having substance abuse issues, and being unemployed, among other things.<sup>44</sup> Research has also suggested that literacy is a major problem for some Aboriginal people. Therefore, when creating a train the trainer model it is important to offer flexible methods of learning for trainees that do not rely solely on written work. Instead, more effective practices for Aboriginal people are activities like modelling, role-playing, and open discussions.<sup>45</sup> An effective train the trainer model should also make each person feel comfortable and in

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<sup>37</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>38</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>39</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>40</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>41</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>42</sup> Samaritans. (1990).

<sup>43</sup> Howells, K., Day, A., Byrne, S., Byrne, M. (1999). Risk, Needs and Responsivity in Violence Rehabilitation: Implications for Programs with Indigenous Offenders. *Paper presented at the Best Practice Interventions in Corrections for Indigenous People Conference convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with Department for Correctional Services SA and held in Adelaide, October 1999.* 115-133.

<sup>44</sup> Howells, et al. (1999).

<sup>45</sup> Howells, et al. (1999).

order to do so it may be beneficial to have an Aboriginal trainer present who may be able to breakdown culture and language barriers.<sup>46</sup>

Material used in the training sessions must include information relevant to Aboriginal communities and, indeed, other minority groups. Trainees should understand that each person/population is different, and the risks and needs that each group presents are also different. It may be beneficial to teach the trainees how to encourage a healthy and balanced lifestyle within an aboriginal context.<sup>47</sup> As modelled in the Lifer Resource Strategy Facilitator Manual, the importance of diet, exercise, and healthy decision making (no drugs/alcohol/unprotected sex, etc.) should be explained. Trainees can share this knowledge with Aboriginal lifers to help address some of their needs to reduce the likelihood that they will reoffend when they return to the community. An effective train-the-trainer model should ensure that the trainees understand how to relate to Aboriginal people and how to facilitate effective communication and relationships with them.<sup>48</sup> This may require that the mentor and mentee speak the same language, or that the mentor is aware and considerate of the mentor's culture, languages, and individual risk factors and needs.<sup>49</sup>

Given the wide diversity among aboriginal populations, it may be beneficial to create groups of aboriginal trainees and ensure that the trainer is also aboriginal.<sup>50</sup> Research has demonstrated that some aboriginal people may benefit from a slightly different structure when doing peer mentoring and that utilizing storytelling, open dialogue, and considering culturally relevant practices is very important.<sup>51</sup> Teachings, ceremonies, and group discussions may be a better way to teach trainees the values that are needed to become a peer mentor since these practices are culturally relevant and possibly, more comfortable.<sup>52</sup>

Kimberly Lavoie, Director of Aboriginal Corrections Policy with the Department of Public Safety, has investigated key guiding principles when implementing programs and working with Aboriginal communities. The guiding principles include:

- being holistic;

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<sup>46</sup> Howells, et al. (1999).

<sup>47</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (2010). *Lifer Resource Strategy: Facilitator Manual – Aboriginals*. Module 2.4-2.5, 1-166.

<sup>48</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (2010).

<sup>49</sup> Correctional Services Canada. (2010).

<sup>50</sup> The Department of Public Safety. (2009). *Community Mobilisation Dialogue with Aboriginal Communities*. Retrieved March 2014 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/cmmnt-mblstn/cmmnt-mblstn-eng.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> The Department of Public Safety. (2009).

<sup>52</sup> The Department of Public Safety. (2009).

- being culturally relevant;
- encouraging community involvement;
- recognizing the gifts and strengths of individuals and communities;
- being respectful of each community's current state of development; and
- they should be developed by and for Aboriginal people.<sup>53</sup>

### Gender Considerations: Women

As with cultural considerations, gender differences are important in adapting the SLSC *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* for women. A survey conducted by Adult Correctional Services (ACS) done in 2009, revealed that women made up eleven percent of provincial admissions and six percent of federal admissions to correctional institutions.<sup>54</sup> The Office of the Correctional Investigator states that five percent of the total offender population is female, and that the amount of women being incarcerated in a federal institution has risen by forty percent in ten years.<sup>55</sup> Considering the specific behaviours, circumstances, and historical social issues that women face will create better results when developing reintegration skills and assisting incarcerated women. There is considerable research on the important gender differences and unique social and environmental issues that women face. It is well established that women have specific health risks, are much more likely to be exposed to family/domestic violence, suffer more from depression and anxiety, and have issues with substance abuse that are directly connected to their experiences of trauma and violence. Bloom and Covington (2003) outlined three important guiding principles that are helpful in shaping gender-responsive strategies and SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop*.

### Guiding Principles

#### 1. Acknowledging Gender Differences

The first guiding principle is ensuring that the different needs and pathways of women are acknowledged and understood.<sup>56</sup> The ways in which women enter the criminal justice system and deal with their incarceration period is quite unique as they are influenced by their relationships with people inside the institution (staff, etc.) while also dealing with many of the issues mentioned above.<sup>57</sup> In order to adequately respond to the many complex issues that women face, these issues need to be acknowledged and understood

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<sup>53</sup> Lavoie, K. (2014). *Community Mobilization in Indigenous Communities* [PowerPoint slides]. Presented at National Associations Active in Criminal Justice Forum on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Mahony, T. (2011). Women and the Criminal Justice System. *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, 89, 1-40.

<sup>55</sup> Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2013). *Federally Sentenced Women*. Retrieved March 2014 from <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/priorities-priorites/women-femmes-eng.aspx>.

<sup>56</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

<sup>57</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

and SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* should ensure trainers are aware and educated on these gender issues.

## 2. Create an Environment that focuses on safety, dignity, and respect

Research has demonstrated that feeling safe and being treated with respect and dignity are areas that lead to positive improvements in behaviour for women.<sup>58</sup> When considering the fact that a majority of incarcerated women have experienced violence and trauma, it is important for them to be in an environment where they feel they are safe and supported.<sup>59</sup> SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* should ensure that trainers understand the consequences of having been exposed to violence and trauma, and also understand why having a safe and supportive environment is so important for women. This will help ensure that the women are not further traumatized and that trainees know how to treat women with respect. In turn, the knowledge that the trainee has gained will help women feel more comfortable and more committed to the relationship between mentor and mentee.

## 3. Promoting Healthy Relationships and Connections

The role of relationships within incarcerated females is important to incorporate into SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop*. Relationships are a multi-faceted area that has been shown to be very precious to this population of people.<sup>60</sup> Relationships with those who have a negative influence are thought to be a precursor to many women's criminal involvement. When women are incarcerated, relationships remain very important to them.<sup>61</sup> For example, relationships between family members, children, significant others, fellow female prisoners, and staff are all relationships that can help or hinder incarcerated females.<sup>62</sup> The *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* may incorporate training on how important healthy relationships are and how trainees can foster these relationships with their future mentees. The trainee's should also be taught about how to promote positive relationships between females and their family/children through communication and supportive discussions.

## Summary

The key components of an effective train-the-trainer model are outlined below:

- Choose the trainers by ensuring that those chosen care about others and are a positive role model for other life sentenced individuals.

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<sup>58</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

<sup>59</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

<sup>60</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

<sup>61</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

<sup>62</sup> Bloom et al. (2003).

- Ensure training sessions are hands on, interactive, and that the trainee receives opportunities to practice the new skills they learn.
- The most promising hands on methods of training are role playing/modelling with a mixture of demonstrations and discussions by experts (successful mentors/lifers).
- Training should consider the appropriate length for the participants, and the key is to have multiple follow up sessions.
- Training sessions should teach core concepts and skills needed to be an effective peer mentor, which include: clearly defining the trainees' roles, responsibilities, and expectations; teaching relationship building skills and strategies; building interpersonal skills; and, being trained in crisis management and health management.

The factors that have been listed above are the key findings that have demonstrated the most empirical validity and can be applied to SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* to create a well-rounded training model. This literature review has revealed the importance of ensuring a number of things are taken into consideration in order to develop an effective training model. Life sentenced people compose a very unique and special population that deal with extremely complex issues on a daily basis. Well trained peer mentors will be able to address the special needs of this population, and the support that peer mentors give provides hope for successful reintegration and public safety. Using the empirical evidence found through this literature review, SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* is a promising model to help the struggling lifer population.

## Appendix A

Susan Dennison, the Assistant Professor in the social work department at the University of North Carolina, outlines a promising training session that was given to high school students participating in the Big Buddies' program. The Big Buddies' program was the result of three North Carolina organizations coming together with the goal of addressing high school dropout rates, lack of interest in community volunteering and other service related issues.<sup>63</sup> In this program, a number of successful senior and junior students were matched with fourth grade students who were at risk for dropping out of school in the future.<sup>64</sup>

The mentors and mentees met with each other twice a week and went over any educational issues that the mentee was having.<sup>65</sup> Dennison (2000) pointed out the importance of ensuring that the Big Buddies were trained well and understood the purpose of the program, their role, and had the skills to build a positive relationship with the at-risk children. Dennison's training model for this program is useful to SLSC's *Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop* and provides a promising outline of effective training methods and principles. The training model for the selected Big Buddies is outlined below.

### The Big Buddies Program: Model Training Session for Big Buddies

I. *Warm-up Exercise*: At the beginning of each class a disclosure technique was utilized to build a relationship among the Big Buddies. These same techniques could be modified and used by the Big Buddies with their Little Buddies. Modified task sheets from these exercises were sometimes given out in the class so students would know exactly how they could conduct a similar relationship building task with their Little Buddy.

II. *Training Topic*: The trainers selected a sequence of topics that were related both to relationship building with at-risk children and to tutoring them effectively. Examples of topics included listening skills, understanding childhood development, anger management and conflict resolution skills, activities of interest to children, games for teaching academics, and ways to deal with problems that surface. This material was presented through a variety of teaching methods.

III. *Trouble Shooting Problems*: This was the time in the class for student to bring up problems or concerns they were having about their Little Buddies. In some instances the trainers found they needed to intervene with particular problems that surfaced as a way

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<sup>63</sup> Dennison, S. (2000). A Win-Win Peer Mentoring and Tutoring Program: A Collaborative Model. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 20(3), 161-174.

<sup>64</sup> Dennison, S. (2000).

<sup>65</sup> Dennison, S. (2000).

to ensure they were handled effectively. However, the majority of discussions were to determine alternative ways to respond to problems. This period of the class proved to be invaluable for teaching mentoring and tutoring skills because the theoretical material, presented during the lectures, could now be applied directly to the students' experiences.

IV. *Closure*: At the end of each class the students were asked to process the session by indicating what they found most helpful or interesting about the class. This feedback provided the trainers ongoing guidance in planning these sessions. The processing also offered another opportunity to build a positive relationship among the Big Buddies.

SLSC recommends that this model could be adjusted in order to be used in a correctional setting. Although this model is used in an educational setting, the target population has many parallels with the population of life sentenced people as they both require support to ensure they are successful in their future activities within the community. This model could be moderately adjusted to include the training topics that have been discussed in this report. Troubleshooting problems could also be replaced with role playing activities in which trainees get to practice their communication and problem solving skills while also becoming more comfortable with their role. Each section of this training model could be adjusted to meet the needs and goals of the target population for *SLSC's Train the Trainer: Peer Mentoring Workshop*.

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