

Mentoring Frequently Asked Questions

What is mentoring?

A mentor is defined as a “wise and trusted advisor.” It’s someone who nurtures and guides a younger protégée, or “mentee,” in the pursuit of his or her goals. All of us have had mentors—an aunt, a teacher, a coach, a pastor—who inspired us to achieve great things while helping us avoid negative influences and potential barriers. Behind every successful adult is at least one mentor who showed the way, providing a positive role model.

What does PROMISE stand for?

PROMISE stands for **P**roviding **R**eal **O**pportunities for **M**aximizing **I**nnovation and **S**uccess through **E**ducation.

Does mentoring work?

The mentors provided by formal programs such as PROMISE are able to achieve powerful results for the youth they work with. National studies have found that mentored youth:

- Were 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs
- Were 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use
- Were 38% less likely to engage in violence
- Skipped school 52% less

How does the GED Plus PROMISE Mentoring Program provide mentoring?

The GED Plus PROMISE program recruits adult volunteers from the community to serve as mentors with youth enrolled in GED Plus programming. Matches meet twice per month for a minimum of one academic school year. The meetings are held on site at GED Plus or ESAC facilities and are facilitated by the PROMISE Mentor Coordinator.

The GED Plus PROMISE program takes a broad developmental approach to mentoring that focuses on helping youth build their own capacity to succeed in education and in life. The connections made in the PROMISE program will serve to encourage students to reach their full potential as students and beyond, as members of our community. By empowering youth to make good decisions and set positive goals, PROMISE strives to impact:

- Academic achievement and attitudes towards school and education
- Gang involvement and delinquency
- Family and peer relations
- Youth self-esteem and confidence
- Youth cultural competency levels

Who can serve as a GED Plus PROMISE mentor?

Our mentors must be at least 24 years old and able to pass our screening process, which includes a criminal background check, sexual offender registry check, personal interview, reference checks, and pre-match orientation. Mentors must agree to a time commitment of three hours every two weeks for a minimum of one academic school year. They must also have access to transportation to mentoring activities. Beyond that, any caring adult from our community can serve as a mentor provided he or she has an open mind, a compassionate heart, and experiences to share with GED Plus students.

Who are the youth in the program?

Because we believe that *every* young person can benefit from the gift of a mentor, the PROMISE program is open to *all* students in the GED Plus Program. Most youth are referred to the program by teachers, the educational counselor, or the program director. Our mentees come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs. But more than anything, they simply need someone to help show them the way to their goals and dreams.

How do I know that PROMISE is a safe, quality program?

PROMISE follows the established program guidelines found in the National Mentoring Partnership's *Elements of Effective Practice*. These guidelines ensure that:

- All volunteers are properly screened and trained prior to working with their mentee
- Youth are matched with an appropriate mentor that can help them achieve their goals
- Meaningful youth development activities form the core of the mentoring relationships
- The program rigorously supervises the mentor-mentee relationships
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to govern the mentoring relationships and program operations
- Ongoing training and support are offered to all participants

How can I learn more?

We are currently holding orientation sessions where you can learn more about the program and sign up to be mentor. For information on scheduled sessions, please contact us at 617.541.2643 or by email at jsmith@esacboston.org. We are happy to answer your questions and explain more about how we bring the opportunity of mentoring to GED Plus students.