

Developmental Relationships Handouts

*Creating Close Connections That Help Young People Be
and Become Their Best Selves*

Kent Pekel, Ed.D.



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Developmental Relationships in Your Development

For each section below, write the names of up to three people who did these things for and with you when you were growing into the person you have become. It is OK to leave one line or all three lines blank.

People Who Made a Difference

Category A: Who showed you that you mattered to them?

They may have done this by . . .

- Being someone you could trust.
- Really paying attention when you were together.
- Making you feel known and valued.
- Showing you that they enjoyed being with you.
- Praising you for your efforts and achievements.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Category B: Who pushed you to keep getting better?

They may have done this by . . .

- Expecting you to live up to your potential.
- Pushing you to go further.
- Helping you learn from mistakes and setbacks.
- Insisting that you take responsibility for your actions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Category C: Who helped you complete tasks and achieve your goals?

They may have done this by . . .

- Guiding you through hard situations and systems.
- Building your confidence to take charge of your life.
- Standing up for you when you needed it.
- Putting in place limits that kept you on track.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Category D: Who treated you with respect and gave you a say?

They may have done this by . . .

- Taking you seriously and treating you fairly.
- Involving you in decisions that affected you.
- Working with you to solve problems and reach goals.
- Creating opportunities for you to take action and lead.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Category E: Who connected you with people and places that broadened your world?

They may have done this by . . .

- Exposing you to new ideas, experiences, and places.
- Inspiring you to see possibilities for your future.
- Introducing you to other people who helped you grow.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please choose 1 of the following 2 questions to share with your partner or group:

(1) Which person did you list in the largest number of categories?

(2) Which person on your list was a bit of a surprise because you had not previously thought about how that person influenced your development?

Developmental Relationships in Your Organization

Please indicate how well each of the statements in the lefthand column describes your organization by checking one of the boxes to the right. Be as accurate as possible. You will not be asked to share or turn in this handout.

To what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is true of the organization where you work?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
1. Staff who work with young people have enough time to get to know them as individuals and to respond to their thoughts and needs				
2. When we hire new employees who will work with young people, we ask about their interest in and previous experience with building relationships				
3. Building relationships is an ongoing focus of the professional development/training we provide for staff who work with youth				
4. We allocate additional financial and/or human resources to build relationships with young people who are struggling				
5. The leaders of our organization regularly talk about the importance of building positive relationships with youth				
6. The leaders of our organization provide staff with the resources and other support they need to build strong relationships with the young people they serve				
7. We periodically collect data from surveys or other methods on the ways young people experience relationships in our organization				
8. Staff sincerely want to build positive relationships with <i>all</i> of the young people they work with				
9. Our organization's mission, vision, values, or logic model explicitly mentions relationships				

To what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is true of the organization where you work?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
10. Staff possess the relationship-building skills they need to create close connections with all young people in the group or class				
11. The governing body of our organization (i.e. board of directors, school board) strongly supports our efforts to build strong relationships with all of the young people we serve				
12. The configuration, look, and feel of our physical space encourages and supports building strong relationships with young people				
13. Staff believe that the relationships they build with young people will influence the way those young people think and behave in our organization				
14. Staff work to build positive relationships with parents and guardians as an element of their effort to build positive relationships with young people				
15. Staff understand that the relationships they build with young people today can have a lasting influence on the young people's personal and social development				
Total for Each Column				
Total Points for All Columns Combined				

Based upon the total score above, does your organization make developmental relationships the “active ingredient” (like fluoride in toothpaste) in your work with young people?

45 – 60 Points: Fully Activated
30 – 45 Points: Highly Active

15 – 30 Points: Getting Activated
0 – 15 Points: Missing the Active Ingredient

The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
1. Express Care Show me that I matter to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable..... Be someone I can trust. • Listen..... Really pay attention when we are together. • Believe in me Make me feel known and valued. • Be warm..... Show me you enjoy being with me. • Encourage Praise me for my efforts and achievements. 	
2. Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best Expect me to live up to my potential. • Stretch Push me to go further. • Hold me accountable ... Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Reflect on failures..... Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks. 	
3. Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate..... Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Empower..... Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Advocate..... Stand up for me when I need it. • Set boundaries Put in place limits that keep me on track. 	
4. Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Include me Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Collaborate Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • Let me lead Create opportunities for me to take action and lead. 	
5. Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Broaden horizons Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Connect..... Introduce me to people who can help me grow. 	

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

The Intentionality Tool

How much conscious attention do you give to finding and/or creating opportunities to take the actions listed below in your work with young people? Please answer as honestly as possible.		Almost None (1 pt)	A Little (2 pts)	A Fair Amount (3 pts)	A Lot (4 pts)	Almost Constant (5 pts)
Express Care	Showing young people that they can trust me	___	___	___	___	___
	Giving young people focused individual attention	___	___	___	___	___
	Making young people feel known and valued	___	___	___	___	___
Category Total (add points):						
Challenge Growth	Setting high expectations for young people	___	___	___	___	___
	Helping young people learn from mistakes & failure	___	___	___	___	___
	Holding young people accountable for their actions	___	___	___	___	___
Category Total (add points):						
Provide Support	Guiding young people through hard situations	___	___	___	___	___
	Building young people's self-confidence	___	___	___	___	___
	Standing up for young people when they need it	___	___	___	___	___
Category Total (add points):						
Share Power	Taking young people's ideas & opinions seriously	___	___	___	___	___
	Involving young people in important decisions	___	___	___	___	___
	Letting young people take the lead	___	___	___	___	___
Category Total (add points):						
Expand Possibilities	Inspiring young people to see future possibilities	___	___	___	___	___
	Exposing young people to new ideas & places	___	___	___	___	___
	Introducing youth to people who help them grow	___	___	___	___	___
Category Total (add points):						