A CRITICAL INCIDENTS STUDY OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YOUTH WORKERS AND ADOLESCENTS

by

Dale Peters

B.A. Trinity Western University, 1992

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Counselling Psychology)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1995

© DALE DWIGHT PETERS, 1995
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Counselling Psychology

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Sept 22/95
Abstract

This study looked at the initiation and facilitation of significant, mentoring relationships between adults and adolescents. Research in the areas of mentoring and social support systems has tended to focus on outcomes of those relationships. This study primarily focused on the process of these relationships, i.e.: what actually occurred in them. In-depth interviews were conducted with seventeen participant-observers, ranging in age from 16 to 31 who had experienced a significant, mentoring relationship. The critical incidents technique was used to identify the behaviors of the adults that facilitated and strengthened the relationships. A total of 373 incidents were collected and distilled into six main categories of behaviors through an emergent method of thematic analysis. The behaviors were then listed and described. The domains, in order of prominence, emerged as follows: Behaviors that enhanced self-esteem; Communication and interpersonal skills; Initiating, contacting and maintenance behaviors; Teaching, advising and guiding behaviors; Behaviors that modeled values, attitudes and life skills. Implications for the development of skill-training programs, counselling practice and future research have been suggested.
# Table of Contents

**ABSTRACT**................................................................. ii

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**.................................................. vii

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**................................................ iii

**LIST OF TABLES**....................................................... vi

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**........................................ 1
  Statement of the Problem........................................... 1
  Definitions.......................................................... 3

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**................................. 5
  The Concept of Mentoring........................................... 5
  Adolescents' Needs for Relationship and Support............... 7
  Adult Organized Programs......................................... 10
  Characteristics of Adults in These Roles....................... 10
  Summary............................................................... 12

**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**.................................... 14
  Design................................................................. 14
  Participants and Sample Size................................... 15
  Procedures.......................................................... 16
  Data Collection..................................................... 17
  Analysis............................................................. 18
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Organization of Results
Reliability and Validity
Validity of Data
Exhaustiveness of Category System
Independent Rater
Description of Domains
Initiating, Contacting and Maintenance Behaviors
Advocacy and Service Behaviors
Behaviors of Communication and Interpersonal Skills
Behaviors That Model Values, Attitudes and Life Skills
Teaching, Advising and Guiding Behaviors
Behaviors That Contribute To Enhanced Self-esteem
Hindering Behaviors
Behaviors Catalogue
Domain #1
Domain #2
Domain #3
Domain #4
Domain #5
Domain #6

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Limitations of the Study
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. Number of Incidents by Domain.....................70
TABLE 2. Number of Incidents per Behavior Category......71
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and support of my advisory committee, Dr. Bill Borgen, Dr. Dietmar Neufeld and Dr. Marv Westwood for assistance in completing this research. Special thanks goes to Marv who kept my spirits up with collaborative skills and optimism when the going got tough. I'd also like to thank Dr. Norm Amundson for his help earlier in the project when the boundaries of the sample "box" were drawn.

To Edna, Jodi and Daniel, who lent their husband and father to this project for many afternoons and evenings without complaint, I give my heartfelt gratitude. (May some of the behaviors revealed in the following pages be found to be true of my relationships with them).

Further, this study was made possible because men and women that I have had the pleasure of knowing have dedicated their lives to serving and befriending young people. These are the staff of Greater Vancouver Youth for Christ and they also are my "family".

Finally, my thanks and admiration go to the research participant-observers whose words so eloquently allow us inside their lives and relationships. This study is a part of each of their stories and it is alive.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

"To live is to emerge, to constantly become something new" (Bibby & Posterski, 1985, p.9). The period of human development known in the Western world as adolescence, while not unique in representing it, typifies this emergence. Adolescents are in the process of changing from children to adults, a process requiring many adjustments. Many adult readers of this study remember people who helped them emerge into adulthood such as parents, teachers, pastors and relatives. Galbo (1983) notes that traditional thought also continues to identify this inter-generational assistance as the vehicle through which society at large is reproduced and its cultural values transmitted from one generation to the next.

Unfortunately, many young people today are not adequately connected to the adult generation. Flaxman (1991) asserts that adolescents are becoming increasingly isolated. "Because of changes in the structure of the family, in community and neighborhood relationships and in workplace arrangements, these youths are being deprived of the adult contacts that historically helped them develop and take on adult roles" (p. 16).
It is generally held that disadvantaged and at-risk youths are at a particularly vulnerable position to the extent that they are removed from structured environments containing parental support, affection and sources of self-esteem. However, there are no exemptions to this alienation with any social class or family status. More than fifteen years ago Elkind (1981) identified the children of many middle and upper class families as being undernourished emotionally, without access to loving, available parents. Yet, the need of support in adolescence appears to be more basic and all-encompassing than just these two extremes. Stevens (1985) asserts that, "...every family, no matter how healthy...can benefit from having other adults befriend their children, especially during the teenage years" (p. 16).

Where organizations, institutions and individuals recognize the need in the lives of young people for intervention through adult support, various forms of mentoring have become commonplace. Big Brothers, Boy Scouts and church youth pastors all include, among other goals for their outreach, the desire to befriend young people in significant ways. Detached youth workers, alternative school teachers and high school guidance counsellors also value the relationships with young people that give them access to their lives, whether their mandate be rehabilitation, education or guidance.
While the need for significant adult-youth contact has been well established and studied (Lackovic-Grgin & Dekovic, 1990; Stern, Northman & Van Slyck, 1984; Benson, 1990) the research and design of mentoring models has not. This study seeks to address the inner processes of mentoring relationships and shed light on what it takes for them to work. Hopefully the increased understanding of the process as well as the extension of the breadth and depth of the mentoring experience will be of value to all those concerned with meeting adolescents' needs in this way.

The broad research questions that guided this study were: "What happens of value in mentoring relationships between adults and adolescents?" and, "How does it take place?" To study these questions an interview approach using the critical incidents method was chosen with the goal of answering the following specific question: "What are the behaviors of the adult mentor that facilitate and strengthen these relationships?"

Definitions

In this study, I have found the following definition of mentoring, taken from Flaxman, Ascher and Harrington's (1989) study, to be most suitable: "...a supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone more senior in age
or experience, who offers support, guidance and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, enters a new area of experience, takes on an important task or corrects an earlier problem" (p. ii). The difficult period referred to in this definition suits the purposes of the present study as generally descriptive of adolescence. The other situations (new areas, important tasks and problems) are specifically identified in much of the mentoring this research studied as well.
The concept of mentoring
Of the various issues involved in the adult-adolescent relationships I wish to study, the concepts of mentor and significant other are perhaps the most fundamental. Over the last decade or so there has been a fair amount of research done on both mentors and significant others. The original literature reference for the term mentor is well known to many of us. It comes from Homer's (approx. 725 BC.) *Odyssey*. In that story a teacher named "Mentor" guided Odysseus' son, Telemachus on his legendary journey to adulthood in the absence of the youth's father who was away fighting in the Trojan wars. The name has since taken its place as a common noun in the English language, meaning, "a close, trusted, and experienced counselor or guide" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1971).

Considerable study has been done in the field of formal mentoring programs, including studies with disadvantaged or problem youth (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike & Newman, 1984; Alleman, 1986; Ascher, 1988). In these as well as other planned mentoring programs, mentoring is usually defined relative to specific outcomes such as career exploration and academic performance.
However, the literature also refers to a natural mentoring process (Flaxman, Ascher and Harrington, 1989) that occurs between adolescents and young adults and the significant other adults in their lives. In this broader sense mentoring has taken place in all of our lives. Our mentors or significant others have simply been people who care (Mahoney, 1991) or those who have facilitated an enabling experience (Flaxman, 1991). Or consider Geiger's (1989) succinct summary of a mentor's role: "to be an adult who has time for a child, who cares about that child, who believes in that child" (p.18).

Other established components of mentoring at any level are a long term involvement (Mahoney, 1991), a depth of commitment that exceeds normal social and working relationships (Hamilton & Darling, 1989) and an observable set of behaviors (rather than innate attributes) that distinguish mentors from non-mentors (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike & Newman, 1984).

Alleman et al. (1984) also make a distinction between instrumental mentoring, which has a direct and observable impact on the protege's educational process, career or social life and psychosocial mentoring which attempts to change the follower personally and prescribes mentor roles of model, counsellor and supporter. Youth workers such as the ones the present study focuses on function in a number of structured roles such as tutoring, coaching and life-skills training but
more of their interaction with adolescents is informal and supports this latter kind of mentoring.

**Adolescents' need for relationship and support**

Although there has been some difference of results in the search for most important significant others, there is no question that the societal environment our youth are growing up in today has undergone very significant changes. Family breakdown, has served to limit the amount of contact children have with their parents and thereby contributes to a certain weakness in their self esteem (Slater, Stewart & Linn, 1983) although, interestingly, female adolescents' were found to suffer these effects more than males.

Of concern to a number of researchers has been the lack of cultural values, career experience, vision and goals accessible to many youth today. This is due to increasing alienation between youth and adults (Stiles, 1991; Flaxman et al., 1989). Structured mentoring programs (Ascher, 1988; Flaxman et al., 1989) provide role models as well as supportive relationships which act as linkages for young people needing them. So do informal, natural mentors and adults that work in preventative and recreational youth programs (Hendry, 1989).

Perhaps some of the most alarming results of family disruption and the resulting stress are the behavioral
dividends evident in the lives of the children. Stern et al. (1984) found that the absence of a father was linked with higher rates of sexual activity and drug and alcohol use among adolescent males. Incidence of suicide has been suggested to increase with the decrease of contact with significant adults (Galbo, 1986).

The transition from child to adult is a complex one. During it adolescents need a solid, consistent support network to face the challenges of growing up such as identity development, interpersonal relations and the physical changes of puberty. As well, the process of self-determination is developing which means that the young individual finds him or herself acting increasingly independent of familiar family and parental influence and more dependent on peer influence.

Galbo (1986), in summarizing research in the area of adolescent development and the role of significant others, notes that while parents have been shown to be very important to teens, their influence is largely situational. In such important areas as sexual choices and career decisions, other adults as well as peers seem to be sought before parents for advice and support. What seems to be critical for the successful transmission of culturally acceptable values to young people is simply a relationship in which the youth identifies with the adult, whomever he or she is, to the extent that modeling takes place.
Hendry, (1989) found that contact with adults is important for communicating concrete visions of and goals for the future to adolescents. Cotterell's (1992) study of Australian teenagers linked the strength of their attachments to their parents and teachers with positive self-esteem. Galbo's (1983) study showed parents were quite highly regarded as significant by their academically oriented, upper middle class children. However, in other studies (Benson, 1990; Galbo, 1986; Cauce, Felner & Primavera, 1982; Bo, 1989) teachers have been chosen infrequently by students asked who they would turn to if they needed help with a problem they were facing.

In addition to the needs researchers have been suggesting, adolescents' own perceptions have also been given voice. Galbo (1983) found youth wanted the input of significant adults for discussing problems, sharing activities of common interest or simply enjoying their company. Stiles et al. (1991) found that youth looked for a confidant and a supporter in their relationships with adults. So young people need support from significant adults and suffer without it even as they instinctively push for independence.
Adult organized programs

While there are exceptions such as family relatives, informal mentoring often occurs in the context of some structured organization or institution such as the church (pastors; youth pastors), the school (teachers; coaches) and community agencies (youth care staff, program providers and other workers). Hendry (1989) has argued that youth who attend structured activities and adult organized clubs enjoy an important opportunity to interact with adults beyond the family that other teens may miss. Cotterell's (1992) study with Australian teens also emphasized the value of non-kin attachments for youth.

Lackovic-Grgin and Dekovic (1990) have pointed out that as adolescents grow older, their predominant social roles become less asymmetrical (as with parents, teachers and other authority figures) and more symmetrical (such as the reciprocal relationships between friends). Perhaps this explains in part both the tendency for youth to rely more heavily on peer support as they get older and the rapport that youth leaders and youth pastors have with teens (Galbo, 1983; 1986).

Characteristics and behavior of adults in these roles

The literature has identified significant sources of mentoring as parents, other adults related by kinship and non-
kin adults. I have already noted that parents play a decreasing role as adolescents get older. More and more, youth turn toward non-kin adults and peers for their support.

Hendry, Roberts, Glendinning and Coleman (1992) found that for 180 Scottish adolescents, the roles mentors played included enabler, believer, teacher, supporter, role model and challenger among others. Stiles et al. (1991) reported that adolescents wanted an adult who was easy to talk to and trustworthy. In addition, boys in that study listed intelligence, caring, encouraging and willingness to be frank while girls reported that desirable qualities were easy to get along with, non-judgmental, cheerful, and open to share experiences. Ascher (1988) notes that trust is an especially crucial component in relationships with disadvantaged and problem youth.

A possibly overlooked component in natural mentoring relationships is their voluntary quality (Galbo, 1983; 1986). Young people must choose to become involved. Whether they are actively recruited to programs or not adults must earn the right to be significant in their lives. This significance must be "earned through the adult's response to an adolescent which is interpreted by the youth in a favorable manner" (Galbo, 1986, p.46). Clark-Lempers et al. (1991) emphasize that there is still a great deal to investigate in the areas of the "frequency, nature and effects of adolescents'
relations with adults other than parents" (p. 297) thus mandating studies such as the current one which looks more closely into those relationships.

Summary

Several methodological considerations alluded to in the literature seem pertinent to the present research. Galbo (1984) mentions the need for qualitative methods in order to give added depth to the meanings and implications of adolescents' responses in studies. Hamilton and Darling (1989) cite Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, (1981) who suggest the importance of research guided by a "person-process context" model that not only examines differences in relationships but documents the processes responsible for creating them.

It would appear difficult from the literature to predict the exact nature of the critical incidents and the accompanying behaviors that were likely to be reported in this study. Little work has been done gathering data from adolescents themselves about their mentors' behavior. General trends, however, are somewhat more predictable but it will be left to Chapters 4 and 5 to determine if or how well the current study reflects previous conclusions that highlighted youths' needs for non-kin role models, sources of emotional support and career vision and goals. As well, while limited, there has been some research that identified various mentor
roles as well as qualities observed, both from the perspective of adolescents (Stiles et al., 1991; Ascher, 1988). It seemed a reasonable assumption that incidents would reflect those roles and qualities. Again, Chapter 4 reveals that the breadth and depth of experience represented by this study's rather heterogeneous sample group goes well beyond these findings as well.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Design

Because the aim of this study is to generate understanding and not to validate or test established findings, a qualitative approach was chosen. The critical incident method (Flanagan, 1954) appeared most suitable for the purpose of exploring and describing the relatively new content domain of adult behaviors in mentoring relationships. It involves the collection of specific incidents or events, either written or verbalized, by observers who were witnesses to those events. In essence, it provides an account of the significant facts as perceived by someone who was there when they took place.

The purpose is to study the facilitative and/or hindering effect the incidents have on a given process, in this case relationship facilitation. Relying on the "expert" testimony of adolescent participant-observers, this study utilized their eyewitness accounts of adults' behavior with them to explore which of those behaviors made significant contributions to their relationships.

Reliability and validity for this technique are both well established by Anderson and Nilsson (1964), who state: "According to the results of the studies reported here on the reliability and validity aspects of the critical incidents
technique, it would appear justifiable to conclude that the information collected by this method is both reliable and valid" (p. 402). As well, this method has recently proven well suited for studying human phenomena such as relationships (Woolsey, 1986). Further information about specific measures taken to ensure validity and reliability in the current study follow in Chapter 4.

Participants and Sample Size

The participant-observers were located through the assistance of an inter-denominational, Christian youth organization active in the Lower Mainland. The group included eight females and nine males who, by their own report, had experienced a relationship they felt to be significant in their lives with one of the agency's adult staff or volunteers. The participants ranged in age from 16 to 31 and their relationships had all commenced at least two years prior to the time of the interviews in the interest of allowing for adequate events and incidents to have taken place. (It was later learned that approximately half of the sample were still in regular contact with their mentors).

As much variety as possible in participant characteristics was sought (such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, etc.) to reveal the width of the range over which the content domain extends (Woolsey, 1986). Participation in the research
was voluntary and solicited as described in the section following.

Procedures

Informal pilot interviews were conducted with two volunteer adolescents and discussed with the researcher's advisory committee chairman. It was apparent from these that the interview format was satisfactory to obtain the desired data. Consultation between researcher and advisor resulted in modification and fine tuning of interview questions.

Later, once the first interview was completed, a check was made for researcher bias by the same advisor who listened to the tape of that interview.

Initially a list of names of adolescents or young adults meeting the general requirements of the study was solicited from staff members of the participating youth agency. (Several submitted more than one name and the researcher decided arbitrarily to limit to two the number of relationships involving the same adult mentor). The staff members were then requested to make an initial contact with those names, stating they knew a UBC student doing some research on relationships between adult youth workers and teenagers. They were asked to secure permission simply for the researcher to make contact and present the project.
Potential participant-observers were then contacted by telephone (see Appendix A for front end of conversation) by the researcher to invite their involvement. Care was taken to extend the same impartial and objective invitation to each individual. Once agreement to participate was secured (in several cases after consultation with parents or guardians) an appointment was set and participants were asked to spend some time before that recalling relevant incidents and behaviors.

Interviews took place in a variety of settings with approximately half occurring at the participant's residence. Before commencing, small talk was made to build rapport and set the participant at ease. Then the aim of the study was again explained, any questions were answered and the consent forms (see Appendix B) were signed (this included a parent's or guardian's permission where the participant was under 19 years of age).

Data Collection

The in-depth interviews lasted an average of one and a half hours and were tape recorded. They consisted of participants supplying and discussing incidents in the form of either events or recalled behaviors. Through empathic listening and perception checking (Woolsey, 1986) the researcher attempted to distill the essence of participants'
experiences and thereby avoid a diffusion of data and the subsequent difficulty of incident categorization.

The interviews were based on the following continually repeated cycle of questions. "What did (name of mentor) do that strengthened your relationship?" "Can you recall a specific incident when this occurred?" "Please describe exactly what (name of mentor) did."

Analysis

Relevant portions of the tape recordings were transcribed to form summary catalogues of reported incidents for each participant. This process took place concurrently throughout the data collection time period in the hope that redundancy of themes could be monitored, possibly signaling the end of data collection if no new behaviors were being generated by observers' recollections (Flanagan, 1954). (In actuality incident transcription was not kept completely current with the interviewing and data collection ended, as a function of time and the scope of the research, with seventeen interviews).

Once incidents were summarized in transcript form, behaviors were extracted and recorded on file cards with the list of incidents which supported them. This produced the first two levels of categorization in the analysis. The
remainder of this inductive process of thematic analysis is described in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the behaviors of the adult youth workers that facilitated and strengthened their mentoring relationships as well as some of the incidents which encapsulated these behaviors. Methods of ensuring reliability and validity are also presented immediately preceding this catalogue as well as definitions of the main domains.

It should also be reiterated that the scope of the study was "what" and not "why". Thus, meanings were not solicited from the participants regarding the significance of the various behaviors. In some cases however, meanings were volunteered and/or became manifest through accompanying reports. In several places where this is the case, and the meanings are illuminating, I have included them for their ability to shed light on the effect various behaviors had on the research participants.

Organization of Results

Out of seventeen interviews, 373 incidents were reported and categorized in 86 separate categories. The categories were organized under six broad domains. The titles of the categories, whenever possible, use a composite of the actual
words of the research participants. They are presented by domain in order of rank, determined by the number of incidents reported in each category. (For tables depicting relative distribution of incidents and domains, please see pages 70 and 71).

References to the incidents are supplied, using quotations from the research participants, for extra richness and description of the categories (except for categories supported by only one or two incidents). Criteria for choosing the examples used were how much emphasis the participant gave the incident and/or behavior relative to the rest of the interview and the clarity of description.

Reliability and Validity

As previously stated, the critical incidents technique has been shown to provide valid and reliable data (Anderson and Nilsson, 1964). Several proven methods of reliability and validity testing were employed in the current study.

Validity of Data

One third of the participants were contacted subsequent to their interviews and asked to validate the observations they had made. A summary of the incidents they reported was read to them and they were asked to make any additions, changes or deletions that were necessary for this data to reflect their
experience. With the exception of one participant, who added a clarifying meaning to one incident, the data was validated as presented.

Exhaustiveness of Category System

While the category system was not formed with scientific rigor (withholding one third of the incidents for classification after categories had been established), it was apparent well before all incidents were classified that the six revealed categories (domains) were sufficient for organizing all the data. The 86 smaller behavior categories are not as clearly exhaustive because of the limited size of the study sample.

Independent Rater

Approximately 13% or 49 of the total of 373 incidents were systematically selected (by choosing several incidents from each interview) for an independent rater to sort into the established domains. The rater, an experienced counsellor and doctoral graduate student in a local counselling program, was provided general descriptions of the domains and asked to classify the incidents. Inter-rater accuracy in this method was 82%. This figure is well within the 75-85% mark established by Anderson and Nilsson, (1964) and satisfactorily supports the reliability of the study's category system.
Description of Domains

The domains were created by a distillation process that grouped behavior categories into general areas of commonality. Several of the domains group broadly diverse behaviors with a single theme or end result such as the domain containing behaviors that enhanced self esteem. Others include behaviors that were similar in function, such as the domain containing behaviors that taught, advised or guided, in which most of the behaviors were geared towards information gathering and processing. A description of the six domains follows.

In a number of cases reported incidents qualified for more than one domain. Unless there were multiple components that necessitated membership in more than one domain, their singular location was chosen on the basis of the best fit.

INITIATING, CONTACTING AND MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS

Domain #1 is composed of behaviors that stood out in the minds of the research participants as impacting the origins and ongoing connections of their relationships. It includes provision of programming (on a group level and on a one to one level) as well as interpersonal behaviors that served to enhance the attractiveness of relationships with the adults. Also found here are behaviors that informed youth of the adult's presence and accessibility in their environment.
ADVOCA CY AND SERVICE BEHAVIORS

Domain #2 represents the behaviors that resulted in an experience of feeling supported by the adult. These behaviors were performed on behalf of the adolescents and were generally identified as things that they were not able or knowledgeable to do for themselves. Some of these behaviors took place in times of crisis; others simply in the context of normal development.

BEHAVIORS OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Domain #3 is composed of habits, styles and techniques used by the adults in their interaction with the young people. They represent basic communication skills as well as more advanced ones. They were associated, by the research participants, with such positive values as honesty, gentleness and patience.

BEHAVIORS THAT MODELED VALUES, ATTITUDES AND LIFE SKILLS

Domain #4 is composed of behaviors that represented lived or modeled values in the observations of participants. The incidents that contributed these behaviors included a sense of being visible, demonstrated, observed and, in some cases, learned and practiced by participants. They were, in a number of cases, observed to be congruent with spoken values.
TEACHING, ADVISING AND GUIDING BEHAVIORS

Domain #5 behaviors provided the participants with information and ways of acquiring and processing information. They can be identified as having helped youth address current issues and crises by direct assistance, such as advice, as well as facilitating self reliance and problem-solving to prepare for future situations.

BEHAVIORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCED SELF-ESTEEM

Domain #6 includes a wide variety of behaviors that are grouped around the common function of building and affirming participants' positive sense of self. These behaviors might be said to bestow a sense of dignity and respect upon those who received and observed them.

Hindering Behaviors

Less than a third of the participants were able to identify incidents that hindered the growth of their relationships. The thirteen incidents that were reported are included in the totals of the categories which most accurately reflect their nature since, whether positive or negative, they are judged to have influenced the relationships categorically.
Domain #1: (INITIATING, CONTACTING AND MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS)

i) Kept in touch (10)

This behavior category represents the different ways mentors maintained the connection between youth and themselves. Nine participants reported this behavior a total of ten times as being significant to the strengthening of their relationship.

Debbie said her mentor, Bruce, who coordinated the choir she sang in called her to go out for coffee about once a month or so when she was about fifteen. "I wouldn't have called him. I was too shy." And so a relationship was forged that, according to her, provided her with a positive, adult male role model at an important time in her life.

Shane put some distance between himself and his mentor when he was 15 while he experimented with various delinquent behaviors. During that time his mentor, Alec, the leader of a local youth program Shane had been involved with, continued to contact him periodically. He extended invitations to breakfast and offered news of upcoming camping activities. Eventually Shane became involved with the program again as well as re-establishing regular contact with his Alec. Since then his participation has broadened to include a volunteer role with younger boys in the program.
Steve, currently a youth worker in a Lower Mainland church, says he hears from his mentor (whom he has known since the age of 15) from time to time on the telephone. "Out of the blue...he'll call just to see how things are going. He's also taken time out of his day to visit me all the way out here (even though I'm not a kid anymore and I've established myself.)"

ii) Laughed/laughed together/made me laugh (7)

Seven participants mentioned laughter, whether theirs, their mentor's or shared, as an important component that drew them towards the adult or furthered that relationship.

Jamie described the "funniest stories he has to tell" as having attracted her to her mentor, Curt, at the time a youth pastor. "You get close to a guy like that. He makes it easy to warm up to him." Jamie remembers talking about the "dumbest, funniest things... once you laugh with somebody it just kind of works... his sense of humor was always there, even when we were talking seriously."

"I learned to laugh," said Debbie. "Bruce taught me the perspective of 'don't take life so seriously'... he would use humor in a situation first to help me lighten up."

Katrina remembers that, in her relationship with Bev, "We'd laugh and joke around a lot... She (still) makes wisecracks... I'd never expected somebody like her to be like that."
iii) Came to my environment (6)

The nature of the work that (participating agency) staff do requires frequently contacting young people wherever they can be found such as schools, parks or the street. Six participants indicated that the adults' visits to their environs stood out to them as significant in the beginning and/or growth of their relationship.

"The first I heard of Brenda was when she came to my school, offering a small group make-up course for girls." Jane remembers, "My teacher knew her and suggested I get involved. At the time I was pretty low." What seems to have impressed Jane was that Brenda never tried to make those meetings cater to her agendas. Instead, she, "gave up her needs for our needs... told us how to apply eyeliner straight and later, how to take care of not just the body appearance but also our interior lives."

Mark had known Adam for some time on a casual basis that included coffee appointments and visits by Mark to the drop-in center where Adam worked. But a time that stands out to him in particular as strengthening the relationship was when he called Adam from a friend's late one night after using drugs. "He said he would be right there and picked me up at a street corner a few minutes later... he was always there when I needed him."
iv) Took me for coffee/lunch (6)

Going for coffee is an everyday occasion that likely occurred in most of the relationships studied. Six people mentioned it specifically as an important component shared with their adult mentors. Typical of their experience is Ronald's. "A lot of the time, we'll just go for coffee and talk... we don't even have to talk about anything... (he's) someone that just wants to be with me." In Ronald's case the casual coffee get together's led to a variety of other venues for the relationship such as paid farm work for a youth ministry enterprise.

v) Acted crazy (5)

Acting crazy or "wacky" was remembered as part of their mentor's behavior in five of these relationships. Jane notes, "Brenda was a moron; like she's just retarded... It shocked me and I couldn't understand why this adult was so strange but I liked it and went to every single one (of the club meetings)." For an example, Jane recalled a cold, December outing and Brenda's slightly off-color jokes about staying warm and having to go to the bathroom.

Shane said of his mentor, Alec's approach, "By being able to come to our level and having that bit of immaturity, that helps to relate to each other." How did Shane define 'a bit of immaturity'? "In wrestling, we'd rip shirts right off of him."
vi) Provided opportunities for exciting, adventuresome or different activities (5)

Part of being involved with the mentors in this study was a connection to a well developed youth program with a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Five the participants in this study included adventure activities in their description of the events and incidents that fostered growth in their mentoring relationships. Skiing was mentioned several times as was cliff-jumping and camping.

Typical of the skiing incidents is Ronald's experience. "I ski with him. Tom's my ski buddy... He's crazy... We'll stop and throw snowballs at each other... There was a jump into deep powder. Tom took it and disappeared. Then he yelled, 'I just fell, don't worry about it'. So off I go. Tom goes off first...I always do everything Tom does."

Shane spoke of one of his earliest memories. "I think the first time (I realized this guy's my friend) was when we were playing football...and afterwards he had his camera out and was taking pictures and all these cool pictures...everyone in a line with our hands out and stuff." Then Shane added a thoughtful insight. "When you do something fun and different with someone you usually kinda bond with them."

Another incident from Shane's interview is included because in it, he articulates well the impact of his mentor's behavior on their growing relationship. "But the first thing
we really did together was he took us hiking up this (local) mountain to the very top and then we took pictures up there too, hanging over the edge and stuff. Well, we weren't really but it looked like it."

Asked about other behaviors on that occasion that advanced their relationship, Shane said, "When we were hiking back there were pine-cones and we were playing war and he'd be diving over logs and stuff, getting right into it. We'd be hucking them at each other. Then we'd be walking along and he'd be asking you stuff, taking an interest in your life you know, like, 'What do you want to do?' or, 'How is it at home?' just stuff like that, and it would make you think...when you look back you can tell it made a difference."

vii) Engaged in a variety of recreational activities (4)

Four participants mentioned a total of ten incidents of recreational activities without discussing the significance of them in terms of relationship building. They are listed to illustrate the wide variety of activities mentors undertook with participants. They include going to movies, canoeing, playing video games, going to Playland, watching videos at a mentor's home, going to the park, playing (board) games, playing miniature golf, shopping, playing with remote-controlled cars.
(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

viii) Invited me to study Bible (1)
ix) Played with us (see category vi above) (2)
x) Told stories (1)
xi) Invited me along on business (2)
xii) Was informed about youth culture and trends (1)
xiii) Shared common interest in Star Trek (1)
xiv) Accepted all comers (2)

Domain #2: (ADVOCACY AND SERVICE BEHAVIORS)

i) Held Confidences (Confidentiality) (6)

This research indicates that there are a number of ways to earn the trust of an adolescent and one of them is through holding confidential his/her words, thoughts or feelings. Participants reported six incidents supporting their valuing of confidentiality as something that had impacted their mentoring relationships in a positive way.

With Shane, the issues were personal. "Trust is another important thing in a friendship which is also connected to talking about personal things in your life...(with Alec) you knew it wouldn't get back to the rest of the guys... girls or other problems."

In addition to his mother's alcoholism and his father's death, Dan talks to his mentor about, "a lot of stuff I can't
really mention about." Dan is absolutely convinced his private affairs are safe with Adam. "Whatever you tell him...He said, 'Well, if you tell me something you don't want anybody to know, I'll quit my job before I'll tell anybody'. Our relationship would be nothing without trust."

For Jane it was an expanding process, concerning issues like a first drunk and a pregnancy scare. "I realized I could talk to Brenda more. I've told her this and nobody seems to have found out. Maybe I can tell her other things. I've told her lots of things in confidence...hoping she wouldn't go tell somebody, and she never told anybody unless I gave her permission... I can talk to her about anything... Nobody knows everything about me like she does; not my mom or my boyfriend or anyone."

ii) Made sacrifices on my behalf (6)

This behavior category is defined, according to the researcher's perception, by the fact that the participants not only acknowledged a given behavior by the mentor but also acknowledged that it cost the mentor something to perform it. All participants made references to behavior that might implicitly have been labeled as sacrificial but only four explicitly defined it as that.

Sara's mentor met with a group of her friends weekly for breakfast, just to talk and get to know them. It was sacrificial because, "Brenda wasn't a breakfast person or an
early person so we knew she was doing this more to meet our needs than her own. It helped to build trust... it showed us we were important enough to get up early for." Later Brenda would schedule breakfasts with Sara alone.

Help with studying was something Ronald's mentor was willing to do for him. "He'd give up his suppertime (to help me)."

Cliff's mentor left an impression that has remained with him by a seemingly simple gesture. Cliff had run away from home and Mitch had located him. In the process of convincing Cliff to return home with him, "Mitch gave me his sweatshirt... I was so cold... it was his best one and I still have it".

iii) Spoke On My behalf (5)

Four participants said their relationships had been strengthened by their mentors putting in a word for them when it really mattered. The addressees of this spoken support ranged from colleagues to judges.

Ronald had just been arrested on a minor charge and his mother was trying to register him for a spring break trip with the youth program Tom worked with. "Tom took me out for coffee to get to know me, then he talked to someone and got me on the trip. He put his butt on the line if I was to get in trouble while we were gone. He convinced the other staff to let me go... through all that I got to know him much better."
As an adult, working for the same agency as her mentor, Meryl felt supported when he went to her supervisor (with her permission) and recommended a stress leave for her. "Kevin always challenged me to take care of myself. He was proactive that way...His actions and words over the years showed it."

Dan's mentor played the role of advocate in a legal setting. "Adam went to court with me numerous times." When asked to talk about one of these experiences, Dan remembers, "He knew the clerks... he helped me to understand exactly what I was being charged with and just helped me through it 'cause I was pretty frustrated...he always put in a good word for me."

(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

iv) Developed a signal with me to use when I behaved inappropriately (2)

v) Calmed me when I was upset (1)

vi) Challenged me to care for myself in times of increased stress (1)

vii) Gave me rides when I needed them (2)

viii) Insured I got my turn at being goalie in floor hockey (1)

ix) Prayed for me for divine help with my problems (2)

x) Lent time, resources and expertise to my project (1)
xi) Helped me understand English by interpreting for me at the movies (1)

xii) Tutored me in Math (1)

xiii) Offered me employment at his agency's farm (1)

xiv) Physically restrained me when I was acting out (2)

xv) Convinced me to return home after running away (1)

xvi) Encouraged me to attend Bible college and helped me apply (1)

xvii) Gathered ideas and resources for me to solve family problems (2)

DOMAIN #3: (BEHAVIORS OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

i) Was Honest About Feelings and Showed Them (15)

Honest and congruent communication from adults was valued by most participants in this study. They spoke about their mentors disclosing their thoughts and feelings by speech and transparent body language. Fifteen incidents were referred to that impacted the mentoring relationships in various ways.

Jamie's mentor was honest with her about areas of frustration, including personal disciplines of faith. "He wasn't pretending to be perfect. He struggled just like us. He would tell us, 'Yah, my devotional life sucks.' That made us feel better. We're normal. At times like that it (our relationship) grew."
Expressing difficult emotions was something that stood out for Cliff. His mentor was able to strengthen the connection with him because of a willingness to do this. "Mitch inspired me to write stories, songs, poems. I wrote a book and he cried at the ending... for his birthday I wrote him a song... he cried then too... I love the guy; he's the best thing that ever happened to me."

Shane got honest feedback from his mentor about behavior that was unacceptable. When he was intentionally rough on a younger boy in a floor hockey game, Alec told him how it affected him. "He told me he was disappointed and that I shouldn't have done it... he thought better of me."

It was also the congruence with which Alec communicated these feelings that impacted Shane. "I can remember his face, when he gets serious with disciplining, he gets this face... he still gets it now... I remember I felt really bad about it." Shane connected this transparency and the sensitivity of his own response to the quality of his relationship with Alec. "To me a real friendship is if you do something that hurts them? You feel bad about it and you're willing to go and apologize."

ii) Listened to me (11)

Experiencing the receptive ear of their mentors was mentioned by well over half the participants as a key facilitative component of their relationships. Different
aspects of listening were emphasized, including the content of what was being spoken and the way in which the mentor listened. Several participants identified a patient, concerned style of listening that helped them fully express and explore their feelings and issues.

Diane noted the balancing effect of being listened to by an adult quite different in temperament than herself. "Julie was one of the best listeners I ever met", said Diane. "She sat and was still and was quiet and let me talk... she was focused and calm, sitting there (whereas) I was hyper."

Mark's mentor was very expressive as he listened. "He's looking at me as he listens... a look of concern in his eyes... you can tell he feels for you... he is taking some of the weight off your shoulders... I almost can't explain". And he was patient. "He would wait till I was done... if it took two hours... as long as I needed." Mark's experience, has a strong flavor of being cared for and empathized with.

For Debbie, being listened to was cathartic, facilitated by her mentor's focused attending and probing. She described returning home disillusioned after her first semester at a private religious college. "I was pretty upset, almost injured. Bruce listened patiently throughout my entire conversation till I was finished... had vented the entire thing. He had an amazing ability to hear the whole thing. He always listened with a couple of questions too... His eye
contact was always there, watching the expressions on my face."

Debbie eloquently connected her mentor's listening skills with a deeper meaning in their relationship. "I'd always imagined a father to be like that...someone with whom I would sit down and talk for hours about whatever was on your mind. That had not happened with my dad and me. So Bruce sort of took that place."

iii) Asked important questions (9)

Almost two thirds of the participants in the study indicated that their mentors asked them questions about important areas of their lives and this had a positive impact on their relationship.

For Debbie, the value of Bruce's questions lay in how they were used to help address and care for her. "When my parents were going through a separation...he would often sit and listen and listen to me. He would ask very significant questions, direct me to myself by asking, 'How are you doing?' No one asked about me...always the family."

Steve's exploration of his inner self and feelings was facilitated through strategic questions from the same man but only after a certain ease and familiarity in their relationship had been established (see Steve's comments below in vi). "Bruce would ask questions. He knew the right questions to ask. It (conversation) was the main thing. I
hadn't done this much with others. Usually I kept stuff in
till after I had dealt with it but Bruce's complete attention
allowed me to talk about myself."

Desi also credits conversation as the vehicle for growth in
his relationship with his mentor, Darrin, especially the
latter's questions. "He had the ability to ask the perfect
question. He would notice what was going on for me, perhaps
with another person or something and ask about it."

iv) Used physical actions to communicate (8)

This behavior category includes the different ways in
which the adult used his or her body to communicate something
to the adolescent.

In speaking about things her mentor did that made her feel valued as a person, Diane recalled, "Julie was always putting her arm around me, saying, 'Oh, Di'...I felt she loved me unconditionally. It felt that way."

Tom performed a small but supportive action that Sherry included in her discussion of their relationship. He had asked her to speak to a large group on behalf of the youth program she had participated in. He had already helped her rehearse her comments, reassuring her that they would be in the situation together. "During the speech, at one point I almost went blank. Tom moved up on the stage beside me to where I could see him from the corner of my eye and then I had the rest of my speech done no problem!"
Katrina felt her relationship moved to a deeper level when she went on a service project trip to another country. Her mentor, Bev was one of the leadership team. "I was having a really hard time. A lot of bad things were happening in my life. My parents were ready to divorce and my grandpa had just died. Bev took the time to sit with me and talk about things...we hugged." When asked what difference the hug made, Katrina said, "I felt a lot closer to her than I did before...a lot closer."

When Shane was still a pre-adolescent his mentor, Alec "played with us. When we'd play football, he'd tackle us down and beat us up...roughhouse with us."

Dan's father had just died. He was thirteen and had only recently met Adam, the man who was to become a mentor. "We were talking about my dad and I started crying and he came up and hugged me really loose. I wasn't expecting that but he did it. We talked for three hours after that." Asked what the hug meant to Dan, he stated, "that I had a real good caring friend."

v) Shared insights from personal experience (7)

This category consists of mentors sharing personal life experience with adolescents.

Cliff told of gaining hope from hearing about his mentor's experience. "Mitch told me the story of his life. I heard it more than once. The first time I heard it I told him about my
life...you know what? When he told me about his life, all of a sudden...it meant...it was possible for me to change. You know, I can do it!"

Dan also valued hearing about his mentor's life. We were talking about my dad and I told him he had been an alcoholic and he goes, 'Well, so's my mom.'" He had to grow up with that all his life...so we both understood each other...and it's one of the things we really have in common."

vi) Let me choose my own decisions and actions (6)

This category of behavior could probably be best described as non-directive behavior. Theoretically it could apply to a broad range of experience however most participants recalled contexts of problem situations. The action of refraining from direct command or, in some cases, even suggestion on the part of the adults, appeared to facilitate decision-making and independent thinking by the young people.

Diane valued her relationship with Julie because she helped her process problems and arrive at her own solutions. "She would say, 'It's your decision'. She wouldn't say, 'You need to do this'. She would talk me through so I could see an answer, a way to go... my decision." This approach strengthened their relationship according to Diane because her parents were not able to provide the support she needed. "They (parents) want to jump in and make decisions for you." Speaking about an especially difficult break up with a
boyfriend, she said, "It was too painful for my mom...a heated thing with my family. They weren't objective. Julie was just detached enough."

Steve appreciated his mentor's sensitivity. "Anytime someone would push me to talk about feelings, etcetera in that period of my life, I would have had the correct answers but wouldn't have had the desire to talk to them about anything but surface, shallow things...Our relationship had gone through a natural progression. He didn't try to push anything. Later, as the relationship developed stronger, he was able to ask me how I was doing and I could think about responding and think about the truth and how I was responding rather than come up with the first answer..."

Sherry was quite forthright with her assessments. "Tom always knows when to offer advice and when to shut up. A lot of adults don't. They offer advice when you don't want it. Tom will listen if I tell him I don't want to talk about it. Or if I mention something but don't really want to talk about it, he'll realize it. When I was upset about something (she didn't specify the exact nature of the problem), crying, he'd come over and talk or else just sit with me...I think that proved his friendship because he could sit beside me and not say anything."

"Tom didn't shy away from my problems even if he could see it was big and it bothered me. But he didn't probe

43
further than I wanted him too. Some people keep going until they find everything out but Tom cared more for me than that."

Regarding advice, "He didn't want to tell me what to do. He just offered suggestions. He said you could do it this way or that way."

vii) Told me about personal pain, difficulty (6)

This behavior identifies the adult's self-disclosure to the adolescent about specific problem issues in his or her personal life. Six participants reported in this category and most indicated specific meanings in their lives that they associated with these incidents.

Sara felt strongly that her relationship with Brenda moved onto a new level with her mentor's disclosure of the personal pain going on in her own marriage. "I remember distinctly the day she first opened up. It was on the back steps of the school at lunch time. It wasn't just her personal life but it was the struggle... it was hard... it hurt. It showed me her realness... she was saying, 'I trust you... you're important enough to tell these things... I want to include you in these other parts of my life'. She was being vulnerable. I think that substantially deepened our relationship."

Later, Brenda also self-disclosed her pain to Jane. Jane felt this was an example of their friendship progressing "up and up." "It used to be more for me but then it started getting like a two-way street during her divorce... It made me
feel closer. It wasn't all just me...her listening to all my little problems. I was listening to her as well."

Jamie identified her mentor's openness about difficulties at work as "a big thing" in their relationship. "When Curt shared this with me I sort of felt privileged cause this was heavy." She was unsure of the impact it had on the relationship but noted, "He did thank me for the encouragement."

viii) Accepted my emotions (4)

This category refers to actions the mentor took or didn't take that communicated to the adolescent that their feelings were being accepted and not diminished or denied. (While there was circumstantial evidence of this behavior in most of the relationships, it was only mentioned explicitly in four and these were all by females.)

Debbie recalled Bruce saying, "I want to see the real Debbie, the one who's hurting." She said, "He let me cry...let me express how I felt in genuine terms...I don't know where I'd be without him. All that stuff might be inside still."

Meryl said of her mentor, Kevin, "He never tried to make me stop crying or 'feeling it'." She related the events of breaking up with a boyfriend while on a group trip out of town. "The trip home was so emotional. Kevin let me be that way. He listened and listened and listened."
ix) Confronted in a positive way (4)

This category, included by only three participants, represents positive ways adults communicated their agenda for change.

"Bev offers constructive criticism," said Katrina. "Maybe you could do this instead of that." She never insults you or makes you feel stupid."

"He would confront in a gentle manner," said Debbie of Bruce. "My previous experience was if you did something wrong, you'd hear about it...up one side and down the other!"

(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

ix) Didn't push me to talk about my inner feelings (1)

x) Understood what I was thinking or feeling and communicated it by filling in the blanks in our conversations (1)

xi) Didn't force faith on me and respected my wishes about not talking about God (2)

xii) Left me alone to cool off when I was mad (1)

xiii) Talked without using lots of Bible quotes (1)

xiv) Admitted not knowing and asked for information (1)

xv) Made fun of self to lighten a situation (1)

xvi) Provided a relaxing, inviting place (his car) where I felt comfortable and we talked (1)
i) Lived religious faith openly (6)

This category includes ways in which adult mentors allowed their religious values and beliefs to be observed in day to day living. Six reports were made by four participants.

According to Desi, his own personal spiritual exploration was the main strand in the early stages of his relationship with Darrin. He reported that his experience with his mentor's faith was novel. "For me religion had always been a sore spot...church wasn't too personal. When Darrin prayed, he didn't say something made up years ago. He prayed from his heart and that was really appealing to me. It was very obvious he had a lot of faith in God."

Jamie expressed her deep admiration for Curt, pointing to the practice of his faith as one of the reasons. "I know he has a really deep love for God...You can tell he loves God in the way he worships. He was playing the guitar one time while he was waiting for his wife to get ready (and I overheard him). And how he sings!"

Jamie also connected her perceptions of Curt's faith with his response to animosity. "Another big thing...he's been through a lot of disagreement with an employer and people who didn't like him. There were some rumors. Going through all
that I saw how he reacted. He was angry but he didn't get all hurt. He handled these people in the right way."

ii) Acted consistently and reliably (6)

This category of behavior was comprised of instances where mentors behaved consistently in ways that were judged significant to the interests of the adolescent.

Mark discussed his mentor's consistency several times in the course of his interview. "If I called him up he would meet me (or else) shortly afterward if he couldn't right then. Adam was always there...Time after time I'd call him in an alcohol situation and I didn't want to be there. He was always there and it didn't bother him."

Mark saw the value of this dependability for his own life. "If you asked him to meet you somewhere he would be there at that time. He's teaching me that. It's quite important."

Debbie had similar praise for her mentor. "He walks his talk. He's a man of integrity and he'll never let you down. Bruce never broke a promise. That was important. In comparison with my dad...well the differences are amazing."

It is useful to note that now, as a young adult, Debbie's expectations are tempered by reality and yet, lessons learned earlier in their relationship have lasting value. "Once, last fall, he missed an appointment we had for coffee. It didn't matter. I'd learned that he had been unconditional with me. I could be the same way with him."
iii) Helped others as a way of life (4)

This category of behavior comprises benevolent activities adolescents observed their adult mentors involved in.

Dennis had known and respected Alec for several years but it wasn't till he participated in a service project trip to another country that he felt the relationship really advanced. He spoke with admiration of Alec's life and his faith, both evidenced on the trip as Dennis observed. "This built the relationship...the fact that he is living with God and doing good things."

Desi believed the shared value of helping people contributed to his relationship with his mentor. "He would befriend service people at restaurants and such. I did this too. We had it in common. It strengthened our friendship. I got involved as a volunteer in the club...I just wanted to help people, get to know them. Darrin had these ideals too."

iv) Prioritized time with own family (4)

Ten of the participants in this study had adult mentors who were married and/or had families. Of these, four mentioned the dedication with which their mentors carried out those relationships.

Sometimes Karn's mentor, Curt would tell him, "This is family time."
"That was good," Karn said, "because he put his family above his friends...a lot of times I'd phone and if he needed to he'd say, 'I've got to spend time with my family.' He even set aside special days with them. I look back on it as a positive influence. Sometimes I minded. Like he was a busy guy...but he's got his priorities straight."

A memory that stood out for Debbie was the time Bruce surprised his wife by having the youth choir Debbie toured with sing Happy Birthday to his surprised wife on their front lawn. "It blew my mind to see a man love his wife that way...to see him take all of our time to do this...I'd never seen it. I want that in a relationship with a man some day."

v) Apologized (3)

Three adolescents included reports of their mentors apologizing to them at different times.

Dennis found apologies hard to come by before he met Alec who plays the role, among others, of his volunteer leadership supervisor. "He was over the edge a couple of times - mad - when I did something. A couple of times he's threatened to fire me, but later, before I've left, he'll come over and apologize. There aren't too many people I know that will apologize when they've done something wrong."
vi) Allowed/participated in unconventional behavior (3)

Participants identified enjoyable and entertaining activities and behavior their mentors permitted or initiated. These behaviors could be construed as inappropriate or unconventional for adults and more normal for youth.

"He let us do things that normally you wouldn't be allowed to do," said Shane. We had a water fight in the van traveling down a hot, desert highway. We didn't wreck anything...it wasn't really harmful so he let us do it." Shane, still a teen, added further insight to this incident. "Some people think that if you let them do certain stuff then you can't control them. But it was different. We respected him. He would horse around but know when to quit. I wanted to be like that too."

vii) Demonstrated commitment (3)

Various priorities and values mentors held were identified by participants in the course of the interviews. Three of them mentioned the commitment or dedication with which their mentors practiced those values.

Katrina told of her mentor's practice of putting other people's needs first. "There was a girl, not going to school. Bev talked to her. She would just talk to you...take you for lunch...find out your reasons (for whatever you were doing). She'll go out of her way to do it, to help you. She'll put
something off that she had planned to do...It's who I found her to be."

On a ski weekend with his youth group, Karn's mentor, Curt injured his leg, quite seriously, in Karn's judgment. "But he didn't go to the hospital. He stayed with us the whole weekend. What a crazy thing!"..

viii) Modeled impartiality (3)

Mentors acted toward others in ways that extended equal opportunity and did not show favoritism.

(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

ix) Spends time watching how people act (1)

xi) Forgave me after I had lied to him (1)

Domain #5: (TEACHING, ADVISING AND GUIDING BEHAVIORS)

i) Taught me (12)

Ten young people indicated that part of the positive dynamic in their relationship occurred in conjunction with their mentors teaching something. To be included in this category the participant generally had indicated that they had learned or been taught.
Mark learned a skill from Adam which he apparently valued very much. "He taught me how to hear." Mark was referring to something more than just a sonic phenomenon. "It's important to be able to hear yourself think. These days there's lots of noise pollution...You can hear the voice of God clearer as well." Mark credits trips he took with Adam to a nearby lake for teaching him to listen to these important new languages. "We'd talk about certain things but it seemed you would receive messages easier...It was a gift that knowing Adam gave me."

Cliff learned a more dubious skill. "He taught me how to smoke...he didn't really teach me like, 'you try it', and we never smoked together...but Mitch showed me one time in the car, not with a real cigarette, how to inhale without choking." Interestingly, Cliff also credits his mentor with teaching him about the wisdom of not smoking. It occurred later the same day when someone offered him a cigarette. "Mitch looked at me but didn't say anything...I tried to inhale but got sick and dizzy...so no way I'm trying that again! So there he taught me a lesson." (It might be observed that Mitch allowed Cliff to teach himself a lesson).

ii) Helped my faith grow (10)

Because of the religious context of the agency for which these mentors worked, they are both trained and mandated to help young people explore and grow in Christian faith. Of the
seven participants who discussed spiritual growth as a facilitative aspect of their relationships, there was a wide variety of circumstances under which this occurred.

Katrina's relationship with her mentor began because of a specific agenda on Bev's part. One evening, at a youth meeting, Bev, who was acquainted with one of Katrina's friends, introduced herself to Katrina. Presently, she invited her to study the Bible with her in a systematic way over a period of about six or eight weeks.

Katrina had some religious training but seemed to be searching for another perspective. "Before, at Sunday School, I had to go. Now I had a chance to learn the good side, not just the consequences...Bev led me through eight books (of a Christians discipleship study program)."

For Katrina, the relationship quickly became an important part of her life. "I always looked forward to time with Bev. Nothing else mattered. I could be whoever I wanted to be. I didn't have to watch myself...it felt very comfortable."

"We talked about all kinds of things," Cliff reported of his early contacts with Mitch. "He talked about asking Jesus in my heart." Cliff credits their relationship with being the vehicle by which he made an important step in his faith journey. Cliff said, "I'll never forget that I became a Christian and the date...I started to have Bible studies with him."
At the same time this event played a role in shaping and changing the relationship between Cliff and his mentor. "Instead of my youth leader we were like friends. It (friendship) was there, but I got to know him better then."

iii) Helped me solve problems (8)

Most of the relationships represented in this study were valued for the various resources of assistance which the mentors provided. Six participants reported help finding solutions to specific problems (a total of eight times) as behavior they believed strengthened their relationships.

In helping her sort out her options for post-secondary education, Debbie's mentor, Bruce, "did sort of problem management with me. 'Here's where you are. Here's where you want to go. How will you get there?' We talked about the pro's and con's. Bruce helped me see the broader picture."

Meryl viewed Kevin's help with problems as part of a larger influence in her life that, according to her, "cinched the relationship more. He would listen, affirm that what I was going through was hard and then offer to help me find some solutions."

As an adult Meryl still values the support Kevin offers from time to time. "Once I was feeling lost and struggling. We went out together and he said, 'I'm really worried...tell me what you can do to make yourself strong.' He wrote those
things down and said, 'You can do it; you've done it; now do it; you really need to take charge.'"

iv) Gave advice (6)

One of the most directive of mentors' interventions that participants identified was advice. However, although it generally involved being given clear direction, participants reported incidents where they still had the option of choosing whether or not to follow the advice.

Sherry's friend was involved with a gang. As a result, "I had some secret information that I didn't know how to deal with. I felt bad carrying it around so I told Tom. He gave me honest advice." In a later follow-up conversation, Sherry revealed that the essence of that advice was a referral to another adult in a position of authority who could use the information in a helpful way.

"Adam is full of advice," said Mark, identifying, for him, "another whole thing" in their relationship. "I was thinking of moving to (another city) with friends. He gave me basically the same advice a parent would give but said it in a way you'd believe it. Not like a parent." Mark shed some light on this distinction as well as the direction of Adam's advice when he added, "He said if I decided to go he would pray for me."

Mark also connected the validity and usefulness of the advice with the nature of their relationship. "He's one
person I could trust. He's gained my trust. A lot of people wouldn't get my trust."

v) Answered my questions (6)

For almost a third of the participants in this study, questions were/are an important vehicle for learning about themselves and the world they live in. Mentors' ability and willingness to provide information adolescents want is focused on in this category.

An important issue for Jane was the accessibility of her mentor and her willingness to provide information on any topic. "I can talk to Brenda about anything. Sometimes, like at camp, we'd go in the canoe and I'd ask her questions about sex and stuff. She'd answer as best she could or she'd say she would find out."

Mark placed a lot of importance on both the process and the content of the information transmission from his mentor. "Adam has always sounded educated, clear minded. It wasn't like talking to just your buddy...I always felt better after I talked to him, that I knew more...I wasn't used to having adults take the time to help me like that...Sometimes he'd read a verse (from the Bible)...I'm not sure what he always would have said, but it definitely worked...it was the answers that were what I needed to hear."
vi) Helped identify another perspective (6)

Six participants identified the assistance they got from their mentors that changed the way they looked at their problems as new, different or other perspectives.

As an early adolescent, Dennis struggled with depression and he was socially withdrawn. His mother wanted him to interact with others and had sought out the youth program run by the man who was to become his mentor. In that relationship Dennis was to find, among other things, new perspectives on his interior world. He observed, "There is a lighter side to depression and suicide that Alec represents. It's another way to go...instead of being a bad kid. Alec gave me information about it."

Jane said Brenda's approach to Jane's anxiety about a possible pregnancy included bringing another perspective to the situation. "She gave me information...said, 'No, that's just the way the body responds'...she calmed me down."

(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

vii) Asked for our thoughts and opinions in Bible study discussions (1)

viii) (-) Did not normalize the depression I experienced as a teenager
i) Gave me responsibility (18)

This heavily supported category identifies the provision of opportunities to take responsibility and occurred in a variety of settings. The styles of approach differed from one mentor to another. However, the results were similar. When teens were given assignments or projects they responded positively and connected these experiences with a deepening of trust and relationship with their mentors.

Sara sounded very proud of herself as she related the following achievement. "Last summer I had the opportunity to be a youth coordinator at Brenda's staff conference. That was neat...like, 'Hey, you're ready for this', and that was a big responsibility...five days...and I'm kind of in charge, right? So that was a kind of a trust thing, and a deepening...'I need your help'...that was really validating."

"Tom trusts me with lots of things," said Sherry, "like looking after his kids...he'd leave them with me and he didn't have a problem. Other times I'd pick up money for ski trips at the school. These things build the trust." They also built self-esteem. "A few times he's put me in charge of projects or events (at the drop-in center). He'll say, 'We're going to do such and such. I want you to figure out this or do that for it.' He doesn't say, 'if you can handle it';
just, 'do it'...automatically assuming I can. I think Tom's friendship and attitude has built my self-esteem."

ii) Treated me like an equal (15)

Another very common theme in this study is comprised of a number of seemingly unassuming behaviors that communicated equality to adolescents in the study. Participants referred to behaviors that made them feel less like kids and more like adults. A theme supported by several incidents was the turnabout wherein the adult asked for help or was in some way dependent on the adolescent. In one case the participant said she felt more equal because of her mentor's respectful response to one of her mistakes.

Meryl said she felt the relationship between her and Kevin deepen one night after she'd baby-sat his and a friend's children. "When they came home they brought pizza with them and we sat around and ate it. I felt included as a friend in their home. I wasn't just a kid in the school but a friend that he'd asked to help him."

A cigar was one of the things included in Shane's experience of equality. He was on an overnight camping trip with his mentor and some other youth, "Til then our relationship was adult to kid...but one night we sat out under a tree, freezing our butts off and looking at the sky. That night we both smoked a Colt. It was also the first time I'd talked to Alec about personal things since I'd become an
older teenager. (Now) I was a different person... with a
different way of thinking... and I felt more of a friend, more
like a pal, even like a brother. And we just sat there and
talked about whatever came to mind."

iii) Singled me out (10)

Being noticed and having attention focused on them personally was a positive experience for these participants.

"When I was in Grade 9 there was this Candygram thing at school and I got one from Tom. I've still got it. The message said, 'Thanks for coming out to club (meeting). Really loved having you there. Hope you come again.' Someone remembered me. It said he cared about me... not just some leader just doing what he had to do. That stuck in my mind. I'd only known him for a month."

Sara emphasized the word 'me' when she said, "Sometimes she would schedule breakfasts with just me... or coffee. In those times... we could talk about deeper things, hurts at deeper levels."

iv) Reassured me that they would always be there and I could always count on them (9)

The common thread woven through these incidents is that of permanence, a message from or action by the adult that communicated unconditional support and availability.
Diane's interview held the fewest themes of all the participants but she was very clear on the significance of what she experienced. "What really stood out was when I was going through a relationship break-up with a guy I'd seen for quite a while. The one thing that stays with me today is that Julie said to me, 'It doesn't matter how many times you come and tell me this one thing, or how long you struggle with this, I'll always listen to you'. That was comforting. She accepted me."

When Dan contacted Adam with an urgent need to meet, he knew his mentor would be there. "One night it was two in the morning. A friend and me were walking home and got chased by some people. We called Adam and he picked us up...didn't even say anything, just, 'Yah, right away. I'll be right there.' And he's said that to me before. If I ever need a place to stay, to talk, whatever...he'll be there for me. In actual fact he's been there more than my parents cause, well, I don't talk to them about certain things but I'll talk to Adam about it...and he's always been there..."

Meryl shared similar feelings. "Through the years, he's been there in different crises I've gone through. Each time, that's cemented it (the relationship)." When her father died, Kevin immediately drew near in a role of comfort and support for Meryl and her mother and brother. Meryl remembered the day of her father's death. "He was there within forty-five minutes of my call...He set everything up at the funeral..."
home." In addition, he performed the service itself. "He was just there."

v) Accepted me unconditionally/didn't judge me (9)

In this category, most participants reported experiencing positive regard instead of condemnation or judgment as a result of actions or messages (or a lack of either) by their mentors. It is useful to note that the adolescents' behavior (about which most of them spoke regretfully) did, however, receive clear value judgments from most of the mentors.

A typical incident was the conversation Jane had with Brenda after her first drunk. She remembers, "I think she said something like this many times, 'I won't love you less. You can do what you'll do and it won't change the way I feel about you but you know what you should or shouldn't do'." Jane felt being spoken to like this was effective. "A parent would have yelled and screamed. She said, 'Well, you know better' and she let me know she was there...It makes you think twice, like maybe I shouldn't do it."

In discussing confidentiality, Katrina recalled telling Bev something she felt guilty about. "I told her that (originally) I'd only become a Christian to get to heaven and I could still live however I wanted. I'd (since) learned faith was more." (In light of the fact that the early stages of their relationship had been mainly focused on Bible teaching and discipleship, this disclosure might reasonably
have been made with some apprehension.) "Bev was surprised. I could see it in her face. But she went on to remind me that God forgives the past. And you can go on."

Katrina felt the relationship was positively affected. "Bev wasn't judgmental. It was comfortable, knowing it didn't matter to her."

vi) Recognized my work/contributions (8)

Incidents in this category underlined the importance, at least to these participants, of being noticed, of having their efforts acknowledged.

Ronald had done a variety of jobs in several different settings with Tom as supervisor. "If he sees you working hard, he'll give you a bonus. Or he'll tell me, 'Ron, you're working hard. I'll buy you breakfast.'"

Sherry (whose mentor is also Tom) observed him recognize her efforts in another way. "At a drop-in staff meeting he said, 'We've had some new ideas for the concession from Sherry. I'd like her to present them.'" This incident was included by Sherry in a group of anecdotes that all seemed to be self-esteem builders. "He gives me a sense of importance."

vii) Stretched my confidence (7)

In a variety of different styles and settings, adult mentors encouraged adolescents to try things they were not sure they could do.
At the beginning of Debbie's involvement with the youth choir she was nervous. The audition had her rattled. "Bruce set the pace for me by saying, 'I know you can do it. I've heard you sing. So just keep going'.'"

Shane was only ten years old when he first began to tag along with Alec's youth program. "After a hike one day we stopped at the (Local) River. We all jumped in and tried to swim to shore. The current started to carry me off. Alec pulled me in to shore." That rescue may have provided some of the confidence Shane needed to try cliff-jumping later. "It takes a lot of guts, but hey, Alec did it. Let's do it!... I've got this courage I owe to him... he taught us courage in our own self-worth."

viii) Took me to his/her home and family (7)

This category includes apparent acts of hospitality as well as inclusion into the mentors' family and home life.

Sherry had been at Tom's home, "on and off, at different times." But two occasions stood out in her mind. "I brought him and his family Christmas presents and he made a point of driving me to his house so I could give them to the family. He went out of the way to do it. That was important to me." On the other occasion, "I brought presents for the baby...I had bought a shirt and he put it on her and took a picture of me holding the baby."
Steve recalled that since his teen years, he had been impacted by his mentor's family relationships. "Seeing Bruce and his wife, their relationship...his love and respect for her and their kids. Their marriage was open to people." Steve elaborated. "They would talk to us. They were expecting their first kid, calling it (funny cartoon name) and we joked about it. They allowed us into their pregnancy...(Now) he still invites my wife and I to their home."

ix) Complimented me (6)

Four participants reported a total of six incidents where their mentor praised or complimented them.

Dennis felt buoyed up by his mentor's praise. One regular venue for this was the sports rec program where Dennis played floor hockey every Tuesday. "Alec would encourage me, say 'good job' if I made a play...he would mention the compliment several times. I like doing this myself to others...put people up."

x) Introduced me to others (4)

Desi's mentor was very outgoing socially and Desi felt that drew the two of them closer. "(Sometimes when we were together) Darrin would ask me if I was open to a visit with some of his friends and I would accompany him on these visits...I was getting to know the friends that he had."
way in which that happened apparently made a difference to how Desi saw the relationship. "He would introduce me to others as his friend, not just as a kid."

xi) Got to know my parents (4)

Mentors' involvement with participants' families was only reported by one-fourth of those who took part in this research. However, for at least three of those, it was spoken of as a powerful component in the growth of the mentoring relationship.

"He took the time to get to know my parents," said Meryl. "After club (meetings) in our home he always talked to them. He would come in and talk to them when he picked me up and he would take time on the phone to talk to them. Sometimes when I wasn't even home he would pop in just to visit with them."

It would appear that the strength of those ties afforded Kevin the equally profound opportunity of supporting the family in significant ways when Meryl's father died some years later (see category iii above).

Sherry wasn't sure at first that she wanted Tom to meet her parents but, according to her, "He made a point of coming in to meet them. But the way he approached her (Sherry's mother)...it didn't feel intruding." In reflecting on the incident, Sherry said, "It showed he really wanted to be my friend."
xii) Trusted me (3)

Although more than half of the participants alluded to the relationship between responsibilities their mentor had provided and the growth of trust in the relationship (see category ii above), three individuals drew attention to the special role of trust they inferred on the part of their mentors.

For Cliff, it was one of the main distinctions between this relationship and all others. "He trusted me. When I told him something he had nothing to object, even when I lied to him, which I did, many times. That trust made me realize, 'Omigosh!' and I told him the truth and he forgave me..."

Ronald inferred his mentor's trust through the following arrangements. "He trusts me going into his house...I have keys (for office and/or vehicles?). I drive his vehicle all the time...Tom trusts me with his life, too. I'll drive for him when he has to make a lot of phone calls on the way to town."

xiii) Treated us like persons (3)

"We were pretty bad kids," said Shane, reflecting on his early adolescence. "But instead of freaking out and yelling at us, Alec set his boundaries. One time he took a van load of us down across the border. On the way back we were being very rude and obnoxious at the other people on the road. It was pretty bad. There wasn't much he could do except tell us
to stop. I know a lot of people who would have just flipped out. Instead of freaking out on us every time we swore, he said, 'Okay, it'll cost you a buck'. Alec had patience...he treated us like persons."

(The following categories contained one or two incidents only):

xiv) Teased me (2)

xv) Often said, 'I delight in your spunk' (1)

xvi) Believed in the best when I made a sexist joke and told me, 'I know you didn't mean it' (1)

xvii) Asked others to wait so he could talk to me (1)

xviii) Bought me nice presents (1)

In the next chapter, both trends as well as exceptions are discussed in an attempt to draw insight from the data regarding the facilitation and growth of the relationships that these research participants spoke about. As well, some connections will be made with this data and themes from the relevant literature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #1</th>
<th>(Connecting)</th>
<th>****************************(61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain #2</td>
<td>(Service)</td>
<td>*************************(38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain #3</td>
<td>(Communication)</td>
<td>**************************************(79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain #4</td>
<td>(Modeling)</td>
<td>******************(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain #5</td>
<td>(Teaching)</td>
<td>**************************(51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain #6</td>
<td>(Self-esteem)</td>
<td>**************************************(110)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Incidents: 373
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #1</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INCIDENTS PER BEHAVIOR (5 or more)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kept in touch</td>
<td>******************************************(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughed/Made us laughed</td>
<td>************(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee/Lunches</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came to my environment</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acted crazy</td>
<td>*********(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting activities</td>
<td>*********(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kept my confidences</td>
<td>**********(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made sacrifices for me</td>
<td>**********(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke for me</td>
<td>**********(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honest and genuine</td>
<td>******************************************(2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listened to me</td>
<td>******************************************(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked important questions</td>
<td>************(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical expression</td>
<td>************(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared pers. experience</td>
<td>************(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-directive</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosed pain</td>
<td>************(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lived his/her faith</td>
<td>**********(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acted dependably</td>
<td>**********(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taught me</td>
<td>******************************************(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped my faith</td>
<td>******************************************(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solved with me</td>
<td>************(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave me advice</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered my questions</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed diff. perspective</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain #6</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gave me responsibility</td>
<td>******************************************(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated me as equal</td>
<td>******************************************(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single me out</td>
<td>************(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always there</td>
<td>************(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted me uncondit.</td>
<td>************(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged my efforts</td>
<td>************(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included me in family</td>
<td>************(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretched my confidence</td>
<td>************(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimented me</td>
<td>************(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter will discuss themes suggested by the results of the study as well as implications for theory, recommendations for practice and suggestions for future research. It begins by looking at limitations.

Limitations of the Study

Both the significance and the generalizability of this research are limited by a number of factors. First, because of the age difference among the participants, there is a range of time span between the present and when the majority of the incidents occurred in the lives of the different participants. As a result, younger participants may have included events and recollections that have not yet been distilled by time whereas older participants may likely have recalled only the most significant events or incidents in their relationships.

Second, there was a range of articulation as well as reflection among the different participants. This necessarily meant that some reports were both more descriptive and more illuminated with meanings than others.

Thirdly, the demographics of the group of research participants precludes extensive generalizing to the
population at large. While quite varied in terms of age, family background and individual factors, there was no balanced distribution of these factors (except for gender of participants) nor were they recorded or used in analysis of the data. As well, female mentors represented in the study comprised only one fourth of the sample.

Fourth, there may have been some researcher bias on the part of the interviewer during the data collection. This could have occurred if his responses to certain disclosures, either through body language or verbally, encouraged participants to report some incidents and not others or to discuss certain aspects of experience and not others. However, as previously mentioned, an initial check took place in an attempt to minimize bias of this nature.

Due to these factors, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings of this study. However, it should be remembered that the aim of the study was to investigate the scope of the facilitating behaviors participants had observed by their mentors and this was felt to be accomplished.
Peripheral Themes

Participants Eager to Speak Well of Mentors

Although potential research participants were qualified before the interview as to having been involved in a significant relationship, it became very clear as the interview was conducted that these adults were held in high regard as a result of their involvement in the participants' lives. All of the participants appeared eager to discuss their relationships with their mentors.

Mentors Still in Touch

In most case there was still a good deal of contact occurring between the participants and their mentors. Given that, it is perhaps not surprising that only six individuals were able to provide reports of incidents that they perceived to hinder the relationships. Out of these, only one had ceased having regular contact with his mentor as an apparent result of those incidents. (This data should be considered with some caution, however, since the method of participant recruitment depended on mentors supplying names of potential participants and it is probable that most would have chosen individuals with whom they still had a strong relationship). None of the other hindering incidents appeared to have had as significant a long-term effect on the other relationships.
Mentors Credited With Significant Growth

Another somewhat parallel impression was that mentors were credited with profound contributions in the lives of those being interviewed. Although many of the details of the situations and circumstances of these young peoples' lives are inferred, it would appear that most of them had achieved considerable growth (in such areas as self-confidence/self-esteem, social skills/relationships and, for the older ones, career) because of their mentoring relationships.

Actions More Influential Than Speech

A quick scan of the behavior categories reveals that there is at least a moderate bias toward actions instead of speech. To be sure, communication plays a large part in many of the behaviors, in some cases an exclusive role, such as in the categories represented by 'Apologized', 'Gave advice' or 'Talked about personal pain, difficulty'. However, on balance, the events and incidents that participants reported facilitated and strengthened their relationships were more often things mentors did, represented by such categories as Took me to his/her home and family, Came to my environment or Gave me responsibility.
Domains as Themes

Self-esteem

Domain #6 (BEHAVIORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCED SELF-ESTEEM) was the largest, approximately tripling the smallest domain in number of incidents reported and outstripping the second largest domain (#3) by more than thirty incidents. This study appears to say that the mentoring relationship is most often facilitated when behaviors that enhance the young person's self-esteem are being engaged in by the mentor. Adding support to this is the observation that more than half of the fourteen negative or hindering incidents reported belong in this domain as well. (These incidents are included in whichever categories they fit and therefore are not identified in a separate place.)

Self-esteem is a particularly acute need for most adolescents, especially those who have had difficult family environments for one reason or another. It is something that can not develop in a vacuum. It is in relationship with others that teens not only have many basic needs met, but actually experience their identity (Kegan, 1982). The role of a mentor can be extremely instrumental in a variety of important facets of the experience of self, several of them being reflected in behavior categories in Domain #6.
One of these functions is mirroring (Kohut, 1971), the process whereby an individual feels recognized or affirmed by someone else. Research participants in the present study confirmed the value of mentors acknowledging their efforts and accomplishments in the Acknowledged my efforts category. Self psychology points out that this experience helps the individual develop self identity and a believe in him or herself.

Another of Kohut's self functions is idealizing in which the child recognizes that although he feels insignificant, there is someone outside of himself who is larger that he or she can look up to, identify with and depend on. These functions are exaggerated in importance when the child is denied or in some way deprived of this kind of relationship. A mentor then may take a larger than life role and find him or herself the idealized hero the young person is still needing to continue a normal growth chronology.

Self-efficacy or the belief that one can accomplish or have an impact on the world around them is also an important component in the growth of mature human beings. The heavily supported category of Gave me responsibility was prominent in the self-esteem enhancing behaviors of the mentors in this study. (Among the seven participants who did not report any incidents in this category, at least half grew up in families the interviewer understood to have provided responsibilities
and, therefore, the potential for development of self-efficacy.)

It is surmised by the researcher, that, for a number of the participants, responsibilities as volunteers in the programs in which they first met their mentors provided ways to thank them (mentors) for their involvement in their lives. No doubt, these are also ways to remain in close association with a valued mentor. As well, they provide excellent settings in which to learn and practice, through hands on situations, many of the behaviors that mentors have exhibited towards them.

The next most heavily supported category was Treated me as an equal with eleven participants reporting fifteen separate incidents involving this behavior. While relationships with parents are still vitally important to adolescent development, the participants in this study also valued relationships of a more symmetrical nature. Giving as well as taking and feeling as though they were on more of a similar footing with their mentors, perhaps best represented with the term, friend, was reported to be a positive growth factor in their relationships. This was summed up in the experience of Diane, who, as a volunteer in the program run by her mentor said, "I felt like more of a friend and less of a kid." Friendship is both a privilege and a mandate for the adults who would be mentors to youth in a youth work setting.
The experience of being focused on, illuminated in the category, *Singled me out*, should serve to remind us of the need some adolescents have to be noticed. Similar to their needs for the acknowledgment of their accomplishments, the behaviors of this category, seemed to convey a special prizing of the individual in the same sense that Rogers' (1961) non-possessive warmth reassures the client of their worth in the eyes of another.

Closely linked to this category is the one, *Accepted me unconditionally* because of this latter's inclusion of incidents where the adolescents felt loved or accepted apart from their actions or behavior. These actions appear to reflect Rogers' (1961) unconditional positive regard. The supplementary theme to this category was that of not being judged or condemned for negative behavior. Granted, the youth workers represented in this study are in less of a structured position of authority or responsibility for youths' behaviors than either parents or other adults such as teachers. Therefore it would appear easier for them to adopt a more accepting role. Nonetheless, that behavior is what adolescents valued according to this study.

**Communication**

Domain #3 (BEHAVIORS OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS) was the second largest domain in this study. The
behavior categories gleaned from the reported incidents in this domain read something like the table of contents in a basic helping skills training program. They are basic building blocks in the general counselling theories (Carkhuff, 1983; Egan, 1975; Rogers, 1961) that have shaped the profession in the last thirty years.

Most valued here in facilitating relationship was the practice of openness and honesty (Was honest about feelings and showed them) by the adult. Rogers' (1961) genuineness fits readily for this behavior. Interestingly, adolescents valued hearing that their behavior was out of line (likely because this occurred in the context of caring relationships and using non-judgmental communication) however this category also included a wide variety of emotions and responses. Among them were fear, disappointment, appreciation, anxiety and anger. In a number of cases where the participants attached meaning to these incidents they said either that they felt the adults were real people like them or that they felt closer to them and knew them better as friends.

Listening has been well established as an invaluable communication skill in the field of people helping (see general counselling theorists cited above) and the research participants in this study felt that way as well. This category (Listened to me) includes the evidence, quite well articulated, that points to the need of young people to be
heard. The voice of youth in general seems to be lost somewhere between the headline news of teenage violence and the popular perceptions of most of them as a group of withdrawn, unmotivated individuals with no real useful contributions to make in society. Eleven of these seventeen young people interviewed reported experience that said, in effect, that in their significant relationship, they had found another individual who valued them enough to listen to them and listen carefully. In being listened to, their feelings and experience were validated, they felt cared for and they learned more about themselves. Implicit also, is the inevitable learning, of this (and other) communication skill(s) that will be vital in their other relationships.

Of particular interest to those who are concerned with severely depressed or emotionally troubled youth (but not solely) may be the category, Told me about their pain/struggles. The behaviors in this category remind us of the value of self-disclosure, another of the key components in the general counselling theories already mentioned. Slightly over a third of the participants mentioned incidents fitting into this category, however several of them were unusually insightful into the usefulness of this behavior in their own lives and in the growth of the relationships with their mentors. It appears that one of the powerful results was an identification with the adult in her pain, which was something
Sara was well acquainted with due to her own experience at that point in time. Conversely, this identification also connected her to the hope that was represented by the rest of Brenda's life that was positive and growing. She concluded, "Maybe there is hope for me, too."

Another meaning was connected to this same mentor's self-disclosure by a different young woman she was involved with sometime later. Jane felt affirmed as someone who was important enough for Brenda to share these painful and difficult feelings and memories with. In this way, her value in another's eyes and, consequently, her self-esteem were strengthened.

There are no real surprises for this researcher in the other highly reported categories in this domain. Non-directive behavior (as observed in the category, Let me choose my own decisions and actions) is a widely practiced approach that allows people to find their own way. Since adolescents are in a process of individuation developmentally, helping them be responsible for their own actions and decisions is both appealing as well as necessary. Shared insights from personal experience was another form of self-disclosure that has value based on the access this provides adolescents to an older, more mature individual's resources of wisdom, knowledge and experience. Incidents described in the category, Accepted my emotions strengthened mentoring relationships possibly by
validating important parts of self that had been split off or denied.

**Connecting**

The third largest domain, #1 (INITIATING, CONTACTING AND MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS), might, in a sense, be described as alliance building, the vehicle through which many of the other significant behaviors in this study were made possible. The behaviors used in initiating and maintaining these relationships have earned, for the mentors, the right to play significant roles in the lives of adolescents. Friendship is, among other things, a privilege granted by the youth to selected adults in their world whom they have decided can be trusted, believed and accepted into their personal environments. Over eighty per cent of the participants in this study arrived at those conclusions while in contact provided by Domain #1 behaviors. In other words, they were well acquainted with these adults before their relationships took on the more intimate qualities of mentoring ones.

When it comes to adults, youth are not impulse buyers. They pick carefully. Through the various activities and events of youth programs and personal contacts the mentors in this study (and in most structured youth programs such as those operated by (participating agency) and other youth
organizations) provide a forum for youth to watch them operate and get to know them.

Perhaps the behavior category that epitomizes this domain is *Came to my environment.* Just over a third of the participants in this study believed that their mentors' visiting their world (in most cases the high school) laid the groundwork for the relationships they had experienced. This practice is among those that distinguish the (participating agency) organization as one that utilizes a reaching out approach with their teenage clientele. Indeed, the mandate stipulates this active presentation by staff to adolescents in their environments.

A notable category in this domain is also the most commonly reported one, *Kept in touch.* Ten participants recognized the initiative their mentors took to keep up the connection between them and valued it by reporting eleven separate incidents of this behavior. A sense of the long term commitment involved in these relationships is evident by several reports of mentors who still keep in contact, after the adolescent has reached a stage of independence and young adulthood. In fact, some of the more recent incidents reported by Meryl, who is now in her early thirties, apparently bore as much significance as those from her teenage years.
Worthy of brief mention are two related categories, Laughed/laughed together/made me laugh and Behaved unconventionally. Youth in our society is characterized, among other things, as a fun loving stage of life. Mentors who were fun to be around, who laughed a lot and who acted "crazy" generated reports from their adolescent counterparts that indicated they recognized the contributing role of this behavior in the growth of their relationships.

Interestingly, the laughter behavior, with one exception, is composed of generic reports (laughed a lot, made me laugh, was always laughing, etc.) suggesting it was more a characteristic style or trait than behaviors defined by specific incidents. On the other hand, the unconventional behavior generally includes specific references to "crazy" behavior on certain occasions that implies this behavior was less frequent as well as less intrinsic to the adult's personality. While not given deeper meanings by participants, it is likely that both categories have a positive influence on adolescents in much the same way as spontaneity and creativity are agents of change in a number of prominent counselling approaches, notably psychodrama (Moreno, 1964) and Experiential Systemic therapy (Friesen & Gormanson-Coleman, 1987).
Guidance

As a group of behaviors, Domain #5, (TEACHING, ADVISING AND GUIDING BEHAVIORS) forms the next significant theme in this study. The mere presence of this group of behaviors in a study of what adolescents value is both surprising and reassuring. Because adolescence is a time of individuation and movement toward independence, resources such as those reported under this domain are significant components in building and strengthening the mentoring relationship.

It seems reassuring because these adolescents, representative of different stages of development both requested and valued the learning processes they received in relationship with their mentors. It may be considered surprising because a general impression by many adults, in this researcher's experience, is that young people don't want guidance, assistance or instruction.

A number of the categories in this domain (Gave me advice; Answered my questions) might be considered to challenge current counselling models and theories, even those validated in other parts of this study. There appears to have been a need for many of the participants for very directive input at different times in their relationships. These times included a variety of situations, ranging from discussions of vocational future to handling personal crises. These adolescents' experience would appear to contraindicate (at
least at certain times) the non-directive, less structured role of helper advocated by client centered counselling (Rogers, 1961).

However, a note of caution is necessary. The incidents where this kind of directive guidance was observed took place once rapport was well established. The findings of this study would generally not support the use of these behaviors during the initial stages of relationship building.

Serving

As another theme of this study, **ADVOCACY AND SERVICE BEHAVIORS** (Domain #2) could be looked at as expressions of appreciation by the participants for their mentors. The incidents reported in this domain are equivalent, in a sense, to saying, "Thanks. I really value what you did for me." Working as a volunteer with their mentors may be a practical demonstration of this gratitude. (See comments re: volunteer responsibilities above in section of Domain #6 themes).

Confidentiality can lead to tricky ethical dilemmas with which most veteran youth workers have had some experience. However, that does not appear to have prevented mentors in this study from clearly and firmly extending these indications of loyalty to adolescents (Held confidences). As a result, trust was deepened in the relationships.
Made sacrifices on my behalf and Spoke on my behalf are both noteworthy categories in that they represent behavior that was, in this researcher's opinion, interpreted as evidence of mentors' care for their adolescent friends. In the eyes of the participants these (as well as other behaviors in the study) went beyond the regular requirements of duty. One participant said, "It's more than just a job for him." Behavior like this implies a commitment that everyone is not willing to make. These mentors were.

**Modeling**

Domain #4, **(BEHAVIORS THAT MODELED VALUES, ATTITUDES AND LIFE SKILLS)** comprised less than ten per cent of the total incidents in this study. However, several issues need to be recognized concerning the value of behaviors in this domain. One is that they represent, albeit consciously for only a small number of participants, an integral step in the loop of learning...watching someone else. Also relevant is the sense, taken from a number of participants that behaviors of mentors included in this domain (as well as others) represent a kind of adult that they were not previously familiar with. They communicated a feeling of discovering novelty in the persons and behavior of their mentors.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) maintains that modeling is one of the ways individuals learn culturally.
appropriate behavior. Since, as previously mentioned, positive parental contact decreases due to adolescent individuation as well as through conflictual or broken family dynamics, mentors are a potential source for continued learning through modeling. Some consolation can be taken that, although not recognized by a majority of the participants in this study, this process was/is at work through these and other mentoring relationships.

Another consideration involves other mentoring behaviors revealed in this study. In conjunction with behaviors from other domains such as Took me to his/her home and family, it is concluded that modeling has also taken place in other environments than those listed in the categories of Domain #4. In effect, wherever the adolescent has been situated together with his or her mentor this kind of learning has potentially occurred. This would imply lessons in such values, as previously mentioned, as honesty, openness, and impartiality, among others.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of the present study validate a number of the significant themes established so far in the field of mentoring relationships as well as in the related research of significant others.
Nature and Type of Mentoring

First of all, Geiger's (1989) definition of mentor seems born out, "...an adult who has time, believes in and cares about a child" (p.18). "Took the time," was a phrase that came up repeatedly by participants, although not in connection with similar incidents so it is not reflected in a specific category. "Believed in," while it must be inferred, certainly fits the requirement as the motivating force behind many of these mentors' actions towards adolescents. It is because of a shared doctrinal value in the worth of individuals that (participating agency) staff persevere in the often challenging work of building and maintaining relationships. "Cares about," lends interpretation to just about every one of the categories in this study and especially those in Domain #2.

As was expected at the outset, the natural mentoring process referred to by Flaxman, Ascher and Harrington (1989) was found to be characteristic of the relationships studied; the informal involvement of a significant other in the various areas of the adolescent's life as opposed to more formal mentoring related to specific outcomes such as career exploration or academic performance (both of which were influenced in isolated incidents by participants in this study).
Similarly, the mentor roles of model, counsellor and supporter, prescribed by Alleman et al's (1984) psychosocial mentoring showed up quite clearly and persuasively, each to a domain (see domains # 4, 3, 2 respectively). In addition, with respect to the results listed and discussed, relationships studied were clearly validated as mentoring ones on the basis of Mahoney's (1991) long term involvement, Hamilton and Darling's (1989) depth of commitment and the observable behaviors criterion of Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike and Newman, (1984).

Adolescents' Need for Relationship and Support

Although systematic demographic and family background data were not procured in this study, enough was learned about the family circumstances of the participants to conclude that at least a third had experienced a conflictual and/or unsupportive family environment at one period in their lives. Slater, Stewart and Linn, (1983) suggest those conditions lead to weaknesses in self-esteem and, while the participants of the current study don't refer explicitly to a lack of self-esteem, their reports of mentors' behaviors that apparently enhanced self-esteem tend to speak for themselves. They comprised the largest domain in the study. The implication appears to be that informal mentors may have significant contributions to make in the self-esteem of youth; especially
those with problematic family backgrounds where normal and necessary self development has not occurred.

As youth go through the transition to adulthood, parents are naturally joined by peers and other adults as influential supports that youth turn to in areas such as sexual choices and career decisions. Again, while mentioned explicitly only occasionally by participants, these topics are still likely to be addressed in mentoring relationships, in this case through modeling (Galbo, 1986). Although not as visible perhaps to youth, the current study identifies modeling (see Domain #4) as one of the key areas in which adult mentors have been active in the transmission of culturally acceptable values and behaviors.

**Adult Organized Programs**

The literature has referred to the value of youth being involved in structured programming (Hendry, 1989; Cotterell, 1992) for the main reason that it increases the contact with adults. This contact, studied at close-up range in the present research has been found to be valued by the participants for its symmetrical quality (see the category of Treated me as an equal in Domain #6). These results appear to validate Galbo's (1983; 1986) findings that youth leaders and youth pastors enjoy significant rapport and involvement with
adolescents in these years. The present research has illustrated the ways.

Implications For Practice

Three potential groups of people helpers stand to benefit from the current study. They are youth workers, other mentors (including parents, teachers and any adults desirous of relationships with adolescents) and counsellors dealing with adolescents and/or families.

Training

It should be pointed out that the results of this study, for the most part, validate and extend modern practices of skill-training programs in the areas of communication and basic helping skills (see Domain #3). The current research focuses those skills especially on use with adolescents.

While parents are not synonymous with mentors, there are significant needs met in the mentoring that takes place in the relationship between parent and child (Cotterell, 1992; Galbo, 1983). Parenting programs could be informed by a wide range of the results from this study in light of the fact that many of the study's participants either mentioned or implied shortcomings in their relationships with parents (See...
incidents in the categories, Listened to me and Gave me advice).

Results from the study could also be used to develop a training program for mentors, either in the context of youth professionals or community based education for adults interested in mentoring. The value to this emphasis lies in the concrete, behavior oriented nature of the results. Curriculum might be organized around the six domains.

**Counselling**

For counsellors working with adolescents and families, at least two issues stand out. The first is with respect to therapy itself. Family work involving parent-teen relationships may be informed by a wide range of dynamics suggested in the study such as listening, problem solving and giving responsibility, to name a few.

When working with adolescents, counsellors could be encouraged to explore less formal, more relational alliance building behaviors, as suggested by this study. These might include meetings away from the office, time spent in contacting parents and using more self-disclosure, again to name a few. In addition, there may be some merit in incorporating the use of less traditionally accepted guidance techniques such as advice giving and answering of questions,
which counsellors are generally wary of doing. After all, the "experts" have recommended it.

The other issue involves support for adolescents a counsellor may be working with. Judging by the value participants placed on their relationships with mentors as sources of guidance, self-esteem and learning, it would appear useful, when working with similar needs, to explore the possibility of referral to a program where contact with potential mentors might take place. In some cases this can and has been facilitated directly such as a referral to an agency like Big Brothers. However, as previously established, (and supported by this study) natural mentoring relationships are as much a result of indirect contact with adults through youth programs as they are of direct referrals. This should be kept in mind, perhaps leading counsellors to build a file of credible, local youth organizations, including church youth groups, that use relational approaches.

**Implications/Suggestions for Future Research**

There are a variety of interesting and useful possibilities for the replication or extension of this study in future research. Pre- and post- measures (with adolescents) might be used, in conjunction with a mentor training program to quantitatively study the effectiveness of
these behaviors either with a group of parents or mentors such as Big Brothers' volunteers.

A similar study with a larger sample that was more clearly broken down demographically could focus on the differences in valued behaviors with respect to different factors such as gender difference, single caregiver family, developmental differences, school attendance, etc. This information could be of benefit to tailoring mentor behaviors more specifically to certain situations.

Another possible angle of study would be a comparison of the contexts in which mentoring occurs. Since this study utilized relationships that had began and developed in structured youth program settings only, it might be useful to look at the nature of mentoring outside of this context.

Summary

This study set out to explore the mentoring relationships between adult youth workers and adolescents, in particular, those behaviors that initiated them and facilitated them. With the invaluable observations and insights of its youthful research participants this was felt to have been accomplished. The ongoing work of most of these mentoring relationships, however, continues. With that work exists the hope (already part reality) that these research participants and many others
like them, who have received the gift of mentoring, will, in turn, pass it on to others. That is a natural growth process.

It is similarly hoped by this researcher that there will be beneficial growth as a result of this research. If, through this study's contribution either in theory or practice, one more young person is effectively mentored it will have been a valuable endeavor.
References


Ascher, C. The mentoring of disadvantaged youth. ERIC/CUE Digest, 47. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.


Appendix A

Front end of telephone invitation to prospective participant

"Hello; my name is Dale Peters. (Name of adult staff) gave me your phone number and suggested that you might be able to help with a research project that I'm conducting. Would you be interested in hearing some details of the project?"

If answer is YES...continue, "I'm a graduate student at UBC studying counselling and I am doing a thesis project on relationships between youth workers and teenagers. I will be interviewing individuals who have or have had a strong, positive relationship with an adult youth worker. I will be asking them to tell me about specific things the adult did that helped build or strengthen the relationship. Would you like to hear more?"

If answer is YES...continue, "If you have or have had in the past, a strong, positive relationship like this with a youth worker (name), and you choose to participate in the project, it will involve a tape-recorded interview with myself that last about an hour and a half. It can take place in your own home or somewhere nearby that is convenient for you".
"After the study is completed the tape will be erased. Your name will not be used nor will there be anything in the final paper that could positively identify you. As well, you may refuse to answer any question, participate in any way or withdraw from the project at any time.

To be sure that this project is authentic and professional you may wish to call the Counselling Psychology department at UBC. I have that phone number if you wish. Do you feel you have enough information to make a decision about participating in the project?"

If answer is YES...continue, "When would be convenient for our first meeting?" Make arrangements and give phone number in case of any changes.

If answer is NO...or...NOT SURE...continue, "I'll be happy to answer any other questions you may have".

* If answer is NO for either of the earlier propositions, continue, "I understand. If at some point in the future you change your mind I'd be happy to hear from you. May I give you my phone number?" (Do so if individual consents). Thank you for taking the time to listen to me. Good-bye".