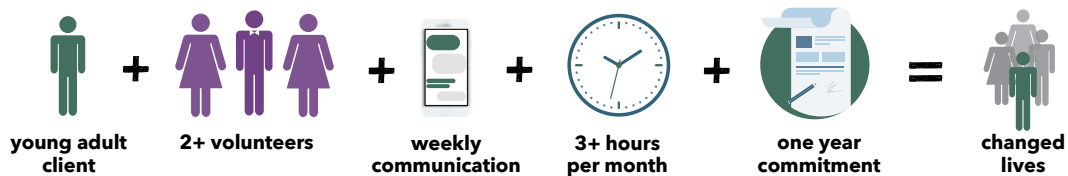


# LIFE LAUNCH

## MENTOR TRAINING MANUAL



presented by



[www.standinthegap.org](http://www.standinthegap.org) | 918-585-6112 | [sitg@sitgm.org](mailto:sitg@sitgm.org) | [facebook.com/StandintheGapMinistries](https://facebook.com/StandintheGapMinistries)

# INTRODUCTION TO STAND IN THE GAP

## Stand in the Gap Ministries

Stand in the Gap exists to connect people in need with people who care. We accomplish this by providing the local Christian community with the tools and support necessary for long term-committed relationships with widows, orphans, and prisoners.

## Stand in the Gap for Widows

**When a woman's husband dies, she loses 75% of her friendships.**

Stand in the Gap empowers the church to come around widows and support them in practical and emotional ways. Whether hosting regular widows-only social gatherings, providing practical home maintenance education, or facilitating small groups of widows in relationship with each other, Stand in the Gap provides tested and proven methods to help widows adjust to life after loss.



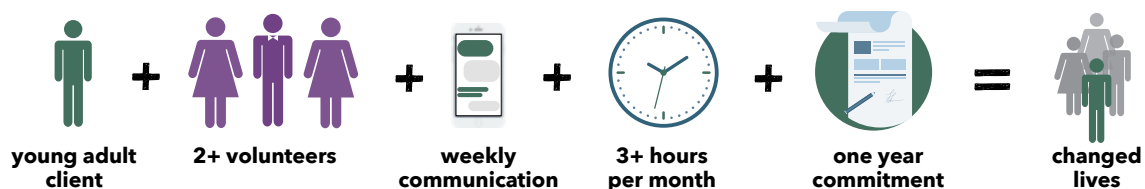
## Woman in Transition

**Oklahoma incarcerates more women, per capita, than any other state in the United States.**

Women in Transition surrounds women coming from hard places (mostly incarceration) with a small group of mentors. These small groups of volunteers relationally support one woman as she faces the difficulties of reintegrating back into society, navigating the legal system, being reunited with her children and much more.

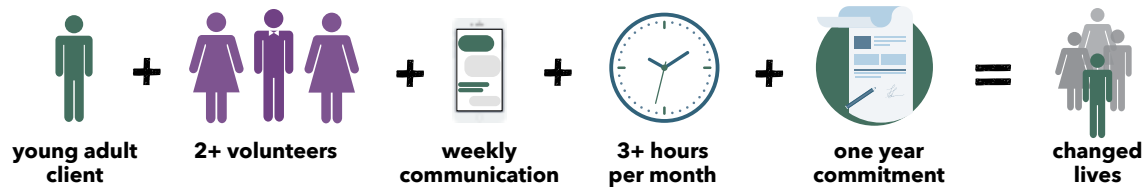


## Life Launch



# STAND IN THE GAP'S LIFE LAUNCH

Life Launch exists to provide relational, emotional, and spiritual support for the modern day orphan by equipping our mentors and mentees with the tools and support necessary to cultivate organic, long-lasting, relational connections.



## LIFE LAUNCH ORIENTATION VIDEO REVIEW

### WHO ARE MODERN DAY ORPHANS?



#### FOSTER YOUNG ADULTS

- Generally institutionalized or in foster/adoptive homes
- System-induced trauma
- **Very few, if any, safe, unpaid adult relationships**
- Nationwide, within two years of aging out of foster care, 6 out of 10 young adults will be homeless, incarcerated, or dead.
- **Health, behavioral, and emotional issues as a result of trauma**
- Average of 10-25 placements in foster care
- Loss of 2-4 months of education progression with every move



#### COMMUNITY YOUNG ADULTS

- Reside in our community
- Community-induced trauma
- **Very few, if any, safe, unpaid adult relationships**
- No taxpayer money allocated to them for school, etc.
- Highly vulnerable to being pulled into the drug and/or sex trade
- **Health, behavioral, and emotional issues as a result of trauma**
- Chaotic living environments
- Lack of relational and material resources

### MENTEE REQUIREMENTS



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# TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN

## BRAIN MODEL

### prefrontal cortex *logical brain*

- Executive function
- Higher concepts, creativity, problem solving, etc.
- Planning
- Anticipation

### limbic system *emotional brain*

- Memory
- Stress response system
  - Fight
  - Flight
  - Freeze

### brain stem *primitive brain*

- Sleep/wake
- Breathing
- Hunger
- Heartbeat

### Types of Trauma

- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Community induced trauma
- Traumatic foster care placements or removals

### Common Affects of Trauma

- Body and brain
- Emotions and behavior
- Cognition
- Lack of self-awareness and future orientation

### Cognitive & Biological Issues

- Communication between “the logical” and “the emotional” brain can breakdown
- Over- and under-eating
- Disturbance in sleep and wake cycles
- Disturbance in emotional regulation
- Physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion

## THE GOSPEL AND THE MODERN DAY ORPHAN

*The Philosophy, Model, and Motivation of Life Launch Mentoring*

### NOTES:

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# TRAINING OUTLINE

The goal of this training is to invite you into the story of how the Gospel calls, compels, and equips us to serve the modern day orphan, to clearly define the role of mentor, and equip you with the initial tools and insights you will need on your journey of becoming a great mentor in the Life Launch program.

## TODAY'S TRAINING

- What is a Mentor: Defining the Mentor Role
- The Gospel and the Modern Day Orphan: The Philosophy, Model, and Motivation of Life Launch Mentoring.
  - Compassion  
"Identify Trauma Behavior"
  - Humility  
"Trust and Respect"
  - Patience  
"Trust and Expectations"
  - Prayer  
"God's Story and Our Participation"
- Life Launch Program Expectations  
"Practices for Cultivating the Heart of the Life Launch Team"
  - Spend Time Together
  - Highs and Lows
  - Prepare for the Next Time, Every Time
  - Weekly Communication
  - Identify Goals
  - Respond to Monthly Check-Ins
- Next Steps
- Q & A
- Paperwork
- Dismissal

# WHAT IS A MENTOR?

## Defining the Mentor Role

PARENT "Obey Me"	BOSS "Listen to Me"	MENTOR "Walk With Me"
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
• A Trusted Guide	• Counselor	• Disciplinarian
• Overseer	• Performance Analyst	• Goal Setter
• Provider	• Protector	• Advocate
• Shepherd	• Fixer	• Caregiver
• Safe Relational and Social Resource	• Good Listener	• Director

### Things to Know:

- Staying within the mentor role in the life of your mentee is one of the biggest indicators of a successful mentorship.
- Mentors can "move".

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*Luke 6:36-37, Genesis 3*

“When we share in God’s compassion, a whole new way of living opens itself to us. Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless.”

-Henri Nouwen

- Henri Nouwen

- There is always something behind the behavior. If the behavior is culturally or relationally out of place, it should be a red flag that it may stem from trauma.
- Clearly communicating and consistently setting relational boundaries helps cultivate lasting “relational connections” and reduces the growth of “transactional connections”.
- The kindness and mercy that God shows us in Christ empowers us to have compassion on young adults from hard places.
- In relation to your mentee, always assume the best until proven otherwise.

# IDENTIFYING TRAUMA BEHAVIOR AND THE EFFECTS OF SCARCITY

## Cultivating Restorative Responses and Setting Relational Boundaries

BEHAVIOR	COMMON REACTION <i>Correct the behavior</i>	RESTORATIVE RESPONSE <i>Engage the heart</i>
<b>Sharing of Personal Life Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma/Abuse</li> <li>• Family issues</li> <li>• World view</li> <li>• Beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling overwhelmed by the information</li> <li>• Feeling obligated to fix or compensate for past hurts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect feelings back: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"That must have been so hard."</i></li> <li>» <i>"I know what you have been through and I care. I know it's not easy, but I/we are in it with you."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acknowledge the past hurts</li> <li>• Ask questions to learn and listen</li> </ul>
<b>Lying:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories about self or others</li> <li>• Lack of continuity between story and evident life decisions or circumstances</li> <li>• Direct offensive or uncomfortable actions or comments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration, questioning, asking "why?"</li> <li>• Trying to catch in a lie</li> <li>• Forcing an apology</li> <li>• Displaying confusion and disapproval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Realize lying can be a safety mechanism for young adults from hard places</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"Are you pulling my leg?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"Do you ever feel like you need to impress me? I hope not, because I like you just the way you are."</i></li> <li>» <i>"I am not upset. Do you trust me? If so, it's okay to tell me what really happened."</i></li> <li>» <i>"I just want you to know that when you said/did that, it made me feel this way... Did you know that?" (Ask them to respond, yes or no.)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Control/Manipulation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking for food, clothing, &amp; other items</li> <li>• Asking for rides to work or other locations</li> <li>• Anxious behavior in uncertain situations, locations, or conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritation</li> <li>• Increasing control or punitive stance</li> <li>• Feeling of being taken advantage of</li> <li>• Hurt feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BOUNDARY SETTING RESPONSES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– recognize the feelings that scarcity can cause <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"Do you believe you will always have enough when you are with me/us?" (Ask them to respond, yes or no.)</i></li> <li>» <i>"I can't do/buy that for you but that doesn't mean I don't care for you, right?" (Ask them to respond, yes or no.)</i></li> <li>» <i>"You know that we are here to walk you through new or hard situations, right?" (Ask them to respond, yes or no.)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Agency and Ownership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty maintaining a job</li> <li>• Difficulty managing money</li> <li>• Fear of new relationships or inability to maintain them</li> <li>• Impulsive and repetitive poor decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to "fix" the problem</li> <li>• Discouraged when advice is not followed</li> <li>• Showing excessive disappointment or disapproval</li> <li>• Over-use of <b>only</b> singular nouns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"Your problems"</i></li> <li>» <i>"What are you going to do?"</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"What's the one thing I can't do for you?" (make decisions)</i></li> <li>» <i>"What do you think would have been a better choice in that situation?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"How does that make you feel?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"What is a practical way we can help you?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"What keeps you up at night?"</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• use of <b>plural</b> nouns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>"What's our issue here?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"Well, what are we going to do now?"</i></li> <li>» <i>"How do you think we can assist and/or encourage you?"</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# HUMILITY

## Connecting with Your Mentee Through Humility

*Luke 14:11, Matthew 18:4, John 1, Philipians 2*

### NOTES:

“The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.”

-Timothy Keller

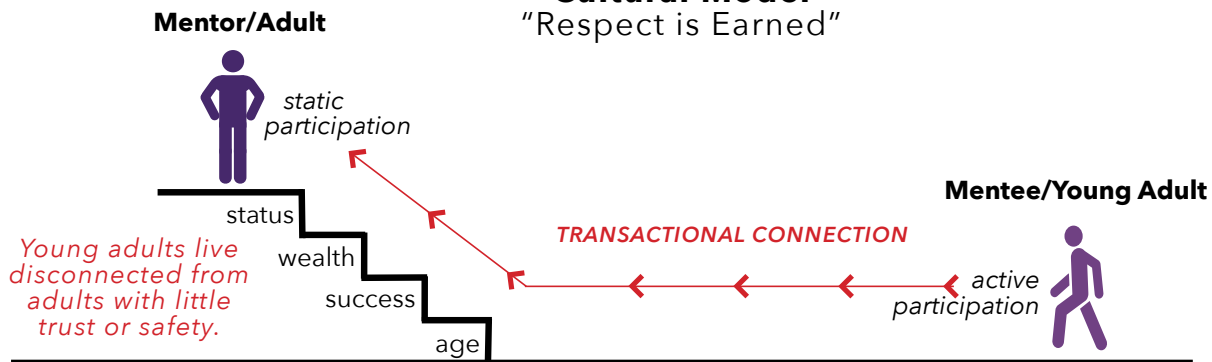
### Things to Remember:

- Respect is inherent.
- Trust is the currency of relationships; all parties must work together to earn trust.
- Relational humility cultivates safety, safety cultivates interpersonal trust, and trust cultivates true, long-lasting relational connections.

# TRUST AND RESPECT

## Cultivating Relational Connections

### Cultural Model "Respect is Earned"



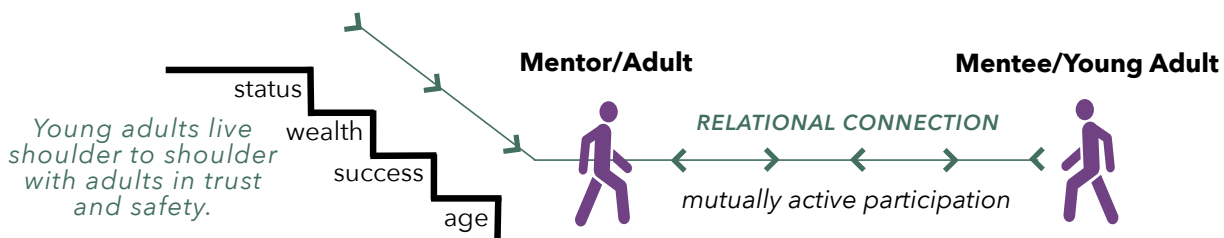
#### Adult

1. Demands respect based on authority/status
2. Self-identifies as fixer and problem solver
3. Inactive participant
4. Views young adult as a project to be completed, or product to be produced rather than a person to be in relationship with

#### Young Adult

1. Lack of relational trust and safety and diminishing sense of personal dignity
2. Lack of agency, critical thinking, and problem solving skills
3. Resentment
4. Diminished relational connection and increased transactional connection

### Biblical Model "Respect is Inherent"



#### Adult

1. Respect is given, not earned
2. Trust is cultivated over time
3. Is present, active, and consistent in relationship
4. Asks good questions and equips young adults to succeed

#### Young Adult

1. Sense of dignity and respect
2. Trust develops as a product of felt safety
3. Feels valued and seen
4. Develops personal agency and problem solving skills

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25-28

# PATIENCE

## Walking with Your Mentee with Patience

*Proverbs 14:29, Colossians 3*

### NOTES:

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Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,  
compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

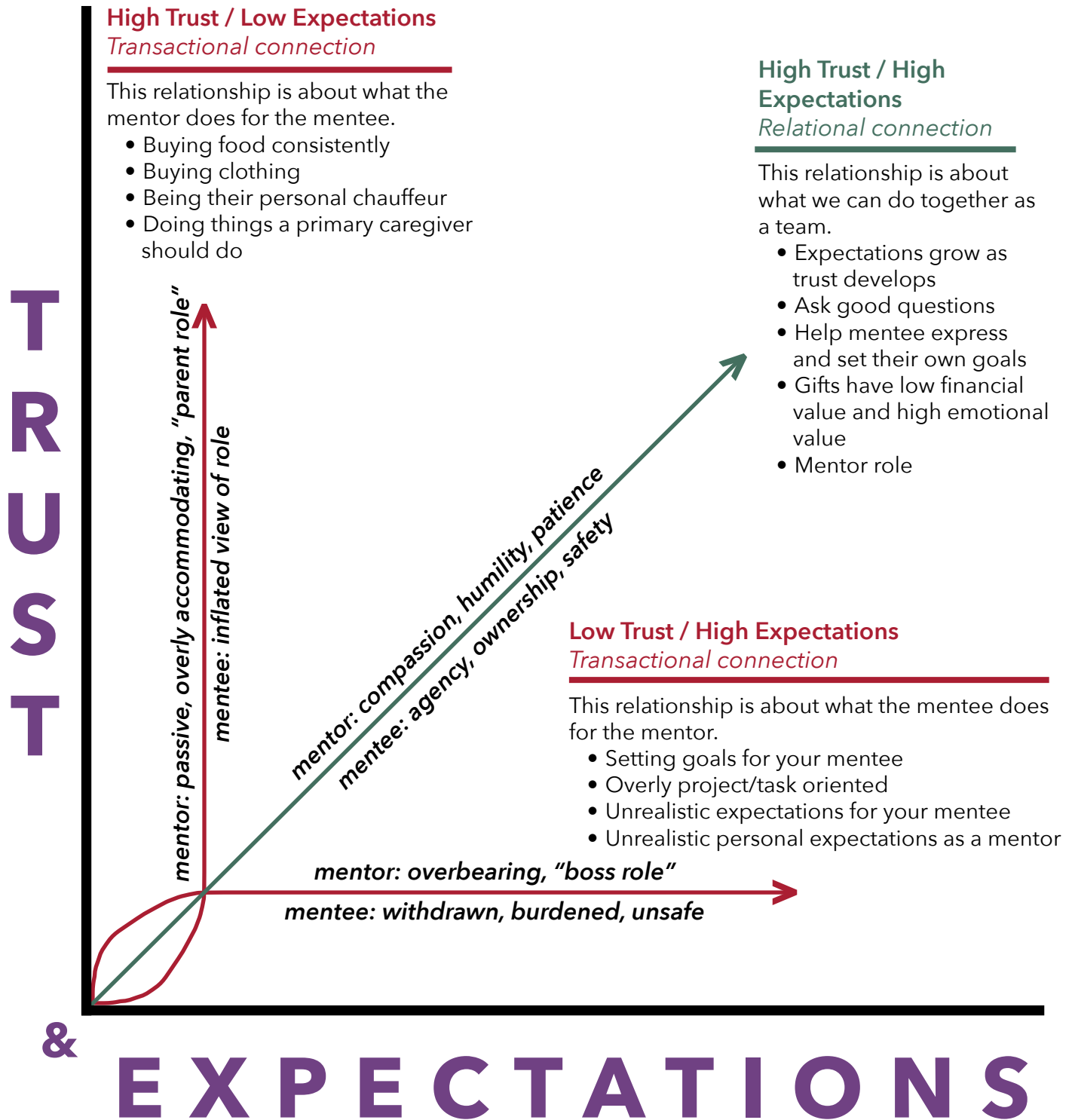
-Colossians 3:12

### Things to Remember:

- Life Launch relationships are primarily about "being", not "doing".
- The consistent presence of safe, unpaid adults is the most powerful aspect of the Life Launch program.

# TRUST & EXPECTATIONS

## Building a Foundation for Change



# PRAYER

## Cultivating Healthy Perspectives and Personal Rest *Philippians 4:6-7*

### NOTES:

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When confronted by the scarcity and pain of the modern day orphan's story, prayer helps us find rest under God's tender care and invites us to participate in the story He is telling about our mentee, rather than trying to control the story ourselves.

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### Things to Remember:

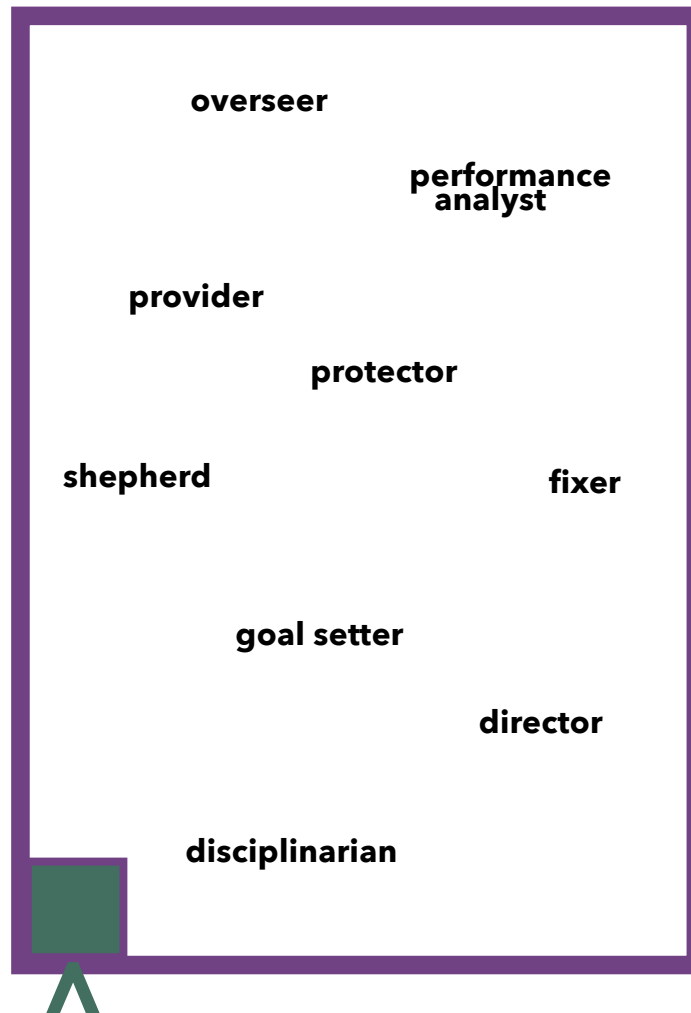
- In your mentee's life, prayer can be a significant introduction to spiritual realities. But be sensitive to his or her comfort level.
- When difficulties arise with your mentee that are outside of program expectations, pray as a team and share the situation with your Program Manager for guidance.
- Intentionally pray for your young adult and the circumstances of his or her life. Then step back and watch as a team how God answers those prayers.
- Prayer helps us rest in the role God has given us.

# GOD'S STORY AND OUR PARTICIPATION

## Refining the Mentor's Role and Defining Personal Boundaries

### The Story God is Telling About Your Mentee

Learning to believe that God cares for our mentees and is in control of their lives gives us the ability to stay within the boundaries of our role and find confidence in God's care, and rest in our participation.



### Life Launch Mentorship: Your Participation in the Story of Your Mentee

Life Launch program expectations are specifically designed to help you:

1. Cultivate a lasting relational connection with your mentee as a team, slowly, over time
2. To keep you within the role of a mentor in the life of your mentee
3. And, to help your team cultivate an atmosphere of trust and safety



# LIFE LAUNCH

## PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

In Life Launch we believe, “you are what you love”<sup>1</sup>. This means that all people ultimately run after what their heart desires. The best way to cultivate what the heart desires is to have restorative or healthy rituals, routines, or practices.

One of our main goals in the formation of our Life Launch teams is not only to equip you with information on how to be a mentor, but to equip you with the necessary practices that will cultivate trust and safety in the heart of the Life Launch team over time. We can’t think or believe ourselves into becoming good mentors, we must practice our way into it.

It is crucial to know that most of our young adults distrust adults because of the routine abuse, disrespect, and mistrust perpetrated by adults in their lives and because of the broken systems that they have been a part of. In knowing this, we can respond by cultivating practices that are safe and restorative.

As we do this, not only will the heart of the Life Launch team be formed, but we will have the privilege of watching the heart of our young adults begin to orient toward safe adults like they may have never known before.

We call these six practices our “Life Launch Program Expectations.”

<sup>1</sup> Smith, James K. A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016.

# LIFE LAUNCH PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

## Cultivating the Heart of the Team

### SPEND TIME TOGETHER

All of our Life Launch teams are required to spend a minimum of three and no more than eight hours together each month. Being together is a foundational part of Life Launch. Time together can be spent talking, going hiking, grabbing coffee, sharing a meal, working toward team goals, visiting an art gallery, going to the movies, or many other things. These times spent together are the fuel that moves the team forward, gives substance to your relationships, and creates space to work on goals and plan for the future.

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#### Things to Know:

- Meeting less than three hours per month is not enough to form the heart of your team.
- Meeting more than eight hours per month can lead to burnout.



### HIGHS AND LOWS

We ask all of our teams to practice their “Highs and Lows” before or after each Life Launch team meeting. Practicing your Highs and Lows is a great way to catch up with the exciting and challenging parts of life. Honestly practicing your Highs and Lows helps the team cultivate humility and trust, and creates opportunities for mentor and mentee alike to encourage each other. This is one of the most powerful practices in Life Launch. There are several underlying benefits that come from incorporating Highs and Lows into the life of our teams.

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#### Things to Know:

- Highs and Lows, when done routinely, breakdown socio-economic walls and cultivate a deep compassion and relatability among the Life Launch team.
- Gives us a specific time for the difficulties of life to be shared, which cultivates trust and commonality.



# LIFE LAUNCH PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

## Cultivating the Heart of the Team

### PREPARE FOR NEXT TIME EVERY TIME

Preparing for the next time after each Life Launch meeting helps everyone stay on the same page, cultivates a sense of priority and belonging for your mentee, and creates predictable routines that cultivate trust and safety for all the team members.

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#### Things to Know:

- The more you intentionally plan for next time, the more your mentee feels like a priority.
- This teaches the heart of our mentee to trust and that you always come back. Planning ahead reduces relational hyper-vigilance and anxiety in our lives.
- Our mentees can learn to plan ahead by using their own calendar.



### WEEKLY COMMUNICATION

We all communicate with the people we care about, and make time for those who are a priority in our lives. Weekly communication helps show that our teams care for each other, and over time consistent communication creates relational connection. You cannot have a good connection with someone you do not know well. There are several things to keep in mind when communicating with your mentee. The majority of your communication must be as a team, so that the team grows together. A team that checks-in stays close and stays together! The majority of check-ins should be via group-text, Facebook group-message, email, FaceTime, or calls.

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#### Things to Know:

- Group communication is the priority. When the team communicates together, it grows together.
- Avoid consistent one-on-one communication between mentors and mentee.
- Schedule as mentors first and then present potential dates to mentee (if planning for next time didn't work).
- If your mentee consistently has trouble communicating, contact your Program Manager for guidance.
- Check-in about everyday, seemingly mundane things.

# LIFE LAUNCH PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

## Cultivating the Heart of the Team

### IDENTIFY GOALS

Identifying and working towards goals is an important aspect of the Life Launch program, and gives teams a trajectory. It is critical that our mentees identify what those goals are and that our mentors remain in the role of helper and guide by asking good questions and offering support along the way. Helping your mentee learn how to set and express their own goals, (however trivial or vital they may seem) cultivates problem solving and agency within your mentee which in turn gives them a sense of ownership in the process.

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#### Things to Know:

- The best way to set goals with young adults is to ask questions:
  - *What do you need help with?*
  - *What would you like to accomplish in the next six months?*
  - *What stresses you out the most about the next one or two years of your life?*
  - *What keeps you up at night?*
  - *How can we pray for you?*
- Goals can be silly and serious



### RESPOND TO YOUR PROGRAM MANAGER'S MONTHLY CHECK-INS

Supporting our mentor teams is one of the top priorities of Life Launch. We check in on a monthly basis with both mentors and the mentee to help support and guide along the way. It is also our goal during these times to help equip you as mentors and mentees with the tools you need to cultivate our program expectations. It is imperative that all of our teams respond to our monthly check-ins so that we can help identify red flags, team drift, address questions, and make sure you all feel well supported as you embark on this adventure together as a team.

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#### Things to Know:

- Your Program Manager is always available for any need or concern.
- Your Program Manager is here to walk with you, every step of the way.

# NEXT STEPS



## APPLICATION AND BACKGROUND CHECK

Complete and submit your mentor application and the OSBI background check to your Program Manager. The background check costs \$14.50. If the cost is an issue, please speak to your Program Manager. After we have received your application and background check, we will begin the process of matching you with a young adult.

## MATCHING PROCESS

Our current match duration is 30-70 days.

During this time we complete our detailed matching process to make the best team we can for both the mentors and mentees. Some of the things that we look for when matching our Life Launch teams are vocation, common interests, geographical location, hobbies, personality, and several other variables. Once we find a young adult for you to mentor we will reach out via text to confirm that you are still interested, and then schedule a mentor conference call.



## CONFERENCE CALL

Once your team is formed, we will schedule a mentor conference call to prepare you for meeting your mentee. To give you an initial sense of who your young adult is, we will discuss his or her history, strengths and struggles, and current life circumstances. We will review the Life Launch program expectations and discuss specific strategies for connecting with your mentee based on his or her personality and needs.



## LAUNCH PROCESS

After the conference call is completed, your Program Manager will coordinate your first Life Launch team meeting. This meeting will generally be in the evening out in the community. Your Program Manager will lead the team through ice breakers and conversations to help you get to know each other. You will then review the program expectations, exchange contact info, and schedule your first Life Launch team meeting as a group without the Program Manager.



## LIFE LAUNCH BEGINS

At this point, the Program Manager steps out and the Life Launch team begins to practice and cultivate the Life Launch program expectations. Your Program Manager will check in with you each month so that all mentors feel fully supported and cared for during the life of your team.



## SIX MONTH MEETING PACKET

Once your team has met continually for six months, we will send out our Six Month Meeting Packet. This packet is designed to help your team discuss the progress you have made and look forward to the coming six months by setting goals (fun and serious), discussing how your team has grown together, and what the highs and lows of your team have been to that point.

## LIFE LAUNCH GRADUATION

When your team has consistently met for 12 months, we will schedule your Life Launch graduation celebration! One of the most important parts of the Life Launch process is voicing very clear expectations and defining actionable plans on what the relationship between the team members will look like moving forward. It is our goal and hope that our mentors will stay connected with their mentee for years to come, though this is not a requirement of the program. We look forward to celebrating your Life Launch team graduation!



## WISDOM FROM PAST MENTORS

"Be comfortable with small steps. **The mentor's presence and caring attitude do so much more than we realize.**"

*Tim Sullivan, Team Michael*

"As the saying goes, seek first to understand, then to be understood.

**Listen. Your presence and compassion is enough."**

*Marilyn Cox, Team Brandon*

"As a Life Launch mentor, be sure to remind yourself that you can't fix your mentee, you're only there for support and guidance. This is hard for those of us who are problem solving oriented. The mentors consistent presence can make a difference in a life, even if the outcome isn't what you hoped for."

*Ken Cox, Team Brandon*

"Always keep in perspective why you do this – not to **fix** but to **empower.**"

*Pam Morris, Team Tray*

"Check-in with your mentee more than you would normally want to do with a friend or acquaintance."

*Christiana Garfield, Team Ikia*

"The small things can make a huge impact."

*Phil Poitras, Team Jermaine*

"Be open-minded. Things won't go as planned sometimes, so learn to roll with things. Show lots of love to your mentee and don't give up."

*Amber, Team Markia*

"Call your Program Manager for help and advice. We called our Program Manager numerous times and they were a huge help! Without our Program Manager's help and guidance we would have pushed Shane too hard or in the wrong way. Listening to our Program Manager's expertise helped us succeed with Shane!"

*Randy, Team Shane*

## A WORD FROM LIFE LAUNCH GRADUATES

*Jordan*

"You were always there when I needed you. I could call anytime and know that someone would answer me and talk with me through things. Thanks for not leaving!"



*Ali*

"My Life Launch Mentors respected me as a person, and eventually respected me for me. I don't think they know how much that means to me."



*Gabby*

"I love Bethany and Melissa. They have been a major blessing and true inspiration to me. I honestly don't know where I'd be without them."



*Kyla*

"Because of my Life Launch mentors, for the first time in my life I know where I belong."



*Malik*

"The best part about having my Life Launch team was a sense of real family connection. When I would hang out with them, they were always super nice and warm to be around."



*Noah*

"Having a Life Launch mentor team is having people by your side, helping you do your best to make it in the world and keep going even when life is hard."





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