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# Full court press: providing pre-adolescent girls success through team membership and mentoring

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FULL COURT PRESS

Full Court Press: Providing Pre-Adolescent  
Girls Success Through Team Membership and Mentoring

Katie N. Benike

Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the degree requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

AUGSBURG COLLEGE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

April, 2017

**Augsburg College  
Department of Nursing  
Doctor of Nursing Practice Program  
Final Scholarly Project Approval Form**

The Scholarly Project Committee and Graduate Nursing Faculty at Augsburg College Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner Program, approve the following Scholarly Project entitled "Full Court Press: Providing Pre-Adolescent Females Success Through Team Membership and Mentoring" for Katie Benike, a DNP-FNP candidate in the Graduate Program at Augsburg College. This project has met the requirements necessary to complete the Scholarly Project: Written Defense and Oral Presentation.

**Final Scholarly Project Approved**

**Date:** 12 Apr. 1 2017

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### **Dedication**

This project is dedicated to the eleven participants and their families for allowing me the amazing opportunity to be their coach and mentor over the last four years. I learned much about myself, the sport of basketball and the theme of resiliency along the way. As a group, we learned to care for one another, support one another and accomplish goals. The work of the project has ended, but the values that we learned along the way will hopefully last a lifetime.

**Abstract**

Pre-adolescent female mentorship through team membership over the course of four years is examined for the purpose of this Doctoral of Nursing Practice- Family Nurse Practitioner project. Dr. Jean Watson theory of Human Caring is used as a catalyst for the project. A literature review was performed to help guided the project and bring to surface opportunities for further examination. A Doctor of Nursing Practice- Family Nurse Practitioner student mentored the eleven participants. The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advance Practice nursing were utilized in the project.

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Full Court Press: Providing Pre-Adolescent  
Girls Success Through Team Membership and Mentoring

Self-esteem is a major key to living a successful life. The development of a healthy self-esteem is extremely important to pre-adolescent females (9-12-years) success. Self-esteem refers to how one feels about oneself, and ones behavior clearly reflects those feelings. A pre-adolescent female with high self-esteem will be able to act independently, assume responsibility, attempt new challenges and handle emotions (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Self-esteem gives the courage to try new things and the power to believe in self- power. Having positive self-esteem can also help pre-adolescent females learn to make healthy choices about mind and body. The benefits of improved pre-adolescent females self-esteem, through mentoring and team membership is important to the role of the transcultural, holistic, and integrative family nurse practitioner.

As pre-adolescent females get older, they have a bigger role in developing their self-esteem more independently than they did when they were younger and were receiving positive feedback from their families and friends. Working hard to finish an art project or math assignment, getting a higher grade on a science test, or trying out for a new activity are areas pre-adolescent females can be proud of themselves for trying. Some individuals are not very athletic, but they might be gifted artists or know magic tricks or are kind friends or help other people out in the community— these are all accomplishments that help pre-adolescent females feel good about herself. Reviewing the pre-adolescent mentorship evidence and metis based research enhances advanced

practice nursing through knowledge attainment and best practice program implementation.

### **Problem Statement**

A pre-adolescent females family and other individuals in her life, like coaches, teachers, and classmates also can boost self-esteem, confidence and feelings of empowerment. They can help her figure out how to do things or notice and highlight her good qualities. They can believe in her and encourage her to try again when something does not go right the first time. It is all part of a pre-adolescent female learning to see herself in a positive way, to feel proud of what she has accomplished, and to be confident that there is a lot more in this life that she can do.

### **Purpose of Project**

The purpose of this project is to provide pre-adolescent females with tools that will provide her improved self-esteem, increased feelings of empowerment, and lasting friendships by participating in a youth basketball team for over 4 years while being coached and mentored by a doctorate of nursing practice- family nurse practitioner student.

### **Clinical Question**

Does team membership and mentoring improve pre-adolescent girls self-esteem and confidence?

### **Objectives**

The project identifies the importance of creating and supporting the relationship between the mentor and the pre-adolescent females through one-on-one mentoring relationships. In the coach, the pre-adolescent females have an adult, non-parental

individual to provide additional support, be a positive role model, a mentor, a leader, a teacher and be a friend. The project combines supportive and fun group activities, life skill training, health education and community service opportunities that provide long-term benefits to the girls who participate. The project engages the pre-adolescent females with at least 400 minutes of physical exercise each week during the course of the project.

### **Theorist**

Jean Watson's nursing theory will help guide the project. Watson (2012) provided a working definition of human caring science as "an evolving philosophical-ethical-epistemic field of study, grounded in the discipline of nursing and informed by an ethical-moral-spiritual stance. It is located in a worldview that is non-dualistic, relational, and unified and the universal field of infinity: Cosmic LOVE" (p. 18-19). Ten original Carative factors and refined Caritas processes serve as the value system and humanitarian core of human caring. Inherent in the Caritas processes is a deep reverence for the full spectrum of possibilities within the human experience and the provision of a framework for theory application. This is accomplished through ethically-based guideposts such as loving-kindness, authentic presence, creating healing environments, and allowing for the divine, existential, and miraculous (Watson, 2012). Watson and Woodward (2010) described the essence of the theory as the "caring moment," where "one's consciousness, intentionality, [and] energetic heart-centered presence is radiating a field beyond... the situation, affecting the larger field" (p. 356). The idea of a transpersonal relationship is central to caring science and suggests a surrendering of the ego motivators of relationships and human-to-human interactions, seeking rather to "connect with and embrace the spirit or soul of the other through the processes of caring

and healing and being in authentic relation” (p. 356). Watson (2012) argued that the human caring theory lies in the transpersonal process between the caregiver and the receiver. The relationship between the mentor and the pre-adolescent girls increases the individual’s self-healing capacity, develops a high level of empowerment in the individual, and the individual emerges with the harmony of mind-body-soul. The relationship process, as related to the project, is the caregiving between the people.

### **Patient Population and Healthcare Setting for Implementation of Project**

Low-self esteem, prevalent among pre-adolescent females, directly relates to a lack of team membership and lack of formal adult mentorship (Turner, Norman, & Zunz, 2005). The setting for the study is a public middle school in Rochester, Minnesota. The 11 pre-adolescent female students attend the middle school and became members of a community girl’s basketball team within the public schools beginning in the year 2013.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review, based on an in-depth examination of the empirical research that has emerged over the last ten years on pre-adolescent mentoring, offers insight into the benefits and effects of pre-adolescent female mentoring. If a mentoring program has adequate resources with structures and support in place, it can be useful in facilitating positive developments and outcomes for pre-adolescents. The relationship needs to be maintained over a suitable length of time involving regular contact. The most crucial indicator of a good mentor/mentee relationship is that it is built on long-term commitment, mutual respect, and trustworthiness, combined with the support of a well-designed program. The evidence from the literature establishes clear benchmarks for establishing an effective mentoring program for the preadolescent female population.

### **Key Findings**

Linked to pre-adolescent mentoring programs, is a variety of positive outcomes ranging from behavioral, attitudinal, motivational, and academic outcomes, to social and emotional wellbeing. Mentoring provides a context for pre-adolescents to develop and sustain relationships with caring adult role models while enhancing their social relationships and emotional wellbeing. Mentorship based relationships aid in improving pre-adolescent females' cognitive and emotional health. Improvements attained through instruction and meaningful conversation provides positive results such as accountability. Promoting positive identity development through a meaningful connection to the role models is important.

The length of time of the mentor relationship and regularity of contact between pre-adolescent females and their mentor are important factors impacting the quality of the mentoring relationships and its effectiveness. Current evidence suggests a mentoring relationship lasting at least 13–19 months, or longer, has better participant outcomes than the mentor relationships that terminated early or were only short term (1–6 months) (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, McMaken, & Jucovy, 2007). Pre-adolescent females in short-term matches may suffer relative declines in self-worth and scholastic performance. The risk of negativity from a mentoring relationship that was short-term was particularly high for individuals who experience negative relationships with their family (Eccles & Gootman, 2012). The risk of negativity is resulting from the lack of trust and decreased self-esteem that the pre-adolescent female is experiencing. A mentor relationship lasting for a shorter period of time reinforces the pre-adolescents sense of feeling abandoned and replicated negative emotions experienced with their parents or guardians.

In addition to the duration of the relationship, the quality of the mentor relationship is important because the dynamics through which mentoring relationships occur can promote developmental outcomes. These outcomes rely on a connection formed between the mentor and mentee. Critical factors such as trust, empathy, authenticity, mutual respect, and sensitivity are considered vital to a quality mentor relationship (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2006). As part of the quality of the relationship, mentors need to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the unique cultural environment in which they are engaging. Mentors must attain cultural awareness before their engagement with the pre-adolescents to ensure cultural respect and cultural safety. Quality in a relationship is also achieved when mentors exhibit a feeling of caring and have a positive, nonjudgmental approach to pre-adolescents and be able to meet them “where they are” (Sipe, 2012, p. 253) and guide them in their own personal and unique journey.

Mentors who focus first on building trust and forming relationships with their pre-adolescent tend to be more efficient than those who are overly goal-oriented and immediately try to change or reform the participant (MacCullum & Beltman, 2002). Successful mentors are those who kept meetings and consistently aim to have fun and form meaningful relationships with the mentee (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Those who enter the relationship with the social agenda to make a difference, experience higher levels of disappointment and exhibit feelings of being unappreciated. The best mentoring relationships tend to be reciprocal. Mentors derive benefits such as a sense of pride and insights into their lives as well as the lives of the pre-adolescent. Matching mentors with mentees solely based on shared interests and a demographic background is less important

than how the individuals perceive they are being treated by their mentors. Dubois & Silverthorn (2005) indicate successful mentoring matches result from when the mentor's approach is solely focused on developing a meaningful relationship that places the pre-adolescent at the center.

Some dynamic elements of good mentoring program design include having pre-adolescents input into how the mentoring should occur. Flexibility is a critical element. The mentoring project should include the development of networks and include mechanisms for ongoing feedback.

Much of the research related to mentoring is located within the behavioral sciences and is directly linked to long-term mentoring program evaluations and longitudinal studies of program participants. A data search was carried out using search key terms to seek publications and program reviews and assessments dating from 2005. However, earlier papers were included where it was felt they made a significant contribution.

A wide range of positive outcomes is linked to pre-adolescent mentoring programs. They range from increased behavioral and social and emotional wellbeing to interpersonal, motivational, and academic excellence. A large portion of the research examining the benefits of youth mentoring indicates that it can positively influence parental and peer relationships, academic achievement, self-concept, and behavior (Aseltine, Dupre, & Lamlein, 2000). One-on-one mentoring shows evidence of success in promoting better academic, social, and behavioral outcomes (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, McMaken, & Jucovy, 2007). Underpinning the efficacy given, pre-adolescent mentoring are theories of identity formation and cognitive neuroscience. Research puts the spotlight

on the primary importance of connectedness and the presence of meaningful relationships to the healthy development of a sense of oneself and self-esteem (MacCallum & Beltman, 2002). The biological and environmental changes that occur during this time lead to new social encounters heightened awareness and interest in other people and their feelings. Relationships with peers, family, and society go through distinct changes during these formative years. Pre-adolescents begin to assert more control over their decisions and emotions and begin to disengage from parental or family control. Concurrently, the school environment involves an intense socialization process during which pre-adolescents become increasingly aware of the ideas and behaviors of their peers, teachers, and other non-family members (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003).

Research in the field of cognitive and behavioral neuroscience has identified that the brain matures considerably during the pre-adolescence years. Evidence points to the role of neural maturation in the development of social cognition during adolescence (Choudry, 2006). Magnetic Resonance Imaging studies show that the brain goes through considerable structural development during pre-adolescence years. Brain regions that implicate in social cognition undergo the most pronounced and prolonged change during this stage (Choudry, 2006).

Such research confirms the pre-adolescent phase of identity and brain formation as a highly intense period where pre-adolescents begin to develop their identity in the wider world by becoming members of social networks outside of the family. As pre-adolescents are driven to differentiate themselves from their family units, they become more open to the influence of other adults, such as mentors (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, & Liang, 2006). Forming a meaningful relationship with an adult (other than a parent) plays

and important role in pre-adolescents healthy development. This formation sheds light on explaining the high potential of mentoring relationships. Rhodes (2006), a national mentoring partnership professor who has written extensively on pre-adolescent mentoring, explored how and to what extent pre-adolescent youth mentoring can be effective. She proposed that mentoring affects youth through three interrelated processes by (a) enhancing the emotional well-being and social relationships, (b) improving cognitive skills through interactive instruction and dialogue; and (c) promoting positive identity development through a meaningful connection to advocates and role models. Mentoring can contribute to the cognitive development of pre-adolescents through several actions, including exposure to new opportunities and spaces for learning, provision of intellectual challenge, confidence, guidance and promotion of a positive attitude towards school and success in academia (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, & Liang, 2006). It can also effect change in pre-adolescents perceptions of their future, including their vocational aspirations.

As an important developmental transition, the shift to adolescence also presents a critical turning point that, if not navigated successfully, may result in social and psychological consequences for the pre-adolescent. Changing family, marital and employment patterns, overcrowded schools, and less cohesive communities have been identified by some as dramatically reducing pre-adolescents' access to caring adults (Eccles & Gootman, 2012).

Resilience is a factor identified as relevant to the effect of the pre-adolescent mentoring relationship. Resilience, a way of responding to the exigencies of life, is characterized by having good communication skills, good social skills, excellent

problem-solving skills, and a sense of humor (Herrera et al., 2007). It is the ability to separate either physically or psychologically from toxic situations, the ability to empathize, and high self-esteem (Turner, Norman, & Zunz, 2005).

### **Mediating Effect on Other important Relationships**

In their examination of the “agents of change” in the outcomes of pre-adolescent mentoring, Rhodes, Grossman and Resch (2009) described how the effects a mentoring program have on self-worth, school value and academic outcomes. These outcomes mediated through improvement of parental relationships and “scholastic confidence” (p.1662). Rhodes, et al, stated very little is known about the underlying process by which mentor relationships affect academic outcomes. As noted, the evidence from evaluations of large-scale mentoring programs in America such as the Big Brother Big Sister program clearly demonstrates improvements in retention rates, grades, and confidence among participants (Rhodes et al., 2009).

Rhodes et al. (2009), identify a mediating effect that arises from mentoring relationships on other aspects for the mentees such as improved relationships with their families and developing a more positive concept of self. Rhodes et al. suggested mentor relationships can alleviate some of the tensions and conflicts between pre-adolescents and parents. Conflicts that occur during those years can be minimized, through mentoring, by providing an alternative source of support, a model of conflict resolution, and a means of coping with everyday issues that alleviates the stress on parents and facilitates positive social values and improved relationships between child and parent. According to Rhodes et al. research shows that pre-adolescents capacity to benefit from the support of parents aided by a sense of support and acceptance and is derived from the mentor relationships

(p.1663). Rhodes et al. also suggested that positive role modeling and the provision of emotional support from the mentor can contribute to pre-adolescents' beliefs in themselves as high achieving students and their attitudes about school affects the value they place on attending. Rhodes et al., concluded from their research, "Mentors can affect both the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of pre-adolescents approach to school" (p.1667).

Research shows that one of the critical determinants that impacts the quality of the mentoring relationships and its effectiveness is the duration of the relationship and any pattern of interaction between pre-adolescents and their mentor. Grossman and Rhodes (2012) identified the importance of the variety in the patterns of interactions between mentees and mentors and in particular, the significance of the duration of mentoring relationships. They found that pre-adolescents who participated in mentoring relationships that lasted, at least, one year with regular interactions with their mentors reported relative gains in levels of self-worth, scholastic improvement, social acceptance, and relationship with parents. The value that the mentee placed on school also improved. Lower levels of both drug and alcohol use were synonymous with mentorship participation. Mentoring relationships that are enduring and supportive, facilitate a range of positive changes in developmental outcomes (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005).

Given that a trusting, close relationship is one of the vital elements in pre-adolescent mentoring, the emphasis accorded the amount of time of the relationship is not surprising. Rhodes et al. (2006) stated that "programs that aim to highlight the complexity of the relationship involved, and support with intention and guide the relationship are likely to yield the most favorable effects" (p.693).

### **The Quality of the Mentor Relationship**

In addition to the importance assigned the duration of the mentoring relationship on pre-adolescent outcomes, the level of quality of the relationship is identified by professionals as just as important (Rhodes et al., 2006). The quality of the mentor relationship is important because the dynamics through which mentoring relationships can promote positive developmental outcomes relies on the positive connection between mentor and mentee. Factors such as trust, empathy, authenticity, mutual respect, and sensitivity are critical components of a high-quality mentor relationship. This quality of empathy and sensitivity in pre-adolescent mentoring relationships is identified by others as critical (MacCullum & Beltman, 2002).

MacCallum and Beltman (2002) noted that mentors must be caring and have a positive, nonjudgmental approach to pre-adolescents and those involved on a one-to-one basis particularly need to be able to meet pre-adolescents “where they are” and guide them in their journey. They also note the importance of mentors having clear strategies for approaching issues including offering options or alternatives to work out how they act or react in certain situations – not dictating how they should be. The Freedman study found the successful mentors were those individuals who showed up consistently and whose purpose it was to have fun and form friendships with the mentee. Those who came with a social agenda to make a difference had no effect (2002). Research shows that the longevity and quality of the mentoring relationship for mentor and mentee can play important roles in the efficacy of mentoring programs.

### **Qualities of a Good Mentor**

Because an emphasis on the quality of the relationship related to mentoring affects the efficacy of programs, defining what makes a good mentor is important. It is the selection of mentors, and the support they receive in that role, that matters. Sipe (2012) found that the process of matching mentors with mentees is the least critical element among the ten studies she examined. She found requirements to be matched based on shared interests, and demographic backgrounds were overtaken by the approach of the mentor where the focus is on developing a relationship that places the young person at the center. Across the ten major studies, Sipe found that practices of effective mentors could be summarized. A commitment needs to be made to consistency and dependability to maintain a positive presence in the pre-adolescent's life. Both mentor and mentee need to recognize that the relationship may be somewhat one-sided for some time. Both parties are responsible for keeping the relationship ongoing. Particular attention must be given to the pre-adolescents need for fun activities. Not only is having fun a critical part of relationship building, but it provides pre-adolescents with important opportunities that are often not otherwise available to them. Sipe (2012) concluded that the development of trust, through a consistent and stable relationships is the key to creating effective and long-term mentoring relationships. Mentors who focused first on building trust and forming friendships with their pre-adolescents tended to be more effective than those who were goal-oriented and who immediately try to reform or change their mentees. Jekielek, Moore, and Hair, and Scarupa (2006) found that the quality of mentoring relationships correlated with proper program structure and planning.

### **Clear Mentorship Program Structure and Goals**

DuBois and Silverthorn(2005) found that poorly structured mentoring programs were part of a breakdown of the mentoring relationship and subsequently concluded that the design of the mentorship program was nearly equal to its goals and the outcomes achieved. DuBois and Silverthorn suggested the programs that are structured, with clear expectations, goals, and provide ongoing support to mentors, yield notably strong effects. Rhodes et al. (2006) concluded that the evidence regarding the need for a substantial emotional connection first and foremost captured and brought to light the importance of maintaining heightened levels of support in mentoring programs to guarantee relationship closeness, longevity, and effectiveness. Cultural–awareness training for mentors working cross-culturally, the provision of support and cross-cultural education and screening tools for mentors for their suitability is critical. Mentors must have an understanding of the critical cultural issues that may shape the values, priorities, and perspectives of the pre-adolescents. Without this, the mentor could run the risk of inadvertently reinforcing culturally inappropriate ideas that may leave the pre-adolescents feeling disempowered and culturally disconnected. Cultural competence is gained through course work, self-study, interviews or immersion in the culture.

### **Gaps in the Research on Mentoring**

While there is a substantial amount of research exploring the efficacy of pre-adolescent mentoring programs and relationships, there is still the need to learn about aspects of programs that are the most transformative and beneficial and which are less. This literature review identified gaps in the research on mentoring programs. One gap is the question of when to mentor: Relatively little research differentiates the characteristics

and outcomes of mentoring relationships for different-aged individuals and the optimal timing (regarding age) of mentoring as an effective process for pre-adolescents. Much of the research examined on pre-adolescent mentoring does not always consider the age of the mentees regarding its impact on the effectiveness or otherwise of a program or the mentoring relationship. Little work has been done on researching what differentiates the characteristics and outcomes of mentoring relationships for different-ages. Pre-adolescence is a fluid concept with the traditional age-bound definition are now greatly influenced by social, environmental, and cultural factors (Turner et al., 2009). A second and important gap in the literature is the importance that gender plays on the success or lack of in the mentoring relationship. Less attention and importance are given to the impact of age and gender in the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship and its quality. A third and important gap in the literature is the efficacy placed on the group or one on one mentoring relationships. There is a limited analysis of the effectiveness of group mentoring programs versus those using a one on one approach.

Research has presented evidence that highlights the potential benefits and pitfalls of mentoring relationships for pre-adolescents. It has also identified factors critical to ensuring a sustainable and effective mentoring relationship. While obvious gaps in research remain there is strong evidence to support the notions that if mentoring programs exhibit 'good practice' structures and have support in place they can be positive influences in the development of the pre-adolescent. If the relationships are maintained over a suitable length of time and involve regularly scheduled contact, they can be effective in facilitating a wide range of outcomes for many pre-adolescents. As evidenced by the literature, an important indicator of a meaningful mentorship experience is

trustworthiness, long-term commitment, and mutual respect with the provision of a well-designed program and organization

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

Pre-Adolescent youth mentorship is a nurturing relationship that directly applies Jean Watson's theory of transpersonal caring. Watson (2012) described a caring relationship as one that has the moral commitment, consciousness, and intentionality needed to protect, enhance, promote, and potentiate human wholeness. This style of caring relationship that a mentor exhibits toward the pre-adolescent mentee enables the mentee's personal growth and attainment of interpersonal skills. The theory identifies that caring is a conscious and intentional act of affirming the significance of the other person in much the same way that an individual communicates the value of another through various forms of social, verbal and nonverbal support. Watson also stated that a caring relationship entails the capacity to become aware of and connect with the spiritual condition of another. Mentoring includes caring moments that represent the coming together of two separate lives, each with her life stories, for the purpose of a personal transaction that alters the life stories of both parties in a positive direction. The mentor's sharing of knowledge, Metis, and past experiences influences the pre-adolescents future actions. In turn, the mentor can also learn from the mentee's alternative and fresh approaches to life's uncertainties and challenges. Watson also listed ten carative factors that constitute a caring relationship: (a) instilling the values of humanity and altruism, (b) bolstering hope and faith for advancement, (c) sensitivity to colleagues, (d) helping and trusting relationships, (e) creativity in solving problems, (f) expressing emotions, (g)

transpersonal teaching and learning, and (h) fostering a supportive environment. These factors reflect the qualities and role of a mentor (Watson, 2012).

The promotion of positive identity development is the final piece. Jean Watson's theory provides a foundation for proposing how mentoring may affect pre-adolescents youths' social and emotional functioning. Mentoring, for the purpose of this project, is exemplified by a caring and supportive relationship between a pre-adolescent and a DNP-FNP student. The positive effects of pre-adolescent mentoring are thought to derive from the support and role modeling these relationships offer. It has been proposed that mentoring affects pre-adolescent youth through three interrelated processes (Allen & Eby, 2005). The first is by enhancing pre-adolescent youths social relationships and emotional well-being. The second is promoting positive self-identity development through serving as a role model and an advocate for their well-being. The third is by improving their cognitive skills through instruction and conversation. The effectiveness of each of these processes is changed by the longevity and the quality of the relationship between the mentor and pre-adolescent youth (472).

Mentoring relationships promote social and emotional well-being and development in pre-adolescent youth in several ways. The relationship provides the pre-adolescent youth with opportunities for enjoyment and a possible escape from the stress that impedes their daily life. Most mentoring relationships provide opportunities for pre-adolescent youth to engage in a variety of social, academic and recreational interactions with a trusted adult. Organized mentoring activities provide a respite for youth whom typically must contend with disadvantages and less than desirable circumstances at home.

Mentoring relationships with pre-adolescent youth also have the potential to provide the individual with positive experiences in forming social relationships, which may lead to improvements in other important relationships for some pre-adolescent youth (Choudry, 2006). By offering pre-adolescent youth genuine care and unwavering support, mentors can change negative ideas that they may hold of themselves and of relationships with other adults in their lives. Moreover, mentors can demonstrate that positive relationships with adults are possible.

Mentoring relationships may alter the cognitive development of pre-adolescent youth. This is done through several mechanisms including exposure to new opportunities for learning, physical challenge, and promotion of academic success.

For the purpose of this project, a mentor approaches interactions with the intention of bringing to light teachable moments through basketball team membership. In general terms, the nature of the intellectual challenge and support provided by the mentor is thought to play a role in facilitating the cognitive development of the pre-adolescent.

By serving as a role model and advocate, the mentor may contribute to pre-adolescent youths' positive self-identity development. Mentors may help shift pre-adolescent youth's conceptions of their identity. There is the notion of the possible self. This concept is an individual's idea of what they would like to become, what they would might become, and what they fear becoming (Aseltine, Dupre, & Lamlein, 2000). Such possibilities, which often emerge as pre-adolescent youth observe and compare the adults they know, can inform current decisions and behavior. Indeed, lower income pre-adolescent youth may have limited personal contact with positive role models outside

their immediate family. That may lead to a belief that their opportunities for success are restricted or limited.

A mentoring relationship also may enable pre-adolescent youth to pursue interests not considered popular by peers or to practice new skills without embarrassment in front of peers. That does not imply that every shared moment in the relationship needs to be packed with substantial personal growth. Mentoring is better characterized as a series of small victories that emerge sporadically and naturally over time. Mentoring involves social interaction over an extended period in which information exchanges occur, goals negotiated, emotions are expressed, and behavior is mutually influenced (Eccles & Gootman, 2012).

Given the importance of a sense of closeness and caring in mentoring relationships, and the likelihood that such qualities take a period to evolve, another important moderator of mentoring effects may be the duration of the relationship. Moreover, it is likely that the benefits of mentoring accrue over a relatively long period; therefore, sufficient time is needed for the relationship to develop and unfold. In addition to enabling important qualities and benefits of mentoring to come to fruition, time may permit mentoring relationships to run their natural course. All relationships follow unique developmental pathways marked by turning points, transitions, and transformations. Watson emphasizes the need for mentorship to promote development of self and values that leads to self-actualization of the pre-adolescent. This internal need to grow and fulfill oneself is part of the ten carative factors that Dr. Watson identifies within her theory of caring. The intrapersonal part of self-actualization includes increased sympathy and a genuine desire to help other people. The theory affirms pre-adolescent mentorship

through the explanation of self-actualization. This is intrapersonal and self- development woven together. Through this intricate connection Watsons theory declares no individual can be completely self-actualized without varying degrees of dedication to other individuals (Watson, 2012). The link Watson makes between self- actualization and caring behaviors between the mentor and the mentee implies self-actualization is an important element in the relationship.

Nevertheless, potentially significant stages in the developmental course of most mentoring relationships include anticipating and preparing for the impending relationship. Initiating the relationship and becoming acquainted is another key component. Growing close and sustaining the relationship by negotiating roles, establishing patterns of communication, and developing familiar routines is vital to the relationship. Utilizing Watson's theory as a basis for the mentoring relationship solidifies the significant stages and serves as a platform as to which the relationship can grow.

The high variability in youth mentoring relationship types or contexts poses both an opportunity and a challenge for assessment. It is a chance for understanding whether there are universal or core characteristics of mentoring that are beneficial for all, or whether there are specific processes and qualities that are uniquely helpful not only for certain people but also in particular contexts.

Pre- adolescent youth mentoring is a popular and widespread phenomenon with demonstrated potential to promote the positive development of an individual. A conceptual framework that portrays a close mentoring relationship as the tool for three intertwined processes has been studied. The enhancement of social and emotional

development is the first cornerstone. Followed by improvements in cognitive functioning through conversation, joint activity, and guided instruction.

As pre-adolescent youth mentoring relationships assume an increasingly important role in our society, we need to better our understanding of the ways in which they work and do not work. With a deeper understanding of the mentoring process, we can use programs more effectively to capitalize on the potential to influence a range of developmental outcomes in a positive way.

### **Methodology and Evaluation: Full Court Press**

Mentoring preadolescent youth is a complex task with a range of critical processes occurring at different levels of the individuals, their mentors, and the formal and informal relationships. The methods used to mentor and evaluate the need to be suited for capturing this complexity. This chapter will review the methodology employed in this project, evaluation tools, as well as the setting and project participants.

The clinical participants in the project are a group of eleven pre-adolescent females who attend public school and are members of a community basketball team. There are a variety of ethnic and religious affiliations represented. The preadolescent youth mentoring project has a small sample number. This raises a significant problem. The first is the small number of participants lacks adequate statistical power for detecting dynamics of the relationships and effects on individual outcomes. A second issue with the small sample size is that it is hard to generalize findings and implement them to larger groups with confidence.

The design of the project is a longitudinal study. There have only been two assessments offered the participants (appendix A). One at the beginning and there will be

one at the end of the four-year project. While four years is a considerable amount of time, it does not address patterns of development and change in relationships over an extended period of time that may have significant implications on youth outcomes. Because of the time frames involved, the longer-term consequences of mentoring relationships, for the purpose of this study, remain unexplored.

Also, the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship and the backgrounds and relating circumstances of the pre-adolescent youth can differ within the program. Attempts to arrive at general conclusions about the influence of mentoring are complicated by the relationship context and numerous other personal, environmental and situational factors that are potential moderators of mentoring effects. Other relationships in a pre-adolescents life can also have an influence on them, which makes the various contexts in which young people live their lives to be taken into account in the evaluation of the mentoring program.

Assessing the impact of mentoring programs is problematic given the difficulty of measuring the kinds of outcomes attributing to mentoring. These include factors such as self-esteem, problem solving, decision making and general life skills. Aspects such as school attendance and retention are in one sense much easier to measure, but the question remains as to what extent they can be taken as evidence of a successful mentoring program. Consideration needs to be given to what change is anticipated; the degree of change, how long it might take and how such change will be measured. Short and long-term measures should be considered in determining the impact of any program. Some examples of short-term measures include measuring changes in the degree of antisocial

activities; academic performance, attitudes and behavior; relationships with families and friends; and self- conceptualization.

Another key aspect of evaluating the effectiveness of programs concerns how programs achieve their intended outcomes. This is an especially important question when an aim is to improve the effectiveness of a program or to assist in the development of effective programs. One important measure of effectiveness is whether or not there is a positive change in the pre-adolescents. Certainly, evaluating a mentoring program can be problematic given the potential long-term outcomes sought or proclaimed from many programs. It is also hard to compare programs.

### **Significance and Implications**

The concept of youth mentoring is not new. In fact, it originated in ancient Greek times. A mentoring relationship is defined as a process where an older person counsels and guides a younger person. Although mentoring began as an operation by a trusted and known person, it has evolved into a variety of programs where an adult is often recruited and trained to become a mentor for youth in need of adult assistance and guidance. Since the time of World War II, changes in family structure and neighborhood network affiliations have increased the number of unsupervised hours spent by many adolescents. Since the times of World War II, many families both parents working outside the home. Today's adolescents are growing up faster and are. As a result, facing pressures and risks that previous generations have not had to face. Mentors provide ongoing support and encouragement, serve as positive role models, as well as help their mentees recognize their fullest potential and set positive life goals.

It is estimated that three million adolescents in the United States are part of informal mentoring based relationships in which volunteers are typically matched with adolescents (DuBois, 2012). More adolescents have meaningful and natural mentoring relationships with members of their extended family, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or other caring non-parental adults. Subjective accounts of mentoring relationships and their transforming effects on adolescents are present in the media, including stories of caring adult mentors helping adolescents to discover their strengths, which enhances their feelings of self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence. The question is how does the research bear on this topic? It is important first to discuss different approaches to youth mentoring and then summarizing the research on (1) factors that predict variation in relationship effectiveness, (2) the effects of mentoring relationships on self-esteem, and (3) the processes through which these relationships exert such effects.

Adolescent mentoring can be defined as a trusting relationship between an individual and an older, more experienced non-parental figure that provides support, guidance, and encouragement to the mentee. Ranges of relationships, from those that are formally created through school or community to those that occur naturally, fall under this definition.

Naturally occurring relationships typically arise within already defined social networks and can be characterized by bonds between an older and more experienced adult and an adolescent. These relationships are generally between an adolescent and extended family members, such as an uncle, aunt, a grandparent or godparents, but may extend to a neighbor, a daycare provider, a teacher, counselor, or minister. Naturally occurring mentoring relationships often provide ongoing guidance, instruction, and

encouragement. This ongoing mentoring facilitates the adolescents' transition to adulthood. Unfortunately, many adolescents do not find or have access to older, supportive adults beyond the boundaries of their homes. Several factors, including parental concerns about safety, overcrowding in the schools or a loss of community cohesiveness has dramatically reduced the accessibility and availability of caring adult figures willing to mentor (Grossman, 2015). To address the needs of adolescents who lack attention from caring mentors, individuals are increasingly turning to volunteer mentoring programs in their communities. The two most common mentoring approaches are the community and school-based programs.

Many mentoring programs are community-based, where program personnel matches volunteer mentors with at-risk adolescents. Mentors and adolescents meet on a scheduled basis, with each pair choosing where and when to meet.

Outside of community-based mentoring programs, different mentoring programs are blended into the adolescent's school setting. In school-based mentoring programs, a mentor meets with the adolescent during or after school in the school setting. The mentor in this setting may provide companionship, educational assistance, emotional support, and guidance. School-based mentoring relationships tend not to last as long as community-based mentoring relationships related to interactions being confined to the school year calendar.

Just as youth mentoring programs have been integrated into schools, they have also been incorporated into other programs that serve adolescents, including after-school programs, summer camps, and sports teams. The additional contexts represent a wealth of opportunity for the formation of strong intergenerational connections. Adults in these

surroundings are often afforded continuing opportunities to adolescents in a style of casual conversations and enjoyable activities that can give escalation to close bonds, ongoing trusting relationships, improved self-esteem, and communication skills.

Studies indicate that a low self-esteem in adolescence is associated with adverse outcomes, including poorer mental and physical health, decreased economic status, and increased levels of criminal behavior later in life (Davidson, 2009). Relationships, and particularly the emotional support and social approval resulting from relationships, appear to play a major role in the development of self-esteem. Psychological theories suggest that self-esteem derives from close attachment relationships in which adolescents receive empathy, care, and praise from well-known and respected mentor figures (Davidson, 2009). Although this process often takes place in the setting of relationships with primary caretakers or parents, this process can also take place with others, including peers, teachers, or coaches. In fact, the root nature of mentoring relationships, emphasizes a supportive and caring relationship between an adolescent and a non-parental adult may be particularly suited to developing an adolescents' self-esteem.

Several studies have examined the impact of mentoring relationships on adolescents' self-esteem. Longitudinal research on naturally occurring mentoring relationships indicates that adolescents who report having an important non-parental adult in their lives tend to report a higher level of psychological well-being (DuBois, 2012). This includes self-esteem and life satisfaction. Also, controlled studies of formal mentoring programs suggest that mentoring relationships can have a positive impact on self-esteem. In a meta-analysis of three large-scale, random-assignment evaluations of school-based mentoring programs, the impact on global self-esteem did not reach statistical

significance. However, mentoring had a significant affirmative impact on adolescents' perception of their academic capabilities, which constitutes a particular aspect of self-esteem that is particularly important for adolescents' academic achievement. In summary, evidence suggests that mentoring can be an effective strategy for increasing adolescent self-esteem.

### **Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice**

This project has addressed all eight DNP Essentials that were summarized by the AACN (2006). The first essential is scientific underpinnings for nursing practice. Nursing is resultant from both social and natural sciences with offerings from principles governing human life in periods of sick or well (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). Incorporation of science and ethics provides the greatest level of nursing care. In the path of this project, scientific evidence to support the need for mentoring to prevent the onset of issues with self-esteem were identified through the use of literature searches supporting evidence-based practice. The biologic and social sciences are integrated into this project to determine methods of preventative health and application with adolescents.

The second essential recognizes organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and systems thinking. The nursing process is a main theme in this essential. Assessment and identification of a health issue, and optimizing health care deliver through facilitating change (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). A physical activity and team sports participation deficit in female students within the Rochester Public Schools was identified. A strategy for an increase in physical activity and mentorship was developed and implemented. The strategy was presented to the

Rochester Youth Basketball Association (RCYBA) board and approved for implementation.

Essential three is clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice. Nursing care, observations, and interventions from evidence-based literature build practice guidelines and build collaborative relationships outside nursing (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). A part of this essential is constructed on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) quality guidelines to promote safe, effective, efficient, and patient-centered care and application of science to nursing care (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). In this project, relevant literature was accessed and formed the foundation of the project proposal from guidelines establishing recommendations for physical activity, mentorship, and team involvement for adolescents. These guidelines were adopted and provided the outline for project implementation. Throughout the project, as issues became apparent, relevant literature was accessed, and information shared with participants. Such topics included topics such as Nutrition, Anxiety, Bullying, Personal Hygiene, Self-Care practices, and Alcohol use. Approximately ten minutes each week was dedicated to the dissemination of information to the participants.

Essential four is information systems and technology for improvement and transformation of healthcare (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). Literature searches have never been easier with a use of technology to connect the surplus of scientific resources. In the development of this project, on-line database searches performed and literature was examined, filtered and reviewed.

Essential five is healthcare policy for advocacy in health care (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, 2006). Expert influence is integral to health care

support from the front lines, and advanced practice nurses are perfectly poised to change health care policy with their expertise. The opportunity for change was recognized, scientific evidence supported and validated a need for practice change, and a plan for implementation formulated, approved and adopted with support from board members. Initially, it was not easy to get buy-in from the RCYBA board members.

Essential six is inter-professional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2006*). Nursing identifies deficits in health care, consults and builds practice models, and collaborates for best outcomes. Collaboration outside of nursing completes the cycle of change and encourages inclusivity from other professionals to improve the individual experience. This project utilized the resource of teachers, board members, personal trainers, and a mentor inside the nursing community.

Essential seven is clinical prevention and population health for improving the Nation's health (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2006*). Health promotion and risk reduction are accomplished by identification of all influences in a population. In this project, the focus of intervention is on adolescent females who are members of the basketball team. It is essential and appropriate to identify health issues and engage the individuals.

Essential eight is advanced nursing practice (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2006*). The specialty populations identified in this project were pre-adolescent females not currently active in organized sports. While this project is population specific, the potential outcome of increased physical activity and team membership over a lifetime has been proven to prevent chronic disease and improve health. Another aspect of this

essential is serving as a mentor to students and other coaches to pave the way for inquiry, investigation, and involvement in relationship building. This project has improved communication relations with team members and their families.

The Scholarly Project demonstrated potential to promote positive social, academic and cognitive development of its pre-adolescent female participants. However, describing exactly how mentoring relationships may exert a positive influence on participants throughout their life span remains a challenge. Future research efforts should be aimed at understanding the process at work in youth mentoring should be guided by robust conceptual models that incorporate relevant theoretical perspectives from the literature on pre-adolescent development. Attempts to arise at general conclusions about the influence of mentoring are complicated but the relationship context and numerous personal, environmental and situational factors that are potential moderators of mentoring effects. Studies that follow adolescents through the transition to adulthood would be informative because the continuing influence of the mentoring relationship might be apparent long after the actual interaction ceased.

As youth mentoring programs assume an increasingly important role in our society, we need to improve our understanding of the ways in which they work, and subsequently, do not work. With a deeper understanding of the mentoring process, one can use programs more effectively to capitalize on the potential to influence a range of developmental outcomes in a positive way.

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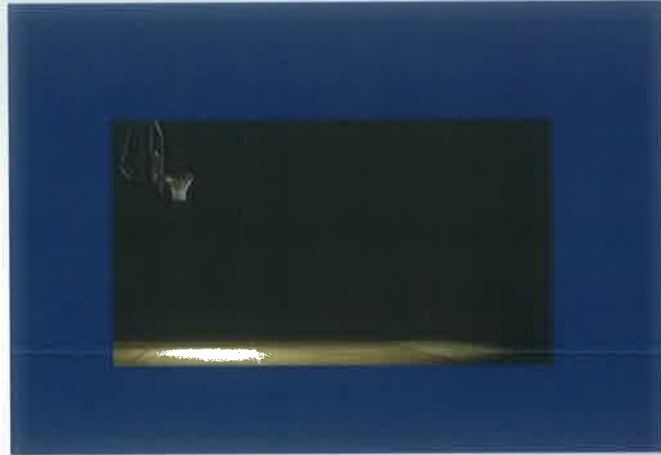
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## Full Court Press

Katie Benike, MA, RN

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

## Mētis-Based findings



## Purpose of Scholarly Project



- Provide tools for improved self esteem
- Participate in a basketball team
- Empowerment

## Problem Statement



- Developing a pre-adolescents self esteem is not just the responsibility of her parents

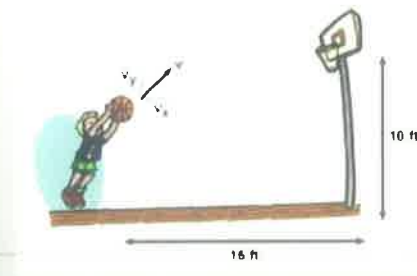
## Introduction



- Self esteem is a major key to living a successful life
- Benefits of improved self esteem in pre-adolescent females is important to the role of the transcultural, holistic and integrative family nurse practitioner

## Clinical Question

To guide the evaluation, developmental evaluation framework was used because it has the flexibility to work within existing community based efforts and focuses on the ongoing questioning strategies of such a mentoring project.



## Objectives of project



- Identify the importance of creating and supporting a mentoring relationship.
- Create opportunities to enhance relationship and build trust while improving participants self esteem.
- Support the participant and act as a role model.

## Population and setting

- Public middle school in Rochester, MN
- 11 pre-adolescent females





## Literature Review

- Key findings
  - Multitude of positive outcomes
  - Length of relationship matters
  - Quality of relationship matters
  - Cultural awareness
  - Relationships first
  - Resilience



## Gaps in research

- Age of mentees
- gender of mentor
- group versus one on one

## Player Narratives

A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on it's own wings. Always believe in yourself.



## Conceptual and Theoretical Framework-Jean Watson



- The relationship between mentor and the pre-adolescent females increases the individuals healing capacity, develops high level of empowerment and the individual emerges with harmony of the mind, body and soul.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice Essential

- Essential seven- clinical prevention and population health for improving the Nation's health
- Focus of intervention was to identify health issues and engage the participants through education, practice and mentoring.

## Impact

- Improving overall health of participants
- The professional role of the DNP-FNP
- More work for the future

## The game knows

- Extra work
- Success
- Teamwork
- Your time will come



## Family First



## Topics of Weekly Discussions

A word cloud of topics for weekly discussions, including: friendships, exercise, management, hardwork, sportsmanship, winning, health, relationships, language, time, effort, nutrition, prevention, yoga, dignity, dressing, hygiene, losing, trust, teamwork, basketball, perseverance, empathy, intentionality, and immunizations.

But, did it help?



Before mentoring- 18

At completion-26

## Lessons learned



1. Be on time
2. Work ethic
3. Effort
4. Body Language
5. Energy
6. Attitude
7. Passion
8. Being coachable
9. Doing extra
10. Being prepared

## Changing mindsets



## Acknowledgements

- Augsburg Faculty, Staff and Classmates
- 11 participants and their families
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- Rochester Public School Staff
- Rochester Community Youth Basketball



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# Thank you for your time

- Questions and Comments





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