

Take a Stand Activity¹

This is a volunteer-training activity designed for and popular with mentoring programs. However, it is easily adapted for use in other settings.

- 1) Create four signs with the following text and post them on four different walls or corners of a room:
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
- 2) Select statements from the next page or create your own.
- 3) Read statements aloud slowly. Tell participants to go stand under the sign (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Strongly disagree, Somewhat disagree) that reflects their personal response to the statement.
- 4) Based on yours and your participants' comfort levels, facilitate discussion around differences of agreement. Have "agrees" defend their opinions to "disagrees" and vice versa. Be careful to prevent majority opinions from overwhelming others.
- 5) After you've done several, ask the following reflection questions:
 - *How do these values come into play when you're mentoring?*
 - *When might it be best to keep your own values in the background while mentoring?*
 - *When is it important to have your values "up-front" in the mentoring relationship?*

¹ Adapted from "Orienting Mentors for Working with Youth: A Guide for Trainers of Adult Mentors". (2000) Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Values Statements

1. Sharing my life experiences can help save a young person from making some of the same mistakes I did.
2. If people don't succeed in life, it's generally because they don't want to badly enough.
3. The most important thing in the world is to honor your parents.
4. Breaking the law is never okay, even when the law is wrong.
5. You have to always stand up for what you think is right, no matter the consequences.
6. When people dress like gang-bangers, they're asking to be treated like gang-bangers.
7. Teenagers just don't make good parents.
8. My private and family life should stay separate from my volunteer activities, including mentoring.
9. If you want a good job, you've got to be willing to conform to the standards of the workplace.
10. If a kid is a drug user, he's not worth my time/effort, because he won't be able to hear what I'm saying.
11. The strongest families are those with two parents who are married.
12. It's hard to stay on the right path without religious convictions.
13. I need to have a great relationship with anybody I mentor.
14. It's important for anyone I mentor to know exactly where I stand on issues like sex, drugs, pregnancy, law breaking, etc.