

Online Training Benefits New Mentoring Program

SUCCESS STORY

The Challenge

Like many mentoring organizations, Eyes Wide Open Mentoring (EWOM) was committed to running a high quality, high impact mentoring program for its youth, but as a new organization it had limited funding and staff. EWOM offers an intensive program of training, supervision, and guidance that enables volunteer mentors to build the kind of successful, long-term relationships with their mentees that are necessary to create transformational change. Their mentors receive specialized training on topics such as cultural sensitivity, child and adolescent development, trauma-informed care, and self-care practices.

However, the organization wanted to ensure that its mentors were well-prepared prior to being matched with their mentees. EWOM did not want to require additional in-person time of its mentors outside of the four-hour in-person training that it conducted.

The Context

Eyes Wide Open Mentoring originated as an all-volunteer project that was piloted in a Washington, D.C. middle school. EWOM launched its one-to-one mentoring program, then, pairing homeless youth with carefully screened adult mentors.

By providing an opportunity for these youth to build a healthy relationship with a caring and committed adult mentor, EWOM believes children experiencing homelessness can be inspired to achieve fulfilling futures. EWOM recognized the value of evidence-based mentoring training and has built mentor training into the core of its mentoring strategy.

The Solution

EWOM recognized that online training could complement and enhance its training. Mentors could take the training instantly and at a time that was convenient for them – which meant less time devoted to resolving scheduling conflicts for staff.

EWOM was already a huge proponent of Mentoring Central, having followed the research conducted on its effectiveness. After evaluating Mentoring Central's online pre-match training course, Building the Foundation, EWOM decided that it was the perfect fit for its organization and its mentors.

"[Online training] has helped our organization save time and resources, which is extremely important for a new organization with limited resources and funding."



– Ashleigh Diserio
Co-founder,
Eyes Wide Open
Mentoring



The *Building the Foundation* course has well-developed sections that create the perfect flow of information. By having mentors complete this online training before they come to the organization's in-person training, EWOM has been able to cut down on the amount of in-person training time required of mentors, which has helped the organization recruit and maintain mentors.

"Mentoring Central's online training is a highly instructive training tool with real life examples of mentor-mentee scenarios and discussions about the essential steps needed to establish a solid mentoring relationship which helps provide potential mentors with the confidence they need to feel prepared to start their mentoring relationship."

– Ashleigh Diserio, Co-founder, Eyes Wide Open Mentoring

"Our mentors liked that this training can be completed over multiple days, instead of in one big chunk of time. The handouts, which are provided throughout the course, are helpful. Our mentors often refer back to them throughout their meetings with their mentees. Mentors take quizzes throughout the online training to show that they comprehended the material and we receive these scores, which is a convenient way of ensuring prospective mentor's mastery of the fundamentals of mentoring."

– Ashleigh Diserio, Co-founder, Eyes Wide Open Mentoring

The Results, ROI, and Future Plans

EWOM now requires every mentor to complete the Building the Foundation course prior to attending its in-person mentor training. "This course is a requirement," said Ashleigh. "The course agenda was developed by experts and we have found that it provides a **quality enhancement** to our program. It has helped us save time and money...allowing us to focus our resources on retaining and recruiting mentors. We anticipate making another purchase of the online training soon. In the meantime, as a next step, we are reviewing and evaluating Mentoring Central's *Building and Maintaining the Relationship* online mentor training."

"EWOM has recommended Mentoring Central, its products and services to other DC-based mentoring organizations. We are pleased with the structure, great-value, and real-life scenarios in the material. We found the course to be perfect for our organization."

– Ashleigh Diserio, Co-founder, Eyes Wide Open Mentoring



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