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Examining the Influence of Adult Mentors on Fostering Prosocial Behaviors Among Teens

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

John H. Weaver III

February 2024

Dedication

To my wife, Hanna, and my son, Jack, your endless encouragement and understanding have driven this journey. Your presence has given me strength and purpose. To the numerous young men and women I have mentored over the past two decades in education, you are the heartbeat of this study. Your resilience, dreams, and challenges have ignited in me a profound passion for serving teens and have shaped the very essence of this research. This dedication extends to the committed volunteers and participants of the mentoring program I have been privileged to lead. Your faithfulness in making a positive impact on the lives of young individuals has been both inspiring and transformative.

I honor my parents, John and Seadalia; my grandparents, Mable, R.J., John Sr., and Annie; and my ancestors, whose sacrifices and legacies laid the foundation for my academic journey. As a first-generation college graduate and a descendant of enslaved people and sharecroppers, I am eternally grateful for this opportunity, and I don't take for granted the ones missed due to your life's circumstances. This dissertation stands as a testament to the dreams you nurtured and the aspirations you instilled.

Finally, with immense gratitude, I dedicate this study to future generations. I recognize the significance of setting a new legacy for my family as I earn this doctoral degree. May this achievement serve as a beacon, guiding future generations toward the quest for knowledge and the relentless pursuit of their dreams.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support and encouragement I received throughout my dissertation journey. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the incredible individuals who stood by me, providing guidance, motivation, and inspiration. First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my family—my rock and foundation. Hanna, your patience, understanding, and love sustained me during the long hours of research and writing. Jack, your infectious joy and boundless energy illuminated even the most challenging days. Together, you created a home filled with warmth and support; I am forever thankful for that.

I extend heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Brenda Arzu, a true godsend during our cohort's journey. Brenda's daily messages and check-ins were a constant source of motivation and camaraderie. Her commitment to keeping us connected and inspired was instrumental in overcoming obstacles and maintaining focus.

A special acknowledgment goes to my dissertation chair, Dr. Jeff Cranmore, whose steady support began with the first phone call. Your guidance and belief in my abilities propelled me forward, turning challenges into opportunities for growth. To my committee members, Dr. Karen Maxwell and Dr. BJ McMichael, I am indebted to you for your exceptional guidance and direction. Dr. Maxwell, your teaching prowess has left an indelible mark on my academic journey, and Dr. McMichael, your insights were invaluable in shaping the course of my research.

Above all, I acknowledge my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom all praise, glory, and honor belong. Through His grace and supernatural power, I persevered through this research study, facing and overcoming insurmountable obstacles without taking breaks. His guidance and

presence fueled my passion for research and instilled in me the resilience needed to complete this program.

I am genuinely grateful for the support and guidance provided by these remarkable individuals who contributed to my academic and personal growth. Their collective impact has left an enduring mark on my journey, and I am eternally grateful for that.

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Abstract

This dissertation addressed a critical public health concern stemming from the prevalence of antisocial behavior among U.S. teenagers. The study specifically tackled the lack of information regarding the components of an effective risk-reduction mentoring program for teens. The primary aim was to explore how young adult alums of a central Florida mentoring program articulated the influence of mentoring relationships that have shaped their attitudes and perceptions concerning prosocial behavior during adolescence. As a bounded qualitative case study, this research employed semistructured interviews with 11 young adult mentees from a mentoring program. Additionally, a focus group of five adult mentors who served in the program provided valuable insights. The theoretical frameworks guiding this study were social learning theory and ecological systems theory. Six overarching themes emerged from the analysis, highlighting the profound impact of mentoring on young adult prosocial behavior. The findings revealed that mentors significantly influenced young adults' engagement in prosocial actions, leading to heightened self-worth, reduced involvement in risky behaviors, and a strengthened sense of purpose and community. This belief, in turn, fostered the growth of responsible and empathetic individuals who made positive contributions to society. In conclusion, this study contributed essential knowledge by identifying critical elements of influential teen risk-reduction mentoring programs. By illuminating the transformative power of mentoring relationships on young adults, the research emphasized the potential for these programs to instigate positive behavioral changes, creating individuals who are not only socially responsible but also valuable contributors to the broader community.

Keywords: mentoring, prosocial behavior, teens, community service, bonding, support

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Adolescents face several life choices as they navigate their teenage years, including whether to engage in prosocial or antisocial behaviors. Teen prosocial activity, which includes helpful, cooperative, and caring activities toward others, can have a variety of positive effects on both the individuals engaged in these behaviors and the larger social environment (Padilla-Walker et al., 2015). Prosocial adolescent behavior promotes social skills, empathy, and positive relationships (Padilla-Walker et al., 2020), boosts self-esteem, reduces dangerous behaviors, and contributes to a sense of purpose and community, ultimately fostering the development of responsible and compassionate individuals who make positive contributions to society (Piliavin & Siegl, 2015).

Alternatively, antisocial behavior encompasses a range of actions, attitudes, and behaviors that deviate from established societal norms, standards, and expectations, often leading to negative consequences such as injury or disruption to persons, property, or the overall social fabric (Fagan, 1975). One significant effect of antisocial behavior is teen substance use (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Hill and Mrug (2015) linked early adolescent use of substances to addiction, violence, and other risky behaviors. More than a quarter of 8th graders, half of the 10th graders, and over 60% of 12th graders admitted to drinking alcohol, which was the most widely abused drug among teenagers (Simonton et al., 2018). Furthermore, 35% of teenagers in high school disclosed using marijuana (Simonton et al., 2018). Nearly 20% of students reported using prescription drugs like Vicodin, OxyContin, Ritalin (Espelage et al., 2018), Percocet, Adderall, and Xanax without a doctor’s prescription (Simonton et al., 2018). Moreover, fighting, school truancy, and other deviant behaviors are antisocial and inhibit public safety (Chen et al., 2019).

In this work, I examined and analyzed prosocial actions, emphasizing the profound repercussions of antisocial conduct. I dove into the hidden factors that lead individuals to participate in behaviors that benefit others and society through a detailed assessment of prosocial actions. Simultaneously, I critically emphasized unraveling the complex impact of antisocial conduct, identifying its far-reaching implications for individuals and the larger community. I attempted to fully understand the subtle interplay between prosocial and antisocial inclinations by comparing and contrasting actions, thus contributing to the research progress on this crucial topic.

Background

Researchers referred to prosocial behavior as actions or behaviors designed to help others or society without considering personal gain or pleasure (Fagan, 1975). They included various activities, from straightforward compassion and selflessness to more intricate social interaction and collaboration (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). A key idea in the study of prosocial behavior was altruism. It entailed giving of oneself to assist or benefit others, sometimes at the expense of or inconveniencing oneself (Batson et al., 2015). Researchers have disputed the existence of genuine altruism since others contended that an underlying need for social acceptance or emotions of personal satisfaction drive actions that seem selfless (Batson et al., 2015).

Furthermore, a key component of human social interaction, prosocial conduct, has been extensively studied in psychology, sociology, and related disciplines (Christie & Montiel, 2015). Education, social work, healthcare, and public policy are just a few areas where understanding prosocial conduct has a significant impact (Stukas et al., 2015). While removing obstacles to prosocial activity may aid in the reduction of social problems like prejudice, inequality, and

conflict, promoting prosocial behavior can result in more peaceful and compassionate communities (Christie & Montiel, 2015).

Several programs have explained the dangers of risky behaviors and helped adolescents deal with peer pressure to engage in antisocial behaviors while addressing concerns for teen health and mental well-being (Bergman et al., 2019). Although the primary focus of this study was on prosocial behavior, understanding teen delinquency is also crucial. For example, teen substance use was a significant concern due to the more considerable impact it had on communities (Bergman et al., 2019). Research indicated that despite recreational interests in substance use, there were a variety of reasons teens used drugs and alcohol, including negative family dynamics, peer pressure, low self-esteem, and genetic predisposition toward use (Hill & Mrug, 2015).

While parental monitoring has decreased teen substance use (Bergman et al., 2019), parents' awareness of their child's activities, whereabouts, friendships, and setting and enforcing regulations improved prosocial behavior (Bergman et al., 2019). Furthermore, parents who regularly monitored their adolescents' conduct and maintained open lines of communication noticed and intervened in potentially dangerous circumstances (Bergman et al., 2019). Additionally, parental autonomy support, or the active development of children's capacities for self-regulation, was significant for the healthy development of children (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This parental supervision and involvement may have acted as a deterrent to risky decision-making. Unfortunately, family dynamics, such as parent/child disconnect, created less-than-ideal circumstances in the home. Parents who were more rejecting and restrictive of their children's behaviors increased the risk for more problem behaviors (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2020).

Adolescents go through tremendous physical, emotional, and cognitive changes as they grow from childhood to maturity (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Consequently, teens naturally tend to express their independence and autonomy as part of this process, which might result in a move away from dependency on their parents (Ravindran et al., 2020). Additionally, teens may rely on the advice of their peers when making decisions. As teens shift their reliance away from parents, they must explore other supportive relationships to aid their development (Austin et al., 2020). Consequently, mentoring has played a vital role in helping teenagers remain autonomous but connected through social support and has effectively reduced unhealthy behaviors and increased positive decision-making among adolescents (Austin et al., 2020).

A primary focus of community and school leaders should be establishing programs that prevent risky decision-making that may lead to substance use, experimentation, and addiction while promoting citizenship. Furthermore, leaders must develop more effective programs to help control teenage delinquency and encourage prosocial behavior (Bergman et al., 2019). Fortunately, community leaders have created several programs and initiatives to intervene and help teens understand the importance of living substance-free lives. School and community leaders must examine other interventions to increase prosocial behaviors and decrease delinquency more effectively. To determine how interventions reduce teenage substance usage, researchers must closely study the effectiveness of alternative programs (Bergman et al., 2019).

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that more than 42 million adolescents and teens lived in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020), representing an estimated 13% of the total population. If researchers do not continue efforts to understand the impact teens have on their communities and to seek solutions, teens may develop unhealthy habits that could lead to delinquency as adults. Understanding the mitigating factors of antisocial behavior can help

schools and communities incorporate more effective prevention programs that increase prosocial behavior (Chen et al., 2019). For example, mentoring is one intervention that positively impacts teens' lives through nonparental and trusted adults serving as role models. Researchers have explored mentoring and found that all ethnicities and families benefit from it (Collins et al., 2020).

Ongoing focus and attention are crucial to help school and community leaders highlight the positive outcomes of prosocial behaviors while preventing the crippling effects teen delinquency has on communities. For instance, teens' poor decision-making affects crime rates, financial markets, and family structure (Wen, 2017). In addition to contemplating these impacts, part of addressing the teen delinquency problem is understanding how to prevent antisocial behavior, which is essential to developing and maintaining healthy adolescents and creating safer communities (Otten et al., 2019). School and community leaders must diligently understand the negative ramifications of teen irresponsibility. Additionally, they must establish effective programs to address the precipitating factors of use and the structural components of teen decision-making. I examined and assessed an existing teen mentoring program to help discover the most effective approaches for improving prosocial behavior while understanding the causes of antisocial behavior.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem addressed in this study is the primary public health concern caused by the significant number of U.S. teens who choose to engage in antisocial behavior (Wen, 2017). While research supports that mentoring programs improve teen decision-making, further research is needed to comprehend how teen mentoring programs increase prosocial behavior. Teenage delinquency continued to be a problem in the United States, leading to subsequent

complications in adulthood (Nair et al., 2022). Increases in accidental death, suicide, truancy, school performance, and long-term addiction are a few problems attributed to teen delinquency (Russell & Gordon, 2017; Spirito et al., 2018). If not further addressed, these problems could lead to higher crime rates, less safe communities, and instability in the workforce, creating negative economic impacts (Broman et al., 2020).

The specific problem addressed in this study was the lack of information on what components make an effective risk-reduction mentoring program for teens. I examined and analyzed prosocial actions in this work, emphasizing the profound repercussions of antisocial conduct. While researchers have studied the effects of teen decision-making, limited research focuses on effective methods for addressing the precipitating factors that promote prosocial behaviors. Previous studies showed how parental dynamics decrease delinquent behavior among teens, including substance use (Bergman et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2016; Russell & Gordon, 2017; Spirito et al., 2018), because of the trusted adult relationships. However, in cases with strained parental relationships, teens continued to face problems without the intervention of trusted adults (Russell & Gordon, 2017). Thus, parental dynamics such as single-parent households, divorce, and parental disengagement influenced a teen's risky decisions (Russell & Gordon, 2017). Further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of mentoring programs for improving teen prosocial behavior. The evidence suggested that school and community leaders examine these mentoring influences to dissuade impressionable teens from making life-altering mistakes.

Purpose of the Study

In this qualitative study, I examined how young adult alums of mentoring programs described the role of relationships that have shaped their teenage attitudes and perceptions

regarding prosocial behavior. Moreover, I investigated teens participating in central Florida Mentoring Program (CFMP—pseudonym). I collected data through interviews and examined them through the lens of research completed by Braun and Clarke (2006) while focusing on social learning theory (SLT). The main objective of this study was to gain more insight into the influential factors of improving teen prosocial behavior by understanding the most impactful components of mentoring programs.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question (RQ1): How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens describe how mentoring relationships shaped their attitudes and perceptions of prosocial behavior?

Secondary Research Question 1 (RQ2): How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe their postprogram views of prosocial behavior?

Secondary Research Question 2 (RQ3): How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe the most successful elements of their program?

Definition of Key Terms

I used the following terms in this study:

Adolescent. An adolescent is a person developing from childhood into adulthood marked by the onset of puberty and is characterized by an individual's understanding, perception, and awareness of their own identity, values, beliefs, personality traits, and emotions (Sawyer et al., 2018).

Antisocial behavior. Antisocial behavior includes activities, attitudes, and behaviors that are contrary to societal norms, rules, and expectations, frequently resulting in harm or disturbance to individuals, property, or the social order (Fagan, 1975).

At-risk teen. Teenagers with a pattern of comparable developmental events, actions, and attitudes who are more likely to engage in deviant conduct that builds over time and perpetuates itself are considered at-risk (Tidwell & Garrett, 1994).

Mentoring. Mentoring is a partnership between an older, more seasoned adult and a younger, unrelated teen or a partnership in which the adult offers continuing direction, training, and encouragement to enhance the teen's character and competence (Rhodes, 2002).

Parental dynamics. How parents engage with each other and their children describes parental dynamics (Belsky & Fearon, 2002).

Prosocial behavior. Prosocial behaviors are actions that benefit others or society as a whole, including acts of kindness, empathy, sharing, cooperation, and helping (Eisenberg et al., 2015).

Substance abuse. The use of alcohol, prescription pharmaceuticals, or over-the-counter medications for purposes other than those for which they were prescribed or in excess is substance abuse (National Cancer Institute, n.d.).

Substance use. Substance use is the consumption of drugs or alcohol among individuals between the ages of 13 and 19 who do so sometimes or experimentally, more frequently, or routinely (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).

Summary

In this study, I analyzed prosocial actions while emphasizing the need to understand the implications of antisocial conduct. I delved deeply into the fundamental elements and motives that drove people to participate in behaviors that benefit others and society, giving insight into the dynamics of prosocial behavior. Simultaneously, I explored the effect of antisocial conduct extensively, examining its far-reaching implications for individuals and the larger societal fabric.

I sought to provide a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the intricate interplay between these contrasting behavioral tendencies by paying close attention to prosocial and antisocial dimensions, contributing significantly to the body of knowledge in this critical domain. Teenage antisocial behavior greatly affected individuals, their families, and the community. In the next chapter, I explain the literature, highlighting the need for support and intervention while exploring the theories guiding this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I examined the exciting world of teenage prosocial conduct, a vital aspect of adolescent development with far-reaching ramifications for individuals and society. Teenagers' prosocial conduct comprised a broad spectrum of voluntary behaviors motivated by empathy, compassion, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). I explored numerous aspects of teen prosocial conduct, including the variables that impacted its origin, the various forms it took, and the critical role it played in molding adolescents' social and emotional development. My goal was to understand how teenagers navigated their social environment thoroughly, contributed to the welfare of their communities, and laid the groundwork for lifetime habits of altruism and empathy as I explored this complicated issue.

Alternatively, a myriad of problems was associated with teen antisocial behavior. According to research, adolescents who made poor decisions were more likely than those who made positive decisions to experience problems as adults (Center for Behavioral Statistics and Quality, 2014). Furthermore, problematic behavior, such as teenage substance use, remained a significant problem for community leaders and policy makers in the United States. Additionally, substance use continued to be among the most preventable causes of illness and death in individuals under 50 (Miech et al., 2023). Preventive measures, early intervention, and therapy reduced the likelihood of developing problems as an adult.

Preventive measures, early intervention, and therapy can lower the likelihood of developing problems as an adult. By understanding what is necessary throughout adolescence, teens can receive the support and resources they need to make positive decisions and exhibit prosocial behaviors. In this chapter, I explore the various mechanisms for increasing prosociality

among teens. Additionally, the literature lists the consequences of risky teen behavior. Furthermore, this chapter provides the foundations of the literature and previous studies.

Literature Search Methods

I used OneSearch at the Abilene Christian University's online library to research prosocial behavior and substance use. Using EBSCOhost in addition to Academic Search Complete, Gale, ERIC, JSTOR, Sage Journals, and PsycNet Recent, I found peer-reviewed articles from 2017 to 2022. I also used Google Scholar to find open-access articles. The following search phrases yielded these findings relevant to this study: *teen substance use*, *mentoring teens*, *impacts of mentoring*, *reducing substance use among youths*, *positive influences on reducing substance use among teens*, *parental effects on adolescents*, *parenting style*, *adolescent development*, *data on teen substance use*, *teen prosocial behavior*, and *concerns with teen substance use*. I utilized many variations of these phrases to provide comprehensive search results.

Theoretical Framework

Theories provided a conceptual framework that aided in understanding the phenomena under study by researchers (Creswell, 2013). They offered a framework for researchers to analyze and comprehend the data they gathered, and without a theoretical foundation, qualitative research could be disorganized and inconsistent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because this was a qualitative study, using a theoretical framework to provide a platform for exploring, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data was crucial.

Social Learning Theory

SLT (Bandura, 1977) was a psychology theory that strongly emphasized the role of social interactions and observational learning in shaping human behavior (Bandura, 1977). People

learned new skills by observing others, copying their actions, and then experienced the results of those actions. Furthermore, SLT was associated with learning that can take place without immediate feedback or firsthand knowledge (Bandura, 1977). Individuals instead pick up knowledge by seeing the behaviors and results of others, particularly influential people or role models (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, people learned through cognitive processes, including motivation, retention, reproduction, attention, and classical and operant conditioning, as proposed by behaviorist theories (Bandura, 1977).

SLT showed how social interactions and observational learning affected teen prosocial and antisocial behavior (Bandura, 1977). The hypothesis claims that teenagers learned habits by watching and copying others in their social surroundings (Bandura, 1977). The following concepts linked SLT (Bandura, 1977) and teen behavior in the following ways:

1. Observational learning (Bandura, 1977)—Adolescents could see their friends, family members, or other significant figures exhibiting prosocial or antisocial behavior. Through this observation, they may learn about the actions, the apparent advantages (such as pleasure and social approval), and the possible adverse effects of behavior.
2. Modeling (Bandura, 1977)—Role models who make positive or negative decisions, such as older siblings, friends, or famous people, can strongly influence adolescents. Even when those activities involve negative behaviors, teens are more inclined to copy the habits of people they find appealing, successful, or socially acceptable.
3. Vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1977)—Teenagers may see peers acting prosocially and receiving benefits like exhilaration or rising in the social hierarchy. This vicarious reinforcement may increase their motivation to engage in comparable actions and experiment with similar behaviors.

4. Social norms (Bandura, 1977)—According to this theory, social environments impact people. Adolescents may view prosocial behavior as conventional behavior and feel pressured to conform if it is common and accepted in their peer group or community.
5. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977)—Self-efficacy has application to teen prosocial behavior, such as community service, if teens feel confident in their capacity to make wise choices and handle social pressure. On the other hand, they may be more likely to engage in problematic behaviors if they have low self-efficacy.

According to SLT (Bandura, 1977), people learn new skills and alter their behavior by seeing and copying others. Social surroundings and role models also influenced a person's development and conduct (Bandura, 1977). According to SLT, teens may be more willing to exhibit prosocial behaviors if they believe them to be a common practice among their peers or if they have had favorable experiences doing so. Understanding the impact of social learning on adolescent prosocial behavior can steer preventive and intervention efforts. These interventions may target the social factors contributing to citizenship among teenagers by promoting positive role models, providing accurate information about the benefits of healthy decision-making, fostering solid social support networks, and enhancing adolescents' self-efficacy.

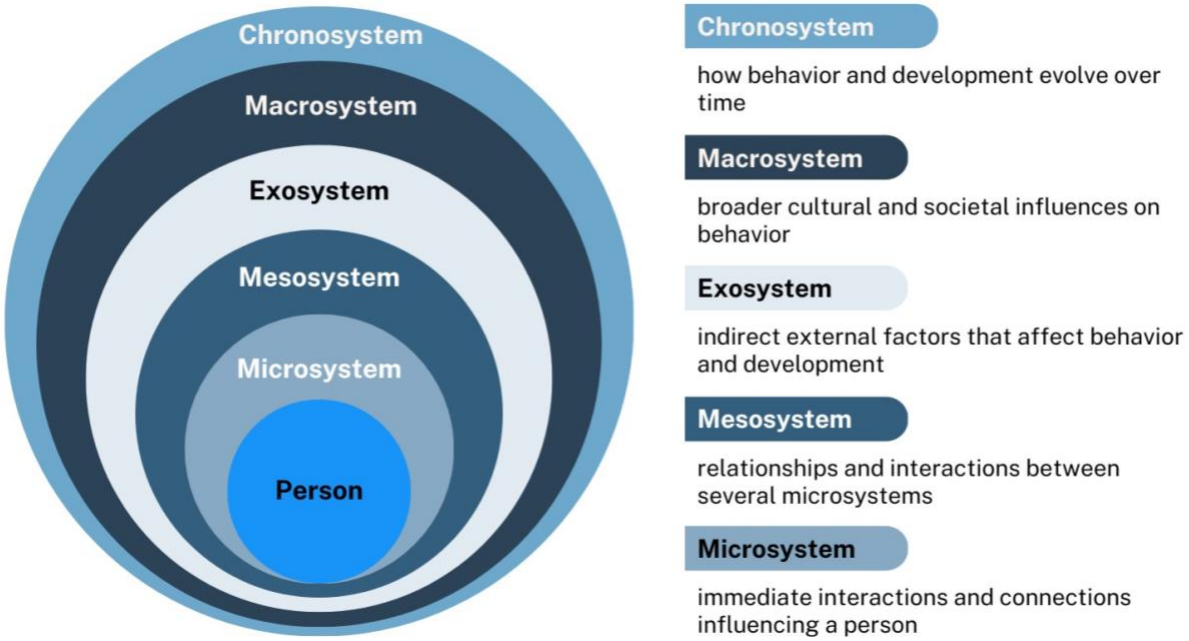
Ecological Systems Theory

EST described a person's family, peer group, community, and larger social forces, which all played a part in influencing their behavior at different levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory contained several interrelated factors, including personal characteristics such as biology, personality, and mental state, and family dynamics such as parenting styles and parental behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Moreover, social norms and external variables influenced teens'

behavior in different environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to this theory, several essential factors or levels affect a person's growth (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



Note. Adapted from *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Harvard University Press. Copyright 1979 by Harvard University Press. Adapted with permission.

Within EST, these elements were frequently referred to as nested systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979):

1. Microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)—The microsystem level examined the immediate interactions and connections that directly impact an individual. This level includes their classmates, family, and school in the event of prosocial behavior. Teen

behavior can be affected positively by peer influence or a familial setting that supports or models behavior.

2. Mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)—The mesosystem level includes the relationships and interactions between several microsystems. Conflicts between parents and instructors or conflicting messages regarding acceptable behavior from home and school, for instance, might confuse teenagers and raise the risk of prosocial or antisocial behavior.
3. Exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)—Exogenous factors indirectly influenced a person's development at the exosystem level. Social norms and media portrayals affect teens' attitudes and ideas about prosocial behavior.
4. Macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)—The macrosystem level includes the broader cultural and societal influences on teen behavior. Cultural attitudes, beliefs, or laws can influence the frequency or acceptance of positive behavior within a culture, along with more general social and economic variables. For instance, cultural tolerance for or normalizing prosocial behavior may influence teenagers' perceptions and behavior.
5. Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)—The chronosystem strongly emphasizes comprehending how behavior and development evolve. Several variables influence teenage prosocial behavior, including developmental transitions (such as puberty, high school, and college), historical events (such as legislative changes and cultural trends), and individual life experiences (such as trauma and grief).

EST provided a thorough framework to comprehend the many factors that affected teen behavior by considering these many levels and their interconnections. It emphasized the importance of considering personal variables and the social, familial, and cultural circumstances

influencing teen conduct. This all-encompassing viewpoint can guide intervention measures to encourage healthy development and increase the chance of teen prosocial behavior.

Grounded in SLT (Bandura, 1977) and the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I attempted to investigate the elements that influence teen prosocial behavior, such as personal risk factors, peer and family pressures, and community and environmental elements. The framework for this study emphasized the numerous influences on teen behavior and the part played by social norms and reinforcement in determining prosocial behavior.

Literature Review

Normal adolescent development referred to the common developmental changes and milestones during the teenage stage, typically lasting from 10 to 19 years of age (Lansford, 2023). While there were physical changes during adolescence, there were significant changes in social cognitive development, which referred to the ability to understand and interpret others' social cues, emotions, and perspectives (Choudhury et al., 2006). Adolescents became more adept at considering other people's viewpoints as they learned that various people may have diverse ideas, opinions, and feelings (Lansford, 2023). They were more able to understand people and consider other perspectives. Furthermore, social cognitive processes played a vital part in this progression, which helped adolescents create a sense of self, navigate social relationships, and think about how others see them (Choudhury et al., 2006).

Adolescents developed a greater sensitivity to nonverbal cues such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions, which improved their ability to recognize and decipher social signals (Choudhury et al., 2006). This awareness helped them comprehend the emotions, intentions, and social context of others (Lansford, 2023). During adolescence, peer interactions became more significant as teens learned to negotiate complicated social dynamics, built and

maintained friendships, resolved disagreements, and engaged in reciprocal relationships with peers (Lansford, 2023). Teenagers also acquired a more nuanced comprehension of moral ideas and standards. They used moral reasoning to weigh the rights, obligations, and repercussions of their acts and those of others when moral identity was formed (Malti et al., 2021).

Abnormal adolescent development referred to atypical or deviant patterns of physical, cognitive, emotional, or social development during adolescence. While many teenagers underwent common obstacles and changes, some may have faced challenges considered abnormal or outside of the normal range of development. During this time, the chance of harm increased, such as injury, depression, anxiety, drug use, and addiction (A. Kelley et al., 2004). On the other hand, the neurobiological model implied that risky conduct and emotional reactivity resulted from a physiologically driven imbalance between enhanced novelty and pleasant sensation seeking, along with the inability to self-regulate (Steinberg, 2004).

Several risk factors may have contributed to teen deviance, such as substance use during abnormal adolescent development. These risk factors varied in their impact and may have interacted with each other, increasing the likelihood of problematic decision-making. Furthermore, teens and their support systems should know the risks and take precautions to avoid them. I investigated some of the precipitating factors of substance use, the adverse effects of substance use, and substance use prevention and intervention methods in this literature review.

Benefits Prosocial Behavior

Actions, attitudes, or behaviors meant to help others or society were prosocial behaviors (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). They encompassed acts of generosity, collaboration, sharing, empathy, and altruism, in which people willingly did actions that advanced the welfare of others without anticipating immediate rewards for themselves (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). Teen

prosocial behavior contributed to developing well-rounded, empathetic, and responsible individuals who positively impacted their close circles and society. It fostered a sense of connection, empathy, and social responsibility, leading to positive outcomes in various aspects of life.

Lazar and Eisenberger (2022) linked emotional and physical well-being to prosocial behaviors. Kindness and service to others enhanced emotions of happiness, fulfillment, and self-esteem (Lazar & Eisenberger, 2022). Furthermore, compared to self-rewarding behavior, such actions lowered stress and resulted in a more substantial reduction of the cardiovascular response (Lazar & Eisenberger, 2022). Brown and Cialdini (2015) developed a neurobiological model of a caring system based on the hypothesis that people were built to have a genuine desire to care for others and generated data that helped to explain why and how helpful activity decreased stressful feelings. On a neurobiological level, Sapolsky (1996) found that prosocial behavior associated with caregiving reduces the activation of the cortisol stress response, potentially impacting health over an extended period.

Essential social skills, including efficient communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, were developed due to prosocial activity (Piliavin & Callero, 1991). These skills were essential for managing social situations in daily life. Consequently, teens built and maintained positive relationships with peers, family members, and community members through acts of kindness, empathy, and support, which fostered trust and a sense of belonging (Stukas et al., 2015).

Other benefits of prosocial behavior included reduced aggression and reduction of risky behaviors. According to the study conducted by Darling (2005), students who engaged in prosocial behavior, such as participating in extracurricular activities, including volunteering,

showed lower rates of tobacco, marijuana, and other drug usage than students who did not participate in such activities.

According to the research, teen prosocial behavior helped shape well-rounded, compassionate, and responsible people who positively influence their local communities and society (Bruner et al., 2018; Padilla-Walker et al., 2015, 2020; Van Dijk, 2015). It encouraged feelings of community, empathy, and civic duty that may positively impact various facets of life. While the research focused on prosocial behavior, diminished prosocial behavior linked risky activities with drug use and criminality (Vadivel et al., 2023). Teenagers who prioritized prosocial activities were less likely to engage in conduct that could be harmful. Therefore, a significant focus of this literature highlighted the impact of antisocial behavior to understand the potential adverse effects.

Adverse Effects of Antisocial Behavior

Antisocial behavior includes overt and covert forms of intentional aggression and hostility directed at people, places, and things (Fagan, 1975). The antisocial behaviors that brought juvenile offenders into contact with the criminal justice system ranged from trivial offenses (such as temper tantrums and lying) to more serious crimes (such as arson and assault; Carroll et al., 2023). The negative impacts of teen substance use overshadowed antisocial behavior, such as aggression, deceit, vandalism, impulsivity, defiance of authority, disregard for social norms, and risky behavior.

Short-term as well as long-term adverse effects of teen substance use are numerous. For example, substance use impairs cognitive functioning by causing changes in white and gray matter volume, memory, attention, and decision-making, causing abnormalities in brain functioning and abnormal neuronal activation patterns (Otten et al., 2019). In 2007, the U.S.

Surgeon General issued a call to action to prevent and curtail underage drinking, citing harmful effects on brain development, cognitive functioning, and academic performance as well as links to higher risks for physical and sexual assault, illicit drug use, risky driving, risky sex, substance use disorders, and even early death (J. Moore & Hardy, 2020). Researchers also discovered that marijuana use that started earlier in life might make a person more susceptible to addiction and psychiatric disorders later in life (Lee et al., 2021). People who began using marijuana before 18 had a four to seven times higher risk of developing a marijuana use disorder into adulthood (Lee et al., 2021). Another reliable indicator of substance dependence and abuse by late adolescence and adulthood was prior substance use before the age of 15 years (Otten et al., 2019).

Substance use also harmed teen's mental health, leading to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Researchers found that teen substance use was associated with higher depressive symptoms, depression, suicide attempts (Otten et al., 2019), and anxiety (Simonton et al., 2018). Physical health was also a concern of teen substance use. The two leading causes of adolescent death—suicide and unintentional injury—were linked to substance use (Simonton et al., 2018). Teen substance use was related to impaired driving, affecting a teen's ability to react and make good decisions, increasing the risk of motor vehicle accidents and injuries (Otten et al., 2019). Ultimately, substance use might raise the chance of deadly overdoses.

The start of substance use was one of the most critical risk factors for unprotected teenage sex and sexual initiation (Chambers et al., 2021), which could have led to sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancy. Additionally, because substance use can amplify anger and intensify minor disagreements, it has been suggested that substance use is a risk factor for sexual assault and teen dating violence (Espelage et al., 2018). Similar risk factors for these behaviors include a dysfunctional home and poor teenage functioning (Chambers et al., 2021).

These social problems caused by substance use can cause social isolation and harm friendships and family ties.

Substance use undermined academic performance, increased school absences, and raised the likelihood of dropping out of high school (Otten et al., 2019). Absenteeism from school was linked to earlier onset of substance use and higher levels of actual usage (Lee et al., 2021). Additionally, substance use can result in disruptive behavior in the classroom, such as talking back to teachers or other students, which can result in disciplinary action. Substance use can result in school suspension or expulsion in some cases, which can have long-term negative consequences for a teen's academic and professional future.

Substance use can be costly, resulting in financial difficulties and reliance on others for assistance. Young adults were the most vulnerable demographic, and despite two decades of prevention efforts, nearly two out of every five college students reported drinking to inebriation in the previous month (Joyner et al., 2018). Each year, alcohol misuse cost the United States more than $200 billion in avoidable healthcare costs (Joyner et al., 2018). According to a recent study, underage drinking cost $12,313 per teen per year (Chambers et al., 2021). Those costs did not include legal fees incurred due to a legal problem, such as an arrest for drug possession or intoxicated driving. Additionally, the federal government spent most of the $244.1 million allocated for juvenile detention and imprisonment and delinquency prevention, mentoring, and reintegration programs for adolescents who used substances (Partnership to End Addiction, 2009). These are just a few of the many issues associated with teen substance use, and teens and their families must be aware of the risks and take preventative measures.

Precipitating Factors of Antisocial Behavior

Antisocial behavior is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors and no single cause. However, research indicated various motives for teens' initial use. These motives included peer influences, family relationships, mental health, and school correlates.

Peer Influences. Teens' peer influences significantly affected whether they participated in antisocial behavior, as teens may have felt pressure from their peers to make risky decisions, especially if their friends were already doing so (Ennett et al., 2018). Regarding substance use, one explanation was that genetically sensitive youth exhibited antisocial conduct early on and, when introduced to drugs, utilized them in adolescence (Dishion et al., 1999). As a result, this provided mutual reinforcement and caused teens to engage in what they considered rewarding activities and behaviors, such as early drug experimentation and alcohol use (Otten et al., 2019). Furthermore, by age 15, those teenagers had begun using alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis (Otten et al., 2019). Additionally, peer drinking forecasted changes in drinking patterns from adolescence through early adulthood (Byrnes et al., 2019), possibly leading to substance abuse as adults (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011).

One major determinant of teen deviant behavior was peer contagion, a reciprocal effect process between a person and a peer that involves behaviors and emotions that can hinder one's growth or hurt others (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011). Furthermore, peer contagion can result from educational and intervention programs that include children and adolescents and from situations where peers interact naturally (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011). Because teenagers frequently adopt the attitudes and habits of their peers to fit in, they may be more prone to make unhealthy choices if their peer group sees it as the norm because they want to fit in and avoid social isolation (Lopez-Mayan & Nicodemo, 2023). Consequently, teens may view antisocial behavior by their peers or

role models as acceptable or desirable behavior, making them more likely to try it themselves to feel more confident in their ability to fit in with a particular group. Based on their peers' experiences and opinions, these perceived benefits may further influence poor decision-making.

Family Relationships. Aside from peer relationships, family relationships played a significant role in reducing teen delinquency (Vadivel et al., 2023). Teens lacking parental supervision and guidance were more likely to engage in early substance use (Bergman et al., 2019; Spirito et al., 2018). Poor parental control also made it more likely for children to associate with troubled kids, which raised the likelihood that they would be troubled as teenagers (Spirito et al., 2018). Recent evidence suggested differences in parent and adolescent reports of adolescent behavior predicted later deviant behavior (Nichols & Tanner-Smith, 2022). Still, the pathways by which these differences led to antisocial behavior use were less well understood (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Youth with poorer and less educated parents were more likely to be exposed to parental modeling of permissive attitudes toward harmful decision-making use, for example, and more stress, which may have encouraged unhealthy coping mechanisms (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Higher parental education may be protective because parents were more likely to disapprove of poor decision-making (Hill & Mrug, 2015).

Furthermore, alcohol and marijuana use appeared to be related to lower parental education but higher family income, indicating a link between family socioeconomic status and substance use (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Family stress disrupted parenting, which resulted in early problem conduct in children and peer deviance, which were indicators of later dependence on drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana (Otten et al., 2019). These results highlighted the complex interaction between family dynamics, socioeconomic circumstances, and teenage

drug use, underlining the need for a thorough assessment of these aspects in understanding and managing young risk behaviors.

Other contributors to teen antisocial behavior use included a family history of substance abuse and parent use (Joyner et al., 2018). Early substance use and parental drug usage were directly related, which may have indicated a genetic component (Otten et al., 2019). However, understanding the genetic influence of alcohol addiction was very complex as the molecular composition of gene reaction and neurobiological sensitivity were all considered (Van Bockstaele et al., 2016). According to research, parental drinking was also linked to more risky drinking among youth (Byrnes et al., 2019). Another predictor of adolescent destructive decision-making was early/teenage parenting, leading to contextual stress at age 5 (Otten et al., 2019).

Mental Health. Teens with mental health issues like depression, anxiety, or trauma may have turned to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism to manage stress and pressure from their relationships, schools, and other sources. Teenage substance use, particularly binge drinking, has been related to traumatic events, including physical or sexual abuse and witnessing violence against others (Cole et al., 2019). Cole et al. (2019) found large percentages of children to have experienced different types of interpersonal trauma exposures throughout their lifetime:

- Over 40% had experienced physical assault (by peers other than siblings).
- Close to 36% had experienced physical abuse by an adult.
- Nearly 28% had witnessed intimate partner violence of a parent.
- Approximately 21% had experienced sexual abuse by a known person, stranger, peer, or partner.
- Additionally, 18% had experienced physical assault by a partner.

The self-medication theory (Khantzian, 1997) proposed that people may take substances to ease or cope with underlying psychological or emotional disorders. According to this hypothesis, people suffering from mental illnesses or distressing emotional states may have used drugs or alcohol to alleviate their symptoms (Khantzian, 1997) temporarily. Furthermore, victims of sexual assault and teen dating violence frequently reported using substances to manage the adverse effects of trauma (Cole et al., 2019). Consequently, adolescent victims were also more prone to engage in risky activities like smoking, drinking, and using marijuana (Cole et al., 2019).

Adolescent risk-taking was higher than in childhood and adulthood, and it linked to the subcortical areas known to be involved in the processing of incentives (Casey et al., 2008). Furthermore, the teenage behavioral profile of risk-taking and reward or novelty seeking showed that critical developmental changes in brain networks mediating emotional expression, cognitive and attentional skills, and reward sensitivity occurred during this stage of life (A. Kelley et al., 2004). Consequently, teens made impulsive choices that increased their risk of delinquency because they had undeveloped decision-making skills (Giedd, 2015). Recent research suggested that the riskiest behaviors resulted from an imbalance between the maturation of limbic system networks, which control emotions and amplify throughout puberty, and the prefrontal cortex networks, which mature later and support good judgment and impulse control (Giedd, 2015). For example, research on social norms has shown that teens consistently overestimated the prevalence of certain behaviors, such as alcohol use, and even grossly underestimated the associated rates (Linkenbach et al., 2021). Teens believed that their peers drank more than they reported. This misconception was one of the most significant risk factors for teen alcohol usage and has been identified as incorrect beliefs of peer alcohol use standards (Linkenbach et al.,

2021). These views were important because erroneous standards were linked to other antisocial behaviors and even their experience with repercussions (Linkenbach et al., 2021). Furthermore, social media has content that glamorized this risky behavior, directly influencing teen participation (Daniels et al., 2021).

School Correlates. Another factor influencing antisocial behavior at the school level was the size of the school. Interestingly, compared to medium-sized schools, both small and large schools have reported higher rates of delinquency (Hill & Mrug, 2015). While young people in small schools can face more significant peer pressure to participate in antisocial behavior, larger schools can expose children to more peer models of these behaviors (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Additionally, larger schools found more problematic behaviors that are risk factors for substance use (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Likewise, other studies have shown a sizable proportion of teenagers and young people encountered substances at private, peer-exclusive gatherings where risky decision-making was associated with teens who attended larger schools (Egan et al., 2019).

The school atmosphere was another indicator of antisocial behavior (Vadivel et al., 2023). In the United States, 80% of children aged 2–17 have experienced childhood trauma, with approximately 54% of those incidents taking place at school (Larson et al., 2019). However, bullying-related attitudes and behaviors typically declined when students felt that the school climate was supportive and pleasant (Doumas et al., 2017). Additionally, children were more likely to ask for assistance with bullying and violent threats when they perceived instructors and staff as supportive (Klein et al., 2012). Conversely, children who felt that the school atmosphere was terrible were more likely to participate in risky behaviors, such as substance use and bullying, and were less likely to seek assistance (Klein et al., 2012).

Prosocial Behavior Promotion and Intervention

Promoting prosocial conduct among adolescents was paramount in fostering a constructive and nurturing school and community environment. Schools and communities have introduced numerous education and awareness campaigns and prevention initiatives in educational institutions, local communities, and healthcare facilities. These efforts included awareness and support, parenting, school-based programs, community prevention interventions, and mentoring programs.

Awareness Programs and Support. After understanding the consequences of teen antisocial behavior, government, school, and community leaders have focused on prevention and intervention strategies. Educational institutions, local communities, and healthcare facilities have implemented several teen education and awareness campaigns.

Too Good for Drugs, a program for prekindergarten through 12th-grade students, attempted to instill social and emotional competencies to support positive behaviors and discourage problematic behavior (Too Good, 2023). Additionally, using role-playing exercises and interactive activities, Too Good aimed to teach teens about the dangers of risky decision-making (Too Good, 2023). The efficacy of Too Good for Drugs has been assessed through research studies, and generally speaking, the program has produced favorable results in lowering antisocial behavior among participants (B. Hall et al., 2013). According to B. Hall et al. (2013), students who participated in Too Good for Drugs had reduced delinquency rates, suggesting that the program had a favorable influence on prosocial behavior.

Prior researchers provided several effective methods for addressing teen prosocial behavior. Researchers asked early adolescents who engaged in prosocial behaviors about their reasons for abstinence from risky decision-making (M. Moore et al., 2018). One study found that

the primary reasons were fear of the adverse effects of making poor decisions, concerns about what would happen if caught, and worries that those decisions would prevent them from pursuing other worthwhile goals and aspirations (M. Moore et al., 2018). In a different study, J. Moore and Hardy (2020) questioned South African teen focus groups about why some youth might avoid making poor choices. They discovered the following categories, in order of frequency: worry about physical and behavioral repercussions (such as physiological effects of risk, recurrence, and crime), avoiding social rejection from friends and family, compatibility with other activities and goals, and moral considerations. This study aligned with the social norms component of SLT, which described the effects of a person's social environment on their decision-making (Bandura, 1977). Bronfenbrenner (1979) also described the mesosystem as the dimension of EST which sends conflicting messages to teens about antisocial behavior. For example, teens may have received lessons from parents and caregivers about the harmful effects of a toxic culture. However, their social environment may have influenced them oppositely.

Beyond the intended primary focus audience, highlighting healthy community standards could have had various effects, such as delaying the onset of risky conduct (Linkenbach et al., 2021). Additionally, it was critical for teenagers who chose positive behaviors to understand that they were not alone and, in some instances, were even a majority of students who acted prosocially (Linkenbach et al., 2021). The misperception that most people were engaging in unhealthy behavior may have led to their initiation of use for those who wanted to "fit in" and do what "everyone" was doing, and this effort to delay the initiation of delinquency was the focus of universal prevention efforts (Linkenbach et al., 2021). A barrier for those considering a change in their use could have been their belief that if they cut back or quit, they would be the "only one" making this choice; correcting this misperception could have boosted those considering a

change (Linkenbach et al., 2021). According to research, misperceptions consistently explained variations in people's behavior and even their experience of consequences (Linkenbach et al., 2021). The effects of positive peer pressure continued to influence teens, as evidenced by these studies.

Parenting. Parents played an essential role in promoting prosocial behavior by monitoring their children's activities, setting clear expectations and boundaries, and having open and honest conversations about the risks of poor decisions. Even in late adolescence and early adulthood, parents significantly influenced their children's behaviors through active engagement (Byrnes et al., 2019). Parents' involvement in their children's social lives, whether through monitoring or actively pursuing knowledge about child behavior to pinpoint and respond against perceived inappropriate or risky activity, decreased over time as teens become more independent and autonomous (Russell & Gordon, 2017).

Healthy decision-making and self-control were frequently encouraged by authoritative parents who were loving, responsive, and transparent about their expectations (Merianos et al., 2020). They created an atmosphere of open conversation, supported individuality within limits, and offered advice on appropriate conduct (Merianos et al., 2020). Alternatively, authoritarian parenting that was tough and dictatorial did not work as well to prevent destructive choices (Krohn et al., 2019). The rigidity of this parenting technique hampered open communication, damaged family relationships, and increased the possibility of rebellion and secretive behavior, all of which may have facilitated antisocial behavior (Krohn et al., 2019).

According to theoretical models, parental autonomy support encouraged adolescents' separate exploration and reduced parent–child conflict, while parental control increased dysfunction (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, authoritative parenting has considerably

influenced several adolescent outcomes, whereas negligent parenting repeatedly caused the worst results (Cohen & Rice, 1997).

Parental guidelines, expectations for teen behavior, and the impact of media on decision-making were just a few of the many topics covered in parent-teen conversations about behavior (Byrnes et al., 2019). Consequently, those discussions have also been connected to increased prosocial behavior (Byrnes et al., 2019). Another study discovered a link between teachers providing parents with academic information about their children and improving prosocial behavior (Bergman et al., 2019). The likelihood of teenage positive outcomes was considerably increased by loving and nurturing parent–child relationships, where teenagers felt safe and connected to their parents (Birk et al., 2022). By developing trust, offering emotional support, and keeping lines of communication open, teenagers were more likely to seek their parents' advice and be influenced by their parents' good values if they had a close relationship with them (Birk et al., 2022). The role of parenting has been one of the most influential factors in preventing and reducing teen antisocial behavior.

School-Based Programs. Schools have implemented evidence-based initiatives to provide children with the knowledge, abilities, and tools to avoid peer pressure and make healthy decisions. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) was a well-known school-based initiative to reduce student violence and drug usage (D.A.R.E. America, 2023). Police officers often used a curriculum that strongly emphasized the risks associated with risky decision-making and the value of making wise decisions (D.A.R.E. America, 2023). D.A.R.E. centered on accurate knowledge of the physical effects of delinquent behavior, the legal repercussions, and the social and personal effects of decision-making in the classroom (D.A.R.E. America, 2023). Leaders designed the curriculum to give kids tools to fend off peer pressure and choose well. The

curriculum contained activities encouraging participants to be forceful, communicate effectively, and use several refusal strategies. It pushed pupils to participate in pursuits and pastimes that support wholesome living and constructive peer interactions (D.A.R.E. America, 2023).

Additionally, the curriculum frequently included conversations, role-playing, interactive games, and small-group exercises. These exercises actively involved students and inspired critical thought about the delivered content (D.A.R.E. America, 2023). Finally, D.A.R.E. frequently involved parents and communities in attempts to avoid antisocial behaviors (D.A.R.E. America, 2023). However, research performed to evaluate the effects of D.A.R.E. over the years has been inconsistent, drawing criticism for having little to no impact on teen delinquency, if any (Caputi & McLellan, 2017).

Other programs, like Project ALERT's classroom-based program, aimed to teach pupils how to fend off peer pressure and make wise choices. Project ALERT, created by the RAND Corporation, aimed to inform students about the dangers of using drugs, such as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal substances. The program's primary goals were to improve students' drug knowledge, mold their attitudes about substance use, and strengthen their ability to resist peer pressure. The program, geared toward middle school adolescents, addressed issues including using tobacco, alcohol, and drugs (RAND Corporation, 2023). The evaluations revealed that Project ALERT reduced specific forms of drug use with particular types of teenagers despite its limited ability as a universal intervention, making it possible to implement the program successfully as a selective or indicated intervention (Gorman & Conde, 2010).

Parenting programs like Parent–Child Interaction Therapy and the Strengthening Families Program gave parents the ability and resources to interact with their kids in a healthy manner and encouraged positive behavior. Parent–Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) aimed to

enhance the parent–child bond while addressing behavioral and emotional problems in young children (PCIT International, 2023). Children between the ages of 2 and 7 who displayed disruptive behaviors, such as aggression, defiance, or attention issues, were the target audience for this therapy. PCIT primarily concentrated on developing parenting abilities, resolving behavioral and emotional problems in early children, and enhancing parent–child relationships (PCIT International, 2023). PCIT focused on risk factors connected to antisocial behaviors to help prevent or reduce those behaviors in children.

Created by Dr. Karol Kumpfer and her associates, the Strengthening Families Program, a family-based preventative initiative, was designed to strengthen familial ties, advance parenting abilities, and lessen the likelihood that kids and teenagers would engage in problematic behaviors (Kumpfer & Magalhães, 2018). The program usually consisted of engaging group sessions in which parents, kids (often ages 6–11), and occasionally teenagers participated. The sessions, which qualified professionals led, covered various subjects, including communication, problem-solving, family dynamics, and behavior control (Strengthening Families Program, 2020). According to one meta-analysis research study, the Strengthening Families Program was beneficial in increasing prosocial behavior while simultaneously lowering antisocial behaviors for various student age groups and backgrounds (Kumpfer & Magalhães, 2018).

Physical activity, defined as self-reported levels of daily activity, including occupational, sports, conditioning, household, or other structured activities such as exercise, aided in increasing positive teen behavior (Simonton et al., 2018). Therefore, students participating in an organized sport, extracurricular or intramural activity, or after-school club were more likely to engage in prosocial activities. Furthermore, teens involved in physical activity were less likely to participate in substance use as it was incompatible with the physiological demands of a healthy

lifestyle (Simonton et al., 2018). School online programs offered standardization of delivery, the ability to engage users with interactive online features, and monitored program usage (Byrnes et al., 2019). Several randomized controlled trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of online interventions for prosocial behavior (Byrnes et al., 2019). These were only a handful of the numerous education and awareness-raising initiatives to increase prosocial behavior. However, the program evaluations took place several years ago, and the need for more effective programs was evident.

Community Efforts. Teens benefited from having positive social outlets and opportunities to interact with peers in constructive and healthy ways through community programs and support systems like after-school activities and youth clubs. After-school programs have been linked to positive outcomes in youth, including lower drug use, higher reading and math scores, improved social interactions, higher English grades, more physical activity, and reduced social anxiety and depressive disorders (English, 2020). Particularly for kids at risk due to systemic inequalities, social engagement through planned prosocial pursuits, such as extracurricular activities, was linked to more extensive personal networks and better academic, psychological, and behavioral results (Austin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, engaging, hands-on small-group programs with near-peer facilitators effectively increased teenagers' support of positive behaviors (M. Moore et al., 2018). Data from interviews, observations, and collected artifacts showed how meaningful relationships were in after-school programs and how youth are often aware of these changes (English, 2020). Moreover, teens who participated in a broad-based community-engaged program led by health professionals reported an increased feeling of autonomy and improved both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills (Collins et al., 2020). The most effective programs that increased positive

behaviors for young adults may be those activities that took place primarily in the evening because that was when most young adults engage in risky behavior (Joyner et al., 2018).

Dr. Peter Benson, a renowned psychologist and researcher, gained prominence for his contributions to youth development and his utilization of asset-based strategies to foster healthy youth development (Sage, 2023). Benson served as the President of Search Institute, an organization dedicated to investigating and advancing the developing assets framework for youth. Benson wrote the 40 Developmental Assets, which the Search Institute classified into external and internal assets (Search Institute, 2006; Figure 2). The assets encompassed a compilation of favorable experiences and qualities universally recognized as essential for young adults' healthy growth and maturation (Search Institute, 2006). Additionally, the assets comprised a wide range of attributes that contributed to the holistic well-being and positive development of children and adolescents (Search Institute, 2006).

According to Syvertsen (2021), the Developmental Assets framework substantially influenced research and programs about positive youth development. For three decades, this framework contributed to the enhancement of support systems and organizational structures for millions of young individuals both domestically in the United States and internationally (Syvertsen et al., 2021). It impacted the evolution of scholarly research and practical approaches to adolescent development and moved away from solely addressing problems and reducing risks. Instead, it primarily emphasized exploring and nurturing young individuals' potential, strengths, and overall well-being (Syvertsen et al., 2021). The framework developed by the Search Institute aimed to assist communities, schools, families, and organizations in establishing favorable circumstances that foster the cultivation of these assets in young adults, resulting in enhanced well-being, increased achievements, and heightened resilience.

Figure 2

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (Ages 12–18)

Search INSTITUTE

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets

Support

1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations

11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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Teen Court was a community-based teen substance abuse program providing support and resources for adolescents struggling with delinquency (Fifth Judicial Circuit of Florida, 2017). Instead of punitive measures, the program emphasized education, therapy, and community service. The idea behind Teen Court was that young offenders would not commit crimes again if a jury of their peers sentenced them (Fifth Judicial Circuit of Florida, 2017). Misdemeanor juvenile first-time offenders were eligible for the program. If all of the requirements of their sentence were satisfied following the instructions given, they could leave this program with a spotless record (Bouchard & Wong, 2017). The jury, comprised of teenagers, decided constructive sentences for the offender who had pled guilty rather than whether the defendant was guilty or innocent (Fifth Judicial Circuit of Florida, 2017). Unfortunately, the outcomes of one study did not appear to reduce reoffending or other public safety concerns (Bouchard & Wong, 2017). More comprehensive studies are needed to provide a more definitive assessment of their long-term effectiveness.

A small group of concerned and committed parents who believed they should start taking the lead in teen prosocial behavior founded the National Family Partnership (NFP), previously known as the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, as a nonprofit organization in 1980 (National Family Partnership, 2023). Through sponsoring the yearly National Red Ribbon Campaign™, NFP has promoted drug awareness to millions of individuals worldwide since 1985 (National Family Partnership, 2023). To provide people with the most up-to-date information on universal campaigns, including the Red Ribbon Campaign, Red Ribbon Certified Schools, Lock

Your Meds, and Safe Homes/Safe Parties, NFP created a series of preventative pamphlets (National Family Partnership, 2023). While there was limited research on the effectiveness of the National Red Ribbon Campaign™, there was evidence that teens exposed to the messaging from this program increased prosocial behavior more than teens who have not (Brooks, 2013).

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), a well-known student-run group, aimed to encourage wise decision-making and discourage harmful actions and other risky behaviors (Students Against Destructive Decisions, 2022). However, the success of SADD programs depended on various elements, including program execution, school support, community involvement, and sustainability. Additionally, assessing changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors about risky behaviors and other specific concerns entailed performing research studies, such as surveys or assessments. Unfortunately, no recent scholarly research was available to measure the effectiveness of SADD programs.

Peer Contagion. The effect of peers in promoting healthy behaviors, pleasant attitudes, and advantageous decisions was referred to as positive peer contagion (Joseph & Kuperminc, 2022). Although researchers linked peer contagion to harmful behaviors, it is crucial to understand that they also observed positive peer contagion (Joseph & Kuperminc, 2022). Positive peer contagion may have given teens access to more prosocial socializing opportunities. Furthermore, peers who participated in sports, clubs, hobbies, or other leisure endeavors provided teenagers with a positive and prosocial environment where they spent their time and formed friendships. Group mentoring programs successfully developed strong mentor–mentee and peer relationships to enable group members to be resilient to negative peer influence and to purposefully cultivate a climate in which positive peer influence was leveraged (Kuperminc et al., 2020).

Other influences played a significant role in improving prosocial behavior. Researchers discovered that religious attendance was associated with increased academic achievement, citizenship, and character (Broman et al., 2020). Additionally, prosocial behaviors among teenagers, such as community service and assisting others, may have lessened their propensity to participate in harmful behaviors (Chen et al., 2019). Teens could interact with people, have a good time, and make a difference in their community by participating in service projects. Furthermore, the service initiatives helped young people contribute to their communities by developing a feeling of purpose, fostering positive peer interactions, and promoting healthier coping techniques. The strict enforcement of laws and rules relating to crimes committed by minors may have deterred teenagers from experimenting with problematic behaviors.

Mentoring

Mentors played a significant role in helping adolescents avoid antisocial behavior by offering advice, support, and positive role modeling. Numerous studies have shown the advantages of supportive connections with nonparental adults. Community-based mentoring mainly was linked to increases in prosocial behaviors and decreases in high-risk behavior, such as drug and alcohol use, aggressive behaviors, and conduct problems (Austin et al., 2020). Additionally, participation in community-based mentoring relationships has been linked to improved school performance, such as better attendance and grades and greater academic competence (Austin et al., 2020). Peers and nonparental adults played a more prominent role in adolescents' development as they moved away from relying solely on their parents for support (Austin et al., 2020). Consequently, mentoring was a common intervention that capitalized on the importance of nonparental adults (Austin et al., 2020). Although mentoring relationships varied, they were broadly classified as formal or informal (Austin et al., 2020).

Several advantageous developmental outcomes occurred under the right circumstances through natural, organic mentoring relationships rather than through official mentoring programs (van Dam et al., 2021). Moreover, youth with natural mentors had better early-adult educational, occupational, and psychosocial outcomes than their unmentored peers (van Dam et al., 2021). Youth mentoring programs were increasingly popular to engage with teenagers at risk for various problems (Austin et al., 2020). In the United States, nearly 3 million children and adolescents were matched with caring individuals through mentoring programs in 2019 (Austin et al., 2020). The research offered some evidence in favor of the effectiveness of adult interactions that are one-on-one and caring, especially when it came to low-cost interventions that could reach large numbers of young people and avoid more intense therapies (Austin et al., 2020).

Various mentoring programs include one-on-one, group, and online mentoring. The effectiveness of each program type in decreasing teenagers' antisocial behavior varied, and more research is necessary to determine which program types successfully reduced delinquency. DuBois et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis, which involved synthesizing the results of several studies to evaluate the overall influence of mentoring programs on various outcomes to offer a thorough review of the effectiveness of mentoring programs for teens. According to the meta-analysis, researchers linked participation in mentoring programs to increased teen prosocial behavior (DuBois et al., 2002). Children with mentors were more likely to have better self-perceptions, self-esteem improvement, and positive psychological outcomes (DuBois et al., 2002). According to the study, mentorship programs benefited young at-risk people who may have encountered additional difficulties or dangers (DuBois et al., 2002). Researchers also linked mentoring relationships that lasted a year or longer to more favorable outcomes, including a

more positive effect on young people than quick fixes (DuBois et al., 2002). The meta-analysis affirmed that mentorship programs were beneficial in increasing juvenile prosocial behavior. However, it is essential to note that the effectiveness of particular programs changed depending on factors such as program design, mentor training, and the unique requirements of the mentees (DuBois et al., 2002).

There are numerous theoretical reasons to believe mentoring assisted at-risk teens, most notably within a social support system (Keating et al., 2002). Kashani et al. (1989) discovered that compared to teenagers who reported higher social support, those who reported lower levels were more reclusive, pessimistic about the future, inattentive, and destructive to others. Alternatively, mentoring has provided some of this social support and improved youth functioning (Keating et al., 2002). From a positive psychology perspective, the research found that mentoring effectively improved positive behaviors, indicating that exposure to kind adults helped teens feel better about themselves and in less harmful behaviors (Keating et al., 2002). Furthermore, teens who connected with mentors became more resilient and hopeful about the future (Stein et al., 2000)

Researchers have conducted limited research to investigate the perspective of young adult mentees in mentoring programs. For example, participants in mentoring programs lacked context, maturity, or insight, which may have prevented them from discussing the effects of the interactions in the program in depth (English, 2020). Despite the prominence of mentorship programs designed to promote teenage prosocial behavior, there is still a lack of knowledge about how mentoring occurs, its essential elements, and how it influences young people’s prosocial behavior.

More study is required to understand further how mentorship programs for diverse groups work (Austin et al., 2020). Additionally, mentoring program evaluations that are thorough and experimental and assess youth, mentors, and program elements that can affect program impact should continue to be a focus of future studies (van Dam et al., 2021). Additional analysis of mentoring and its impact on teen prosocial behavior is essential to comprehend the most efficient strategies for preventing and reducing teenage delinquency.

Summary

The research determined that developing prosocial behavior in teens was a critical undertaking with far-reaching ramifications for school and community leaders. Furthermore, prosocial behavior encompassed a range of actions and attitudes that prioritized the well-being of others and society. Teen prosocial behavior was the cornerstone for creating more connected and robust communities. It helped create a positive social environment when school and community leaders prioritized teaching virtues like empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility. People were more inclined to work together, support one another, and effectively address shared difficulties in such a setting. This feeling of cohesion and identification generated a sense of community essential for advancing development and general well-being.

Researchers have studied psychology, sociology, and related fields on the fundamental role of prosocial behavior in human social interaction (Miech et al., 2023). Teen prosocial behavior had positive long-term consequences. School and community leaders were crucial in determining how society would develop by encouraging prosocial behavior among teenagers. A supportive learning and personal development environment was created by focusing on empathy, collaboration, and social responsibility. In addition, leaders gave the next generation the

knowledge and values they needed to become kind, responsible, and active citizens who advanced their communities and society.

Alternatively, teen antisocial behavior devastated their communities (Miech et al., 2023). One of the most serious concerns was the risk of drug addiction, which can destroy a teen's life. Risky decision-making also disrupted normal brain development, impairing teens' ability to think, make sound decisions, and control their impulses (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Furthermore, antisocial behavior harmed academic performance, disrupted social relationships, and increased the risk of accidents and injuries. Regarding substance use, long-term problems resulted in physical and mental health issues such as respiratory issues, liver damage, anxiety, and depression (Chen et al., 2019). Overall, the consequences of teen antisocial behavior were severe and long-term, making prevention and early intervention critical.

Teenagers who chose to behave prosocially did so for several reasons. Peer pressure was a frequent contributing element. Many teenagers felt pressure to fit in with their peers, and making positive decisions can be perceived as accomplishing this goal. Furthermore, environmental and societal factors such as media influence and positive interactions with family members and community mentors possibly contributed to adolescents' prosocial behavior. It was important to note that each person's reasons for maintaining positive outcomes were unique, and understanding the influences necessitated a customized approach that considered each person's specific circumstances and needs.

There were a variety of methods that helped teens make positive decisions. One crucial strategy was education, which included presenting accurate information about the benefits of positive behavior, sharing details on resisting peer pressure, and making wise decisions. Building excellent peer relationships and allowing teenagers to participate in worthwhile activities that

encouraged healthy habits and positive social connections, developing solid family relationships, and keeping communication open also helped prevent problematic behavior. Community-level programs increased citizenship while supporting healthy behaviors. Overall, multifaceted programs tailored to specific communities and individuals' needs and those involving cooperation between families, schools, community organizations, and other stakeholders helped promote healthy development while increasing prosociality.

Considering the magnitude of teen prosocial behavior, I carefully designed a study on how young people perceive the role of mentors in mentoring programs, paying particular attention to the participation of teenagers in CFMP. In Chapter 3, I explain the study's design with the primary goal of learning more about the elements that can be improved in mentorship programs to improve teen prosocial behavior. The research design of this study is described in detail in Chapter 3, along with the general framework and methodology of this qualitative investigation. It supports the sampling process and the method used to choose study participants. To guarantee the representativeness of the results, it clarifies the target population, sample size, and sampling methodologies utilized. In Chapter 3, I also describe the techniques for obtaining the data, such as focus groups and interviews. I provide a list of tools, including questionnaires, interview guides, and protocols for observation. I also explain how these tools were pilot tested to ensure they effectively gathered the needed data. The data analysis section describes the processes for qualitative coding and thematic analysis of the collected data. Finally, I cover ethical issues like participant confidentiality, informed consent, and data protection, detailing how I followed moral standards during the research process.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In the United States, teen antisocial behavior remains a significant concern, which can result in complications as an adult (Nair et al., 2022). Issues linked to teen antisocial behavior include increased deaths, suicide truancy, poor academic performance, and long-term addiction (Russell & Gordon, 2017; Spirito et al., 2018). Teenage antisocial behavior could devastate communities if it continues. For instance, the usage and abuse of narcotics negatively impact crime rates, financial markets, and family structure (Hill & Mrug, 2015). Understanding how to increase prosocial behavior remains crucial to fostering the development and maintenance of healthy teenage populations and creating safer communities. It must be a vital component in addressing teen prosocial behavior.

In this qualitative case study, I investigated youths' perceptions regarding the function of mentors in mentoring programs, specifically tracking teenagers participating in CFMP from 2016 through 2019. I used individual interviews and a focus group to gather data in this study. I analyzed it following the model Braun and Clarke (2006) provided to answer the questions.

RQ1: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens describe how mentoring relationships shaped their attitudes and perceptions of prosocial behavior?

RQ2: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe their postprogram views of prosocial behavior?

RQ3: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe the most successful elements of their program?

Research Design and Methodology

I used a qualitative case study design and followed Yin and Campbell's (2018) guidance, collecting information through semistructured, individual interviews with adult participants from

central Florida and a focus group. A case study is an empirical investigation that explores a current phenomenon in its actual setting, mainly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the environment are not immediately apparent (Yin & Campbell, 2018). Because the boundaries of prosocial behavior and effective antisocial behavior prevention programs are unclear, the best method for this research was a case study.

According to Yin and Campbell (2018), qualitative research aims to comprehend the complexity of human behavior, events, and connections with others. Therefore, a qualitative inquiry was appropriate for this study because the direct relationship between teen prosocial behavior promotion is too intricate to comprehend fully. Individual consultations are less restrictive and make discussions less systematic and informal because of the personalized approach (ten Have, 2004). Furthermore, video interviews provide more insight, as body language adds another element of interpretation (ten Have, 2004). Therefore, I conducted individual interviews using a video conferencing platform. The research also included a focus group of mentors to give feedback on their experiences with mentoring.

A qualitative research method helps determine several factors regarding mentoring. Other research methods, such as quantitative, were less applicable to this study because the data types involved are finite. The qualitative approach was most useful as it helped me gather essential information more thoroughly. Individual interviews are most effective in gathering unbiased input from those involved in this study (ten Have, 2004). Because I aimed to gather the impact of mentoring on prosocial behavior, open-ended questions allowed respondents to answer freely and with less finite data. Participants were encouraged to express their experiences, viewpoints, and insights through these open-ended questions, which aided in identifying themes for the qualitative study.

Population

The population from this study included young adults who were participants with CFMP from January 2016 through July 2019. The board, composed of community volunteers, created the mentoring organization in 2015 to develop prosocial behaviors in teens through global and local service projects. All young adults entered the program as teens by a personal invite from one of the adult mentors who served as their classroom teacher, coach, or other influential adult. A limited number of young adults joined the mentoring program as teens after hearing about it from their friends. All participants voluntarily joined the mentoring program without incentives. Although the program began solely mentoring males in 2016, female mentors and young adult mentees joined the program in 2017. Consequently, the program had a disproportionate number of males compared to females.

CFMP introduced each cohort to an 8-day, 7-night service project. Before beginning each service project, CFMP organized parent meetings to explain the organization's mission and the service project's goals, which were to raise awareness of poverty and the impact it has on communities, to foster a sense of gratitude for their way of life, and to continue fostering a sense of accountability and camaraderie among the participants. Each trip day began and ended with critical thinking, reflection activities, and discussions. Using the 40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (Ages 12–18) as a guide, CFMP focused on the assets in each of these program components (Search Institute, 2006):

Positive Values

- Caring—young person places high value on helping other people.
- Equality and social justice—young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

- Integrity—young person acts on convictions and stands up for their beliefs.
- Honesty—young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- Responsibility—young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- Restraint—young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

- Planning and decision-making—young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- Interpersonal Competence—young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- Cultural Competence—young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Resistance skills—young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- Peaceful conflict resolution—young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

- Personal power—young person feels they have control over "things that happen to me."
- Self-esteem—young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- Sense of purpose—young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- Positive view of personal future—young person is optimistic about their personal future.

CFMP organized four service projects: three in Central America and one in central Florida. While some young adults were active in the mentoring program for multiple years as teens, the minimum time for involvement was 1 year. CFMP partnered with two global service providers to organize the three international projects. One organization was Global Works Travel (2015), which aimed to deepen participants' understanding of our world's socioeconomic, political, and cultural inequalities and to open their eyes to their role in effecting positive change. Global Works Travel (2015) also attempted to instill a passion for service work, humanitarian efforts, and environmental preservation throughout a traveler's lifetime. Global Works Travel was a certified B corporation with high social and environmental performance. It was legally committed to altering its corporate governance structure to be accountable to all stakeholders, not just shareholders (B Lab, 2023). Certified B corporations also exhibited transparency by allowing information about their performance measured against B Lab's standards to be made available to the public on their B Corp profile on B Lab's website (B Lab, 2023).

The other organization CFMP partnered with was Led2Serve, "a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was formed to equip, inspire and mobilize all who have a desire to serve others by providing meaningful and life-changing service opportunities (Led2Serve, 2021)." Led2Serve (2021) created impactful journeys for reputable community partners across Costa Rica. They participate in impactful community initiatives, aided nearby families and towns, and created memorable experiences for all participants (Led2Serve, 2021). CFMP chose both Global Work Travel and Led2Serve as partners for their commitment to serving others, their impact on local communities, and upon verification of the references provided.

CFMP included 73 participants (29 female and 44 male), all of whom were either high school students, first-year college students, or college sophomores at the time of enrollment. All

young adults attended one of 11 high schools (three private schools and eight public schools) during their teenage years, although 61 of the adults in this population attended the same private high school. Only one college student participated in CFMP as a teen. Although CFMP was not primarily a substance use prevention program, there were initiatives and discussions to help participants make intelligent decisions to abstain. The population for the mentor focus group included mentors from CFMP who served during at least one of the four service trips.

Study Sample

Because this is a bounded case study (Yin & Campbell, 2018), I focused on a particular group of young adults during a specific timeframe. Young adult participants who formerly attended one private school throughout high school formed the study sample. I used convenience sampling to reach or locate a representative sample of 11 young adults from the target population (Leavy, 2017) because it is the most practical and effective method of participant recruitment. Furthermore, all young adults in this study have participated in the same mentoring program and attended the same private high school. All young adults entered the program as teens by a personal invite from one adult mentor who served as their classroom teacher, coach, or other influential adult. A limited number of young adults joined the mentoring program after hearing about it from their friends. Parents provided contact information, including the young adults' cell phone numbers and email addresses while in the program. Consequently, the mentoring program tracked young adults with parental consent. I accessed the contact information of the young adults who participated in the program because of my role in the mentoring program.

Although convenience sampling may appear more biased because it drew from a nonrepresentative sample of those available and willing to participate in the study (Stratton, 2021), I selected young adults who attended one specific school. Furthermore, I chose young

adults who participated in the mentoring program for multiple years. Additionally, I adjusted the population parameters when choosing males and females for the sample to help gather a more representative data set. Purposive sampling is a method without probability in which researchers choose participants or cases based on certain qualities or parameters relevant to the research goals (Palinkas et al., 2015). This method entailed selecting individuals or instances on purpose who may offer rich and diverse viewpoints, experiences, or information connected to the research issue. Therefore, I included purposive sampling and carefully selected the participants based on ethnicity, family status, and gender. I introduced the study and invited the young adults to participate via email, text message, and telephone call. After the initial contact, I provided the Invitation to Study for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix A) and the Informed Consent Form for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix B).

To select mentors for the focus group, I only used purposive sampling, as previously mentioned (Palinkas et al., 2015). I chose mentors who have served with CFMP with demographic compositions similar to those of the young adult sample. I aimed to establish a 6-member mentor focus group.

In qualitative research, investigators often decided on sample size by a concept known as data saturation (Yin & Campbell, 2018), which is the point at which gathering additional data, such as interviews or observations, does not offer significantly new information or insights. I believe I reached that point after thoroughly exploring the depth and breadth of the research topics with 11 young adult mentee individual interviews and a 5-member mentor focus group.

Materials/Instruments

According to Yin and Campbell (2018), in semistructured interviews, a researcher prepares a list of open-ended inquiries to steer the dialogue while allowing freedom to pursue

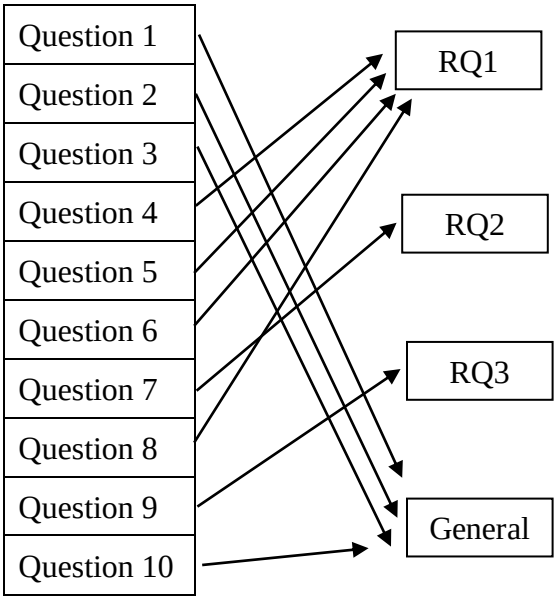
unexpected lines of questioning. Researchers might also follow up on participants' comments to better grasp their opinions and experiences (Yin & Campbell, 2018). The semistructured interviews took place via a recorded video on Zoom. Participants answered questions about their teenage years and what adults have played pivotal roles in care, concern, guidance, and oversight outside their biological parents. Additionally, respondents provided feedback using the data collection tool (Appendix C) regarding their views on prosocial behavior.

A focus group with five mentors added a second layer of data to examine the relationship between mentors and mentees. I selected mentors from CFMP. I invited the mentors to participate via phone call, text message, or email using the Invitation to Study for Mentors form (Appendix D). I held the focus group via a recorded video on Zoom. Questions were related to the experience of mentors and their observations with mentees regarding what they noted was effective in reducing risky behaviors (Appendix E).

To complement the qualitative study, I linked questions from the Data Collection Tool for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix C) with the research questions (Figure 3). Questions 4, 5, 6, and 8 supported the primary research question, RQ1, and Question 7 provided insight into solving secondary research question one, RQ2. Question 9 supported secondary research question two, RQ3, while the remaining questions, 1–3 and 10, provided general information to help support the study and organize themes.

Figure 3

Data Collection Tool Link to Research Questions



I collected data via video recordings and used a transcription service to add a layer of confidentiality (McMullin, 2021). In a case study, transcribing the data helps to ensure that the confidentiality of participants is maintained to reduce any possible risks or harmful repercussions due to participating in the survey (National Institutes of Health, n.d.).

Expert Panel

I gathered a panel of experts to review the Data Collection Tool for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix C) and the Data Collection Tool for Mentor Focus Group (Appendix E). They provided general feedback on the alignment of questions, the appropriate nature of the questions, and ethical considerations. The panel consisted of a current head of school with over 30 years in education and a background in counseling teens, a former head of school with a PhD in educational policy studies, a current head of school with an EdD in educational leadership, and a retired government official with a PhD in chemistry. The collective feedback on the data

collection tools yielded significant changes to the tool's questions. The first draft of questions on the collection tool raised ethical issues regarding asking young adults about illegal activity during their teenage years. Therefore, I restructured the questions.

Additionally, the panel provided general feedback on how the questions should be organized and directly related to supporting the research questions. They recommended making the questions more exploratory, experience- and opinion-based by examining how participants view different facets of the topics. The experts added questions about influencing variables that I should ask participants about events or choices that may have impacted them. The panel's advice was invaluable as it helped curate a list of questions to support the research questions.

Field Testing

I field-tested the Data Collection Tool for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix C) with a registered behavioral technician who was 24 years old and had a business administration degree with a minor in psychology. I informed the interviewee about the study and the development of the data collection instrument before the interview. The in-person interview lasted about 47 minutes.

I concluded that the questions needed to be adjusted for young people since they were too technical. As a result, I rewrote the questions in a more straightforward style and adapted them to fit the study's population better. I found that a few of the queries yielded similar responses. Therefore, I streamlined the data collection method by combining and eliminating some questions.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

After reviewing the literature, I created a set of questions for each interviewee, which the professor evaluated as a course requirement in a previous class. The open-ended questions

(Appendix C) were part of a semistructured interview that provided general queries and allowed the interviewee to respond freely (Yates & Leggett, 2016). The goal was not to give a list of questions where interviewees answered “yes” or “no” but instead created an opportunity for more dialogue. I piloted these questions with a random adult unrelated to this study, and the interview took 47 minutes.

I sought and received expedited approval from Abilene Christian University’s Institutional Review Board to conduct this investigation because the research has little risk to subjects and does not involve vulnerable populations such as children, prisoners, or the economically disadvantaged (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, n.d.). Parents and young adult mentees provided permission for tracking and contact information, including parent and young adult phone numbers and email addresses. Furthermore, parents encouraged continued communication with their children after the mentoring program ended for the participant. After receiving approval from ACU’s IRB, I contacted potential participants by phone, text, or email using the Invitation to Study for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix A). Young adults interested in the study notified me of their interest by phone, text, or email. I then sent the Informed Consent Form for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix B). I contacted those who signed the consent form to schedule the interview.

I recorded interviews via Zoom videoconferencing platform to ensure consistency among participants and for transcription purposes. The importance of video conference interviews provided me with valuable visual cues such as body language, eye contact, and other signs that audio interviews could not offer. I instructed participants not to use personally identifiable information during the interviews. However, when they accidentally divulged information, I reminded them I would anonymize it during transcription. I used a transcription service to

transcribe the recordings into Microsoft Word documents and saved them on an external hard drive.

I used a similar method to invite mentors to participate in the focus group. Using the Invitation to Study for Mentors (Appendix D), I contacted possible mentors by phone, text, or email and invited them to participate in the mentor focus group. Mentors interested in the study confirmed their interest by phone, text, or email. I then sent the Informed Consent Form for Mentors (Appendix F). I then contacted all mentors who signed the consent form to schedule the focus group meeting.

I used a polling platform to determine the most convenient time for all focus group members. For transcribing purposes and to maintain uniformity, I conducted the focus group via Zoom videoconferencing. I instructed participants not to use personally identifiable data during the focus group. When participants inadvertently revealed information, I anonymized the information during transcription. I used a transcription service to create Microsoft Word documents of the recordings and saved them on an external hard drive. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, I will permanently delete the audio recordings after the study according to ACU's storage requirements.

In reviewing the transcriptions, I organized and coded the data using a software program and determined themes (Yin & Campbell, 2018). This thematic analysis identified any themes or patterns in the data. I Investigated the participants' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions, which helped me organize the data and determine similarities. Using Braun and Clarke (2006)'s guidance, I followed the six-step thematic analysis process. Those steps involved the following:

1. becoming familiar with the data
2. generating codes

3. searching for themes
4. reviewing themes
5. defining and naming themes
6. preparing a report

I focused on how learning, behavior modification, and growth occurred for SLT through social interactions and observation (Bandura, 1977). I analyzed the data concerning observational learning (Bandura, 1977), looking for occasions in which individuals indicate learning by observing others. I then looked for examples of role models, peer influencers, or behavior modeling. Regarding reinforcement and punishment (Bandura, 1977), I investigated how consequences (positive or negative) influenced participants' behavior and decisions. I recognized occasions where participants mentioned incentives, punishments, or feedback during their learning experiences. For imitation and modeling (Bandura, 1977), I investigated whether participants imitated behaviors or attitudes seen in others, such as mentors, peers, or family members.

I emphasized how humans are influenced by their immediate and broader settings for EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) by analyzing data in the context of the following:

1. Microsystem—I investigated how participants' surrounding circumstances, such as family, peers, and school, influenced their views and prosocial behaviors.
2. Mesosystem—I investigated the interactions and connections between various microsystems and found examples of individuals discussing how their experiences in one setting influenced their experiences in another.

3. Exosystem—I looked into how characteristics in settings that were not directly connected to participants (for example, parents' work surroundings) affected their prosocial attitudes and behaviors.
4. Macrosystem—I examined the data for cultural and societal influences that shaped participants' prosocial ideals and beliefs.
5. Chronosystem—I examined how the young adult's development occurred over time.

I then checked the themes to see if they were logically significant and appropriately reflected the facts. The themes were combined, divided, or adjusted to convey the material's substance more effectively (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After I evaluated and modified the topics, I gave the topics precise definitions and short titles that accurately reflected their substance. I introduced each theme in a way that summarized its central notion or idea. This process gave the analysis a clean, well-organized structure (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Making a thorough report of the topic analysis was the last step. I thoroughly explained this report's topics and any supporting data. The topics also offered illustrative quotes and examples to help the readers better comprehend each concept. The information conveyed an engaging narrative based on the findings and was cohesive and well-structured (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Triangulation is a valuable strategy in research, data analysis, and decision-making processes because it increases the robustness and validity of conclusions by combining and comparing data from many perspectives (Yin & Campbell, 2018). I used a similar data collection method for the focus group as the individual interviews. I contacted the mentors from CFMP by phone call, text, or email based on their participation in the lives of teens. I aimed to select a sample of six mentors using the Invitation to Study For Mentors (Appendix D). Mentors

interested in joining the focus group received the Informed Consent Form for Mentors (Appendix F) before beginning the interview.

The interviews were conducted via a recorded videoconferencing platform to maintain uniformity among participants and for transcription needs. Focus group participants received instructions not to utilize personally identifiable information in the interviews. To study the relationships between subjects, trends, or recurring ideas that span several codes, I grouped them and captured significant aspects of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I compared data from the focus group of mentors with the responses from the individual interviews to assist in spotting trends, contradictions, or discrepancies in the data, enabling a more thorough and trustworthy grasp of the topic under study.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research, I used guidance from Shenton (2004) to focus on the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Qualitative data are more complex than quantitative data (Shenton, 2004) because researchers cannot generalize them. As such, using prior research and the focus group of mentors to triangulate the findings in this study was crucial in developing integrity. Much research supports the positive effects of mentoring, which I compared to the data from this study. Furthermore, anonymizing the data was one tactic that helped potential participants to be honest during their interviews (Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) also explained that my credibility is critical to collecting and analyzing the data effectively.

Researcher Bias

Researchers must consider how their roles impact research to avoid or mitigate bias (Darawsheh, 2014); in my case, I served as the president and founder of the mentoring

organization the young adult mentees attended and was an integral part of the mentoring activities. However, I only maintained constant contact with a few mentees since 2019. I was a classroom teacher since August 2004 and a school administrator since June 2018, primarily focusing on encouraging prosocial behavior among teens.

While I had biases in how I believed mentoring impacted individuals, I was keenly aware of the line of questioning. Furthermore, I committed to the integrity of questions on the interview sheet without additional commentary. Moreover, I prepared a standardized questionnaire to use as the starting point for the semistructured interviews to reduce the potential for inappropriate subjectivity. Darawsheh (2014) described reflexivity as the process through which people or others in society consider and critically analyze their ideas, deeds, and opinions in light of the social and cultural settings in which they are rooted. It entailed self-awareness and the capacity to examine and critically challenge one's presumptions, biases, and viewpoints. I remained mindful of reflexivity in their preferences and used objective questions instead of subjective ones, as recommended by Darawsheh (2014).

EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) urges researchers examining human behavior to investigate numerous levels of influence, from the individual to the social. A holistic approach reduces the likelihood of oversimplifying complicated phenomena and allows me to account for many elements that may influence this study topic. SLT (Bandura, 1977) emphasized the function of observation and modeling in learning. I used this notion by being aware of my biases and the possibility of prejudice against the research participants. I recognized that others may learn from my actions or attitudes and endeavor to demonstrate impartiality and objectivity. I incorporated these concepts from the theories into this study design and execution, which assisted with my being impartial and unbiased.

Ethical Considerations

I sought and received expedited approval from Abilene Christian University's Institutional Review Board based on the minimal risk posed to participants. However, taking an ethical, responsible, and legal attitude was critical when researching and looking for details on someone's youthful behaviors. The young adult participant and I established a rapport based on mutual respect and trust. Furthermore, I reminded them of the need for privacy and reassured them that their responses remained confidential and only used for research. To ensure that the participant was aware of their rights and the potential risks involved and their participation was voluntary, I thoroughly explained the purpose and nature of the research and the specific topics I explored. I told the participants I treated their comments with strict confidentiality and safeguarded their identity. Any identifying information in the final report or publication was erased or anonymized. Finally, I established a welcoming and safe space for participants to discuss their experiences by selecting a secluded, calm environment where they always felt comfortable, keeping in mind their emotional health. I provided potential participants with the Invitation to Study for Mentees (Appendix A) and the Informed Consent Form for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix B), who were allowed to participate or decline without compensation or consequence.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

I assumed the participants were honest in their responses and felt that their interviews provided valuable information for future improvement. I also believed the respondents' data would triangulate with previous research (Darawsheh, 2014). Finally, I assumed that the 11 participants represented an adequate sample out of the 73 from the population due to the

perceived relationships they have built with their mentees. I also assumed the five adult mentors provided valuable information within the mentor focus group.

Limitations

There were a few limitations of this study. First, the study focused on one teen mentoring program in the central Florida region. Therefore, researchers cannot generalize the results for teens in the United States or other parts of the world. Another limitation of this study was that it did not include input from adults who did not have mentors. Adding interviews for adults, not part of mentoring as teens, could have provided valuable data for comparison. This study was also limited to the memories of adults when they were teens. One final limitation was that this study did not include adults not involved in other teen programs, such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

Delimitations

In this study, I focused on young adults actively involved in one program in central Florida. The adults attended one of 11 schools in central Florida as teens but were a part of the same mentoring program at some point. Not all adults participated in the program simultaneously when they were teens.

Summary

This chapter provided insight into the perceptions of adults who participated in CFMP as teens. Furthermore, this qualitative research study revealed data about adults' experiences with mentoring. Using semistructured interviews provided the participants the freedom to respond with open-ended answers, which were more reflective. Following the guidance of ACU's IRB, the participants were protected and had minimal risk of harm due to safety measures. Beyond designing research methods, creating an atmosphere of comfort for the participants helped yield

the most honest and open responses, thereby increasing trustworthiness. Upon analyzing the data, emerging themes provided insight for improved mentoring. While this study had limitations, the information I gained from the participants will benefit society, one teen at a time.

Chapter 4: Results

The role of adult mentors appeared as a critical thread weaving through the formative years of teenagers in the complicated fabric of adolescent development. Using a qualitative descriptive, I examined adolescent psychology to investigate the powerful influence that adult mentors can have on encouraging prosocial behaviors in teenagers. Prosocial activities, which include acts of kindness, empathy, and generosity, are critical in forming individual character and the larger social fabric. I studied the complex interplay between mentorship and prosocial development. Through this research, I aimed to uncover how adult mentors became positive change agents, thus contributing to forming a socially responsible and compassionate generation. I sought to answer these questions:

RQ1: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens describe how mentoring relationships shaped their attitudes and perceptions of prosocial behavior?

RQ2: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe their postprogram views of prosocial behavior?

RQ3: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe the most successful elements of their program?

My data analysis method incorporated descriptive coding elements within the broader thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). In this approach, the early stages of coding involved generating initial codes without imposing preconceived categories on the data, which allowed for a more open and data-driven exploration (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviewees provided a detailed account of their recollection of their participation in programs organized by CFMP from 2016 to 2019. In the thematic analysis framework, I categorized or coded data to capture the descriptive content of the information without instantly interpreting or

reasoning about its meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It entailed giving a detailed description or summary of the data, frequently using the words or expressions of the participants.

I displayed this study's codes, categories, and themes in this chapter. Additionally, I discussed and illustrated a detailed data analysis, including the demographics of the questionnaire and interview participants in this chapter, along with significant elements of the participants' remarks and involvement.

Results

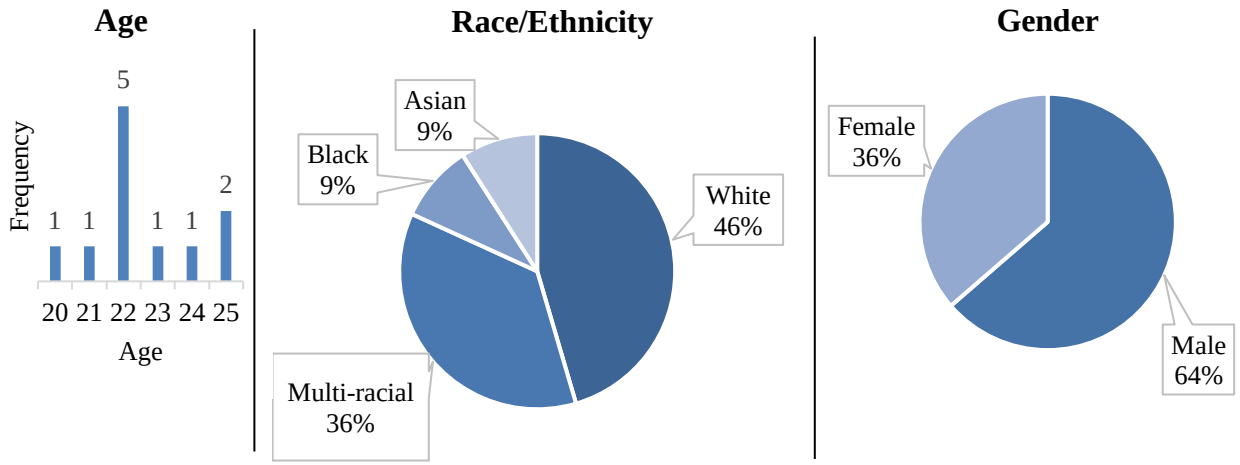
I assembled a panel of experts to examine the interview questions. The committee suggested I make the inquiries more exploratory, experience- and opinion-based by exploring how participants perceive various aspects of the topics. The experts also stated that when asking participants about influencing factors, it is best to inquire about decisions or experiences that may have influenced them. I also piloted the data collection tool. As a result, the questions were revised to suit the study's target group better and worded more clearly. I discovered that some of the questions produced similar answers. As a result, I combined and removed several questions to improve the data collection process.

Participant Demographics

To gather data for this study, I requested input from 11 young adult mentees who participated in programs organized by CFMP from 2016 through 2019. I included all 11 young adult mentees who responded to the invitation. The young adult mentees ranged in age from 20 to 25. The race/ethnicity of the young adult mentees included five White, four multiracial, one Black, and one Asian. Seven were male, and four were female. Figure 4 shows the information using a bar chart and pie graphs.

Figure 4

Demographic Information for Young Adult Mentees



All 11 young adult mentees who participated in the study were invited to join and signed the Informed Consent Form for Young Adult Mentees (Appendix B) via DocuSign before scheduling the interview. All 11 discussions occurred over 3 weeks. Each young adult mentee interview was video and audio recorded via Zoom and transcribed using the Fathom Video transcription service. I emailed each interview participant a copy of their transcription as a PDF for review and accuracy. I corrected a few minor words that Fathom erroneously transcribed. The average young adult mentee age was 22.5, the average interview time was 45.6 minutes, the average transcript document was 11.8 pages in single-spaced, 12-point font, and the average number of years each young adult mentee participated in CFMP activities was 2.4 years (Table 1).

Table 1

Young Adult Mentee Interview Participant Demographics

Participant #	Gender	Age	Race/ethnicity	Interview time	Transcript pages	Years with CFMP
1	Male	22	Multiracial	0:59:27	14	4
2	Male	25	White	0:35:44	12	2
3	Male	22	White	0:56:01	13	4
4	Male	20	Multiracial	1:05:52	15	2
5	Male	24	White	0:32:06	8	1
6	Male	25	Asian	1:04:05	14	3
7	Female	22	White	0:42:14	11	2
8	Female	21	Multiracial	0:33:37	10	2
9	Female	22	White	0:31:13	10	2
10	Female	23	Multiracial	0:37:20	11	2
11	Male	22	Black	0:46:19	12	2
Totals and averages	Male: 7 Female: 4	22.5 years	White: 5 Multiracial: 4 Black: 1 Asian: 1	45.6 minutes	11.8 pages	2.4 years

I invited six adult mentors who have served with CFMP to participate in the focus group. The six mentors also responded, indicating their willingness to participate, and signed the Informed Consent Form for Mentors (Appendix F) via DocuSign. I used the polling program https://whenavailable.com/ to schedule a convenient time for the focus group. However, one adult mentor had a family emergency on the focus group day and could not participate. The focus group consisted of the remaining five mentors and was 50:41 minutes transcribed into a 13-page document in single-spaced, 12-point font. I emailed all focus group participants a copy of the meeting transcription for review and intent. I fixed a few small words that Fathom had transcribed incorrectly. I displayed the demographics of the focus group participants in Table 2.

Table 2

Adult Mentor Focus Group Participant Demographics

Participant #	Gender	Occupation	Years with CFMP
1	Female	Teacher	4
2	Female	Teacher	3
3	Female	Teacher	1
4	Male	Real estate agent	2
5	Female	Contract administrator	2
Totals and averages	Male: 1 Female: 4	Teacher: 3 Real estate agent: 1 Contract administrator: 1	Average: 2.4 years

The young adult mentees provided fresh perspectives, a rich tapestry of experiences, their distinctive viewpoints, and challenges with CFMP. Furthermore, the focus group setting served as a forum for mentors to share their expertise and guidance. This deliberate articulation of detailed feedback from both young adult mentees and adult mentors was pivotal in understanding the impact of CFMP.

Data and Thematic Analysis

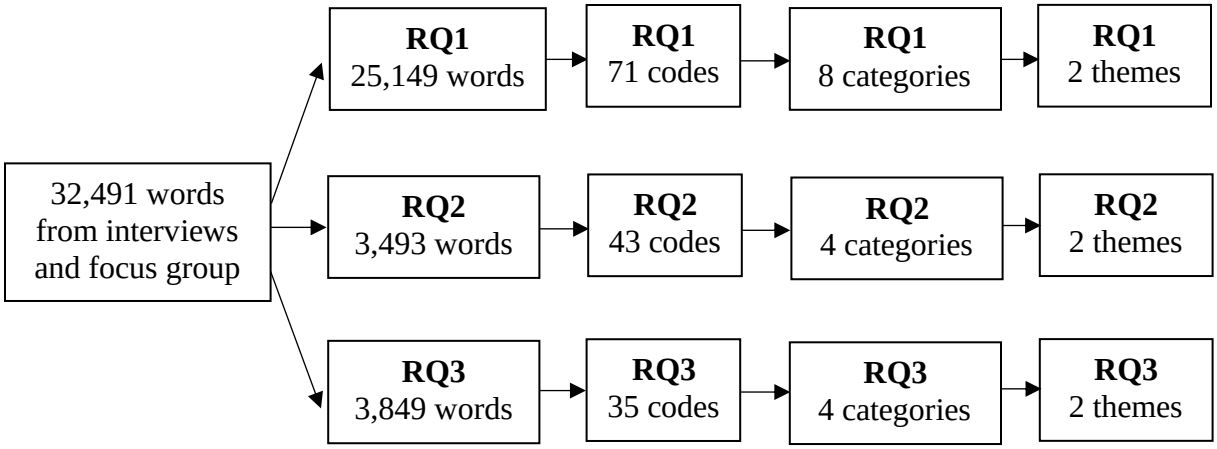
I analyzed the data using a six-step thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Those steps involved the following:

1. becoming familiar with the data
2. generating codes
3. searching for themes
4. reviewing themes
5. defining and naming themes
6. preparing a report

Figure 5 shows the progression of each step in the thematic analysis process and the alignment with each research question.

Figure 5

Progression From Words to Codes to Categories to Themes



Familiarizing and Organizing Data. I began analyzing the data by reviewing each transcript three times. The first revision included making formatting changes and condensing lines. I examined the transcripts again while listening to the video recording. During the final review, I used Atlas.ti 23 software to select groups of words for each research question. While organizing the data, I mainly highlighted significant phrases in the transcripts to ensure a more robust data interpretation that reflects the interviewees' intentions for each research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I organized the words by research question. When I sorted the data by research question, there were 25,149 words for RQ1, 3,493 for RQ2, and 3,849 for RQ3.

Coding. After organizing the data by research questions, I ensured all extracts were coded and collated (Appendix G) within each relevant code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, I merged the codes of "cultural experience" and "exchange" into the code of "cultural competence." I developed 71 codes for RQ1, 43 for RQ2, and 35 for RQ3. I used some codes in multiple research questions (Appendix H). For example, I used the code *support* in RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3.

Searching for Themes Using Categories. I began collecting and categorizing the various codes and compiling any pertinent coded data extracts into probable themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, I used the RQ1 codes “community building,” “connection,” “sense of belonging,” and “sense of purpose” to create the Sense of Community and Connection category. I listed the categories for RQ1 in Table 3.

I used a process similar to RQ1 to develop categories for RQ2. I listed the categories for RQ2 in Table 4. For RQ3, I identified categories using a process similar to that used for RQ1 and RQ2. Table 5 lists those categories.

Reviewing Themes. The fourth phase occurred once I developed a list of potential themes, which entailed refining those ideas through further development (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, I reviewed and refined groups of codes to see which ones were related. To create categories, I developed a preliminary list of themes from those related codes. Subsequently, I conducted a comprehensive analysis to identify patterns and connections among the categories, allowing for a deeper understanding of their underlying relationships. Refining and analyzing the data led to the subtle development of the emergent themes, which improved the strength and reliability of the qualitative data analysis. I listed the progression from codes to categories themes for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 in Figures 6, 7, and 8.

Table 3

RQ1 Categories

Category name	Codes within each category
Positive Role Modeling	achievement; altruism; caring; community service; compassion; generosity; giving back; helping others; humility; integrity; kindness; leadership; mentor's influence; positive influence; role model; support; teacher–student relationship; trust
Personal Growth and Development	accountability; adaptability; comfort zone; decision-making; growth; growth mindset; happiness; hard work; perseverance; personal growth; planning; reflection; resilience; responsibility; self-acceptance; self-awareness; self-confidence; self-esteem; self-motivation
Impact on Values and Beliefs	admiration; equality and justice; expectations; family influence; integrity; long-term impact; values
Challenges and Growth Opportunities	adversity; anxiety; comfort zone; feelings of inadequacy; perseverance; resilience; vulnerability
Enhanced Social Awareness	bonding; community building; connection; cultural competence; diversity; equality and justice; friendship; global perspective; inclusion; interpersonal competence; perception; relationship-building; social competencies; teamwork; understanding
Empowerment and Support	empowerment; encouragement; opportunity; personal power; selflessness; sense of belonging; sense of purpose; support
Long-Term Impact on Behavior	long-term impact; long-term relationship; mentoring; personal growth; reflection
Learning by Observation	communication; expectations; interpersonal competence; mentor's influence; role model; trust; understanding

Table 4

RQ2 Categories

Category name	Codes within each category
Personal Development and Well-being	accountability; achievement; adaptability; adversity; anxiety; courage; effort; emotional intelligence; empathy; integrity; personal growth; perspective shift; reflection; responsibility; self-acceptance; self-awareness; self-confidence; self-esteem; self-motivation; sense of purpose
Interpersonal and Social Relationships	bonding; communication; community building; friendship; long-term relationship; relationship-building; respect; support; trust
Prosocial Behavior and Global Citizenship	community service; giving back; global perspective; gratitude; leadership; long-term impact; mentoring; mentor's influence; open-mindedness
Ethical Values and Social Justice	cultural competence; equality and justice; honesty; privilege; values

Table 5

RQ3 Categories

Category name	Codes within each category
Personal Development and Growth	achievement; adaptability; adversity; emotional intelligence; empathy; gratitude; happiness; hard work; impact; personal growth; perspective shift; reflection; resilience; restraint
Social and Interpersonal Skills	bonding; community building; connection; cultural competence; diversity; equality and justice; inclusion; kindness mentoring; relationship building; support; teamwork
Values and Ethics	caring; honesty; integrity; open-mindedness; respect; values
Community and Service	community service; compassion; global perspective

Figure 6

RQ1 Progression From Codes to Categories to Themes

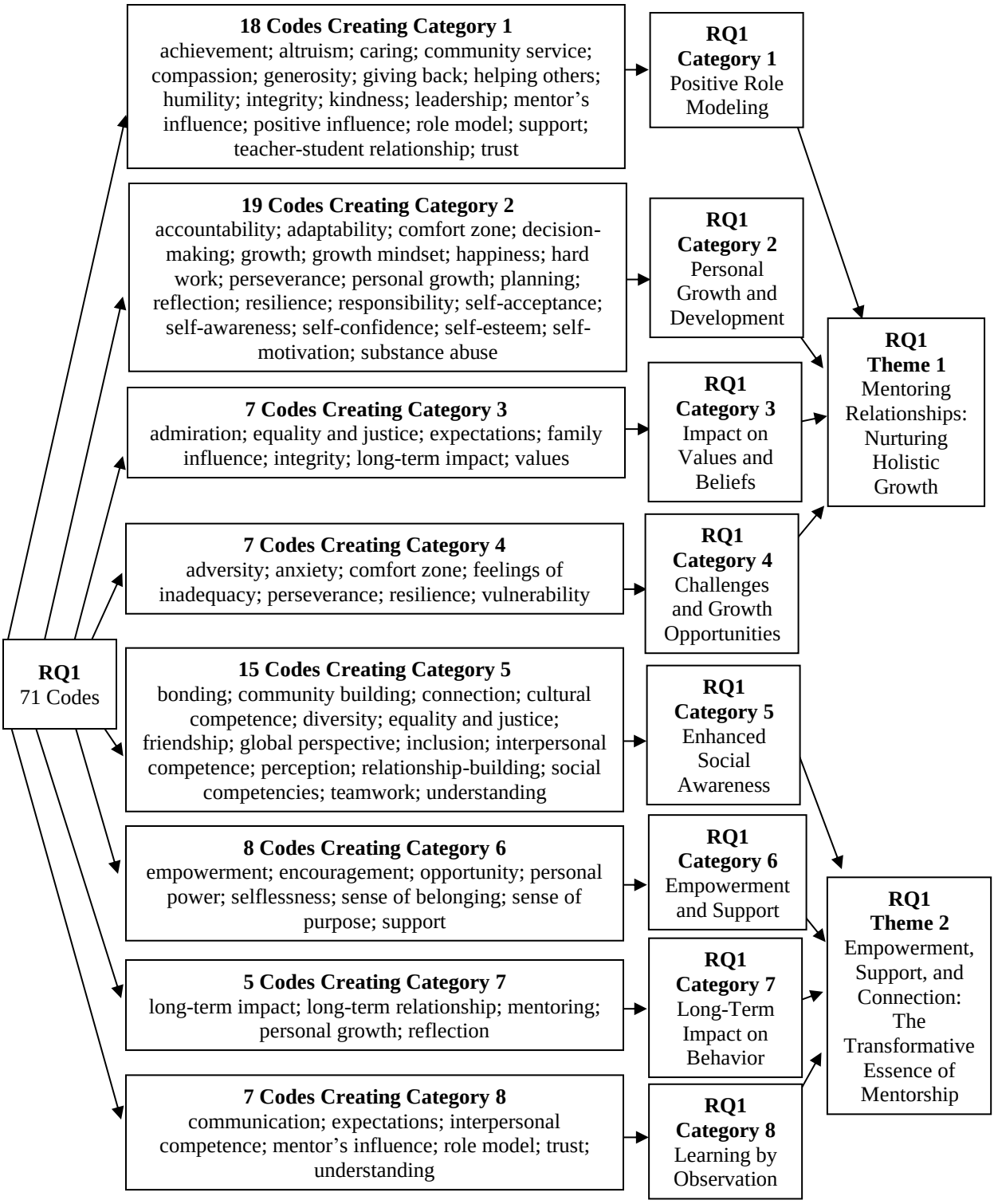


Figure 7

RQ2 Progression From Codes to Categories to Themes

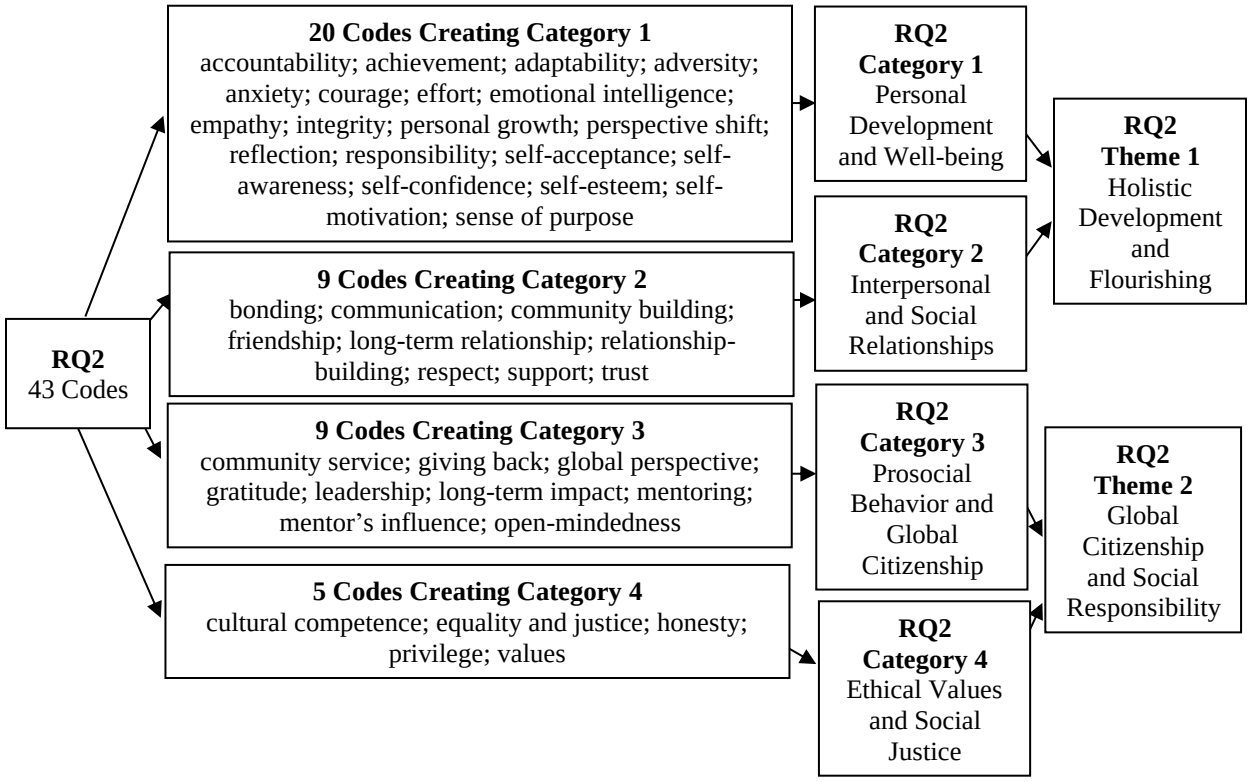
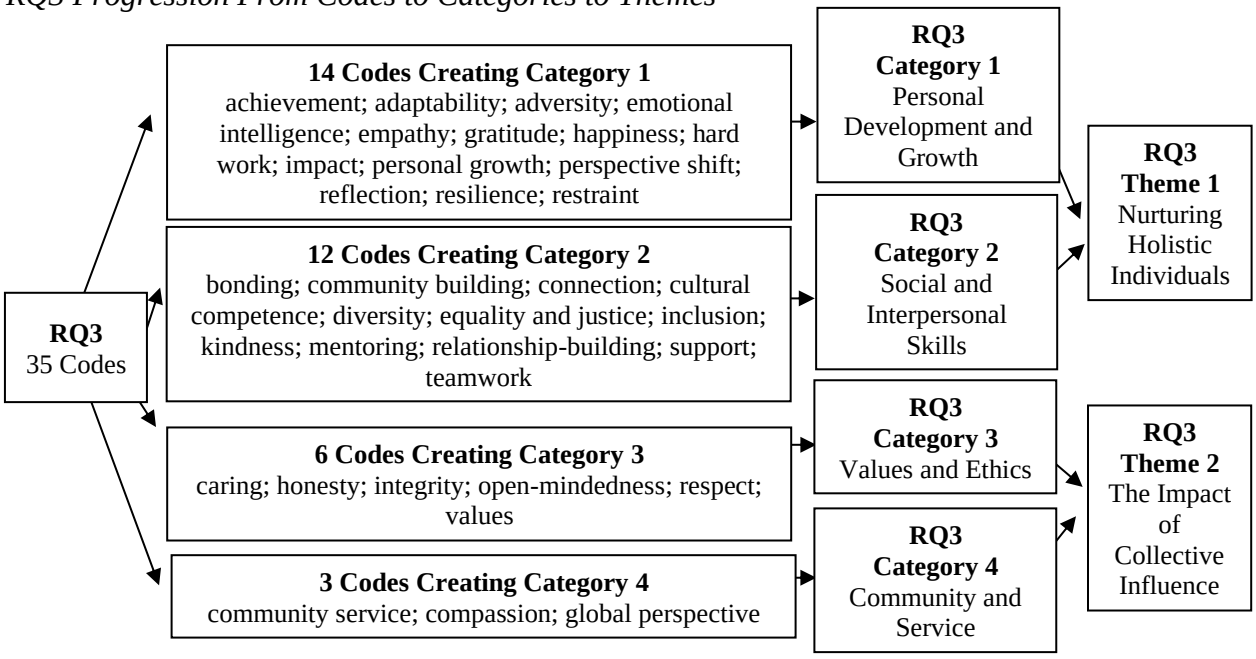


Figure 8

RQ3 Progression From Codes to Categories to Themes



Defining and Naming Themes. After identifying the basic categories in the earlier phases, I attempted to develop further and clarify them (Appendix I). It was necessary to determine each theme within the data and ensure that it effectively conveyed the main ideas of the coded extracts it encompassed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I identified six themes from the data, including two from RQ1, two from RQ2, and two from RQ3. RQ1 focused on the impact of mentoring on prosocial behavior in teens, while RQ2 focused on the lasting effects of exposure to mentoring. Finally, RQ3 examined the mentoring program's most successful components from the participants' perspective. Participants thoroughly recalled their experiences with CFMP, particularly what elements continued to shape their thought processes.

RQ1 Theme 1. Mentoring relationships served as nurturing conduits for the holistic growth of individuals, fostering personal development, shaping values, heightening social awareness, and providing opportunities for overcoming challenges. I derived this theme from the categories Positive Role Modeling, Personal Growth and Development, Impact on Values and Beliefs, and Challenges and Growth Opportunities. Reflection, personal growth, community service, and leadership were the most prevalent codes that created these categories. I coded *reflection* 70 times during the participant interviews, defining the program's impact and the programmatic elements of daily briefings. One participant stated,

> Seeing where people come from versus where I came from and realizing they don't have these basic necessities was pretty sobering. So it's nice to have my team and us working together to help them out.

Another participant reflected on the impact of the mentoring program had on them, saying,

> The program opened our eyes to the world around us to ultimately have some introspection to see what we could do to be better people overall, which I think is very important. It's a little bit hard to understand what kind of person you are and the situation you've been in without context. I feel like these trips and this mentorship program have definitely given context.

Another participant spoke of the importance of the daily mentoring group sessions by stating,

> Taking the time to discuss our lives and maybe any specific pain points or pressure points is a good coping mechanism. I can very vividly remember myself and others expressing some very deep emotions that we had and what experiences the people had in their lives. And it felt good to get that off your chest, especially if you struggle with it.

The participants described how mentoring relationships facilitated their holistic growth and progress through positive role modeling. Furthermore, the young adults told how these relationships promoted individual development, influenced values and convictions, heightened consciousness of societal issues, and offered advice for overcoming life challenges. One participant spoke,

> [The mentoring program] really increased my confidence a lot, knowing that a lot of other people are kind of like me, in a way. I just became more confident in myself through the program by understanding that, in a sense, I'm a lot like everybody else. And everybody else is a lot like me. And we all have our own trials and tribulations that we're going through.

Many participants shared how the mentoring program's community service component gave them a strong feeling of purpose and fulfillment when they were teenagers and how it changed their lives. One young adult described it by stating,

> I remember lots of moments from [the mentoring program]. Volunteering and being selfless are some things I feel I owe a lot to in my growth. Maybe my lens would be slightly different if I did not have those experiences. I can see responsibility now and equality, seeing people for who they are and not how they appear.

In addition to positively impacting multiple communities, these activities helped the young adults cultivate important character qualities like compassion, honesty, and accountability. Exposure to various life events facilitated empathy and a more profound comprehension of others, while the chance to assume leadership positions augmented organizational and leadership proficiencies. One participant described his view of leadership within the program as this:

> The program graciously asked me, "Hey, would you mind playing a mentorship role while also benefiting from the mentorship, programs, and prompts?" But, you know, stepping up to the plate to be an example would [make me] think about these things more importantly. Getting a room full of guys together is important to try to make engagement the norm rather than anything else. And so, I was really excited to be in a somewhat of a leadership position. And I think that that came with a tremendous amount of responsibility in practice. Whether that's drinking alcohol or perhaps other things are not ideal for the time. [The program] pushed me to be, in some ways, precisely the mentor I needed. It made me better at providing leadership to other folks in the group.

One of the adult mentors provided feedback that helped further explain the importance of leadership development through mentoring. They stated,

> What comes to mind is the time we went to [a particular service project]. That was a whole different generation we oversaw underneath the mentees that day. So not only were the mentees receiving, but they were giving back and seeing and having an idea of what it felt like to pull someone else up, not just through service, but just being a big brother or a big sister or being a mentee even at their age. So, I think it became a domino effect. It didn't just stop with our group. They pass it on and start to see themselves as mentors by having the youth shadow them for that day.

Community service turned into a complex process that developed young adults into well-rounded people, instilling a sense of civic pride and duty and strengthening the community. Through fulfilling service work, young adults developed empathy and learned much about social responsibility. This life-changing experience helped them become responsible adults and create enduring community relationships.

RQ1 Theme 2. Mentorship went beyond guidance; it embodied the transformative essence of empowerment, unwavering support, and profound connection, creating a lasting impact on individuals' perspectives and actions. This theme emerged from the categories of Enhanced Social Awareness, Empowerment and Support, Long-Term Impact on Behavior, and Learning by Observation. The most common codes in these categories were "mentoring," "community building," "support," "cultural competence," "teamwork," and "bonding." All participants provided positive feedback about the impact of mentoring, their connection to CFMP, and their mentors.

I coded "mentoring" 60 times throughout the interviews. The young adults frequently characterized their relationships with mentors as transformative and invaluable experiences. One young adult explained,

> I always looked up to my mentor, so I wanted to have him respect me as much as I respected him, and you know, your parents tell you to do things, and it's like, "Who cares? You're mom and dad." Sometimes, it takes someone else that you can look up to. It's not just your parents telling you how to act, but [the mentor] shows you the different ways you could act and how it could benefit you.

Others stated that they maintained relationships with their mentors because their mentors were genuinely caring, connected with them beyond the classroom, and shared some common hobbies. One mentee explained how the mentoring program helped him develop a mentoring relationship that continued for check-ins on life and became a steady person to discuss the transitions from high school to college and the professional world. Another young adult said this about their mentor:

> [My mentor] would see me in class always trying to help people, and she said, "You know, you have a great heart." She used to talk about what I wanted to do in life and where I wanted to go. She would help present these different options. She would say, "Always stay true to yourself," and "Never let anybody tear you down or take away your good heart." And that helped teach me to love myself.

Other students discussed how impactful their relationship was with their mentor. One young adult explained how her mentor cared for her and helped her develop a connection to trust that the mentor led the entire group in the right direction.

These connections extended beyond guidance, evolving into dynamic partnerships fostering personal and professional growth. Mentors were described as trusted advisors, providing invaluable advice and a supportive and nurturing environment for mentees to flourish. Open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to growth often marked the

mentee–mentor relationship. Mentees appreciated the encouragement to explore their potential, tackle challenges, and navigate the complexities of their lives. Young adult mentees viewed these connections as more than just a transfer of knowledge; they regarded them as a source of inspiration and empowerment that impacted the mentee's journey toward success.

Another primary focus of the interviews was building relationships between mentors and mentees, peers, and the communities. One mentee described how he felt when serving a community in Costa Rica. He said, "I think a lot of the things that stuck out to me were the kind of people I met, how welcoming and open they were to us, and how hospitable they were." Another young adult described the importance of balancing internal and external community building. He said, "The nightly discussion time was the most important. It was a perfect balance between actually going out in the community, helping people, and allowing us fun experiences, keeping us engaged as 16-year-olds."

The young adult mentees described the impact of long-lasting relationships as life changing. One young adult told of his connection with the group. He said,

> I knew that everybody around me was going through the same thing [I was]. When you take solace in companionship and not solidarity, and the fact that people around you are also going through it, it convinced me to lean on [our group].

Another young adult spoke about his connection with his best friend while on a mentoring service trip with CFMP. He said he knew this person before attending the trip but did not take the time to introduce himself. During one of the icebreaker exercises, he explained that he and the other friend had something in common. As he explained,

> Being able to listen and talk were two of the biggest challenges I faced. My biggest ones were listening, understanding, speaking, and expressing myself to somebody. I feel like,

> through practicing, and playing games with each other, whether on an air hockey table, card games, or an icebreaker, I managed to foster a relationship with my best friend to this very day.

Additionally, the support element provided a nurturing environment that guided the growth of young adults toward full maturity, giving them the resilience and diverse perspective required to tackle life's challenges. Mentors and participants provided support through various means, which one participant explained as a skill. He said,

> I think support is a big skill, and many people don't recognize that, especially men in the modern age. It's very common to be told to "shut up" and "keep to yourself" from the standpoint of not getting emotional. Don't let others know what you're dealing with, but that ends in the bottling of emotions, and then it usually ends in overflowing or an explosion, which is never good. So, I think learning how to express my emotions is the biggest thing I learned from mentoring. And along with some great friends that I made along the way.

Young adults connected with like-minded peers in ways that went beyond personal development, creating friendships and a strong feeling of community. Mentorship went beyond advice; it empowered and supported, building a deep bond that endured over time. Mentors shaped immediate behaviors and had a long-term impact on young adults' lives by establishing a feeling of community and connection. This empowerment and long-term connection guided mentees' decisions and behaviors long after the formal mentorship had ended.

RQ2 Theme 1. Young adults constructed a narrative of holistic development and flourishing as mentorship influences their postprogram perspectives, supporting resilience, self-discovery, and meaningful relationships within the sphere of prosocial conduct. This theme

emerged from the categories of Personal Development and Well-being, and Interpersonal and Social Relationships. As participants described their postprogram views of prosocial behaviors, they shared stories of how the experiences challenged their perspectives. The most common codes for RQ2 were "personal growth," "empathy," and "perspective shift."

Young adult mentees described how they grew personally. One participant discussed his self-confidence, stating,

> I learned I'm much more capable of doing things than I thought before. Being in that program gave me much more confidence in myself and others, which is really important. So that I could set my mind to something and finish. It gave me a lot of self-confidence in my image because I realized that everybody is their own person. It's okay to be myself instead of comparing myself to others, but it's also good to gain strength from others.

Similarly, several other young adults discussed how the program helped them open up and learn more about themselves and others. As a participant explained,

> My self-esteem was always low before, but I am a lot more outgoing now, and I'm happy that I am. Because even though I disguised it as, "This is my character. I'm just cold and mysterious," I realized it was just an act. That's not as fun as being helpful to people and learning, taking a genuine interest in other people in their lives.

Beyond personal growth, many of the young adult mentees discussed how the program helped them develop empathy. One young man said,

> [The mentoring program] certainly opened up our eyes to other people. I would certainly say that it lent itself to creating a caring environment. It falls into the whole "love thy neighbor," again, outside of any religious context, but just in being a better person. Everybody comes from a different circumstance, but that doesn't mean you can't care for

> people. You had to not be on the trip to not garner that from anything we did. It's very eye-opening to see how other people live. And you know what? It might be harsh to us, but to them, that's life.

Another participant explained how his views of life changed and how important it is to empathize with others. He stated,

> [The mentoring program] helps you realize that everybody has problems. But that doesn't mean that anybody's issues are better or worse. Understanding empathy and building empathy kind of helps you to put everything in context and realize that, all things considered, things might not be that bad for you. But those around you might need a hand to hold on to or somebody holding on. The mentorship program has helped open my eyes to that.

Another participant shared his impact on understanding resilience and perseverance. He shared the following statement,

> I carry much more from the mentorship program than I understand. I'm not the same worried kid as I was in eighth grade. Life always throws you different challenges, but my experiences have impacted me quite a bit to understand that you can work through it realistically. And I've been given the tools to work through it.

Mentees benefited individually from the mentoring program. They learned more about themselves and became more empathetic under the guidance of their mentors. They widened their viewpoints by their experiences, making them more receptive to new ideas and challenging their preconceived notions. In the end, mentees developed fresh skills and a greater awareness of various situations, making them more compassionate and prepared for ongoing personal development.

RQ2 Theme 2. Mentoring's transformative impact on the postprogram perspectives of young adults revealed a pattern of global citizenship and social responsibility through a philosophy of positive change, ethical principles, and a collective commitment to societal well-being**.** This theme evolved from the categories of Prosocial Behavior and Global Citizenship, and Ethical Values and Social Justice. The most prevalent codes for this theme were "gratitude," "mentor's influence," and "open-mindedness." I coded gratitude 39 times in this study as many participants reflected on how the program helped them adopt positive life views after the program concluded. One young adult mentee shared his experience:

> On the first Nicaragua trip, we visited a landfill. A community of people lived on or right next to the dump. One of the only ways they could make money was to go to the landfill and pick through the garbage for recyclable plastic they could sell. Whoever was managing the trash built their homes out of literal garbage. When I realized that, I thought about every building I've ever been in or every building I've ever lived in. It was stable, safe, insulated, kept me warm, and had running water so I could take a shower. I could do my laundry. They didn't have a laundry machine, washer or dryer, or all the materialistic things, but they shared much compassion. That was the biggest difference between us and them: despite not having all worldly things, they had other very important things that we lacked.

Other participants shared their experiences, which they explained have had a current impact on their beliefs. One young man shared his appreciation for the cultural exchange. He stated, "I can pretty much speak Spanish almost fluently. I even go to a Spanish Bible study now that's completely in Spanish. So that's a lot of fun. I've been practicing a lot because it's enjoyable."

Another young adult mentee shared her experience and reflection on how the experience has shaped her thought processes. She responded,

> Something as simple as cooking for free is so much harder for them. But it's something that I've never thought of, like once in my mind, how easy it is to cook a meal, but as soon as I went through their community when we took that tour, I thought about it has changed the way I think every day for me. Every day, right after those projects, whether they were out in Nicaragua, for example, or in Costa Rica another year, I would think about the experience for about a month. I was taking it all in, everything that I had. So, I would look at something like turning on the faucet, washing my dishes, or wasting water. But [the community] would have to walk miles to get, not even close to the amount of water I'm wasting. But that's so essential. And they're barely able to get enough to survive. So, seeing that was a realization or an epiphany for me.

Young adult participants of CFMP shared stories of advocating for positive change and connecting with the world. It was not just about individual actions but a journey of collective impact. These narratives highlighted a growing sense of responsibility and a commitment to making a difference in society. From being more aware of global issues to actively contributing to their communities, participants championed change with a shared spirit. It was about embracing a universal connection, where ethics and social impact come together to create a better, more interconnected world.

RQ3 Theme 1. Mentorship was a catalyst for cultivating potential and promoting comprehensive personal development among young adults. I created this theme from the categories of Personal Development and Growth, and Social and Interpersonal Skills. The most frequent codes were "adversity," "resilience," "hard work," and "impact." The interviewees

explained that the most significant aspects of the program were the activities that created hardship. The code adversity appeared 15 times. The young adult mentees unanimously agreed that removing the comfortable experiences helped them gain more perspective and grow. One participant said,

> I feel like removing that comfort removes any aids or crutches and forces you to stand on your own and make up your mind. And you were meeting new people and seeing how other people live, whether in a broad or an urban community, is the same thing. It forces you to introspect your life and realize that we're not all that different. We all come from other places, but that doesn't mean that I'm any better person than you are. You're not any worse or any better of a person than I am. If you can understand that and remove that guard, or maybe that façade, you can open your mind a bit. You're not as weighted down with everything that you've been told. You can make up your mind as to what the world means to you.

Another young adult mentee provided his perspective on creating an uncomfortable environment. He stated,

> The program taught me to come out of my comfort zone. I mean, I had to. I think things could have been more comfortable in terms of having cell service all the time and eating whatever kind of food I wanted, but that's not the point. If it's too comfortable, you won't leave your comfort zone. I think that's what the whole thing was about: as long as you have a strong figure to look up to, some supporting chaperones, who are also people you can look up to, strong people, and then just a good group of people who are there for one mission, that's all it takes.

Another mentee provided his perspective on adversity. While explaining the importance of designing impactful programs, he said,

> Any instance of hard labor and roughing creates resilient kids. [They] have some sense of self-control and the capability to care for themselves. It keeps them from developing a tendency of entitlement. Putting them in these situations where they must get dirty and learn manual labor skills is all useful.

One young adult mentee discussed the importance of relying on others during adversity. He said, "I think resilience [is important because] sometimes doing the manual labor was very difficult, and [we had] to work through it within [ourselves] and with the people around [us]." Another participant shared, "[We were] getting uncomfortable pretty quickly. We were dirty, hot, thirsty, and were hungry. But yet, dare I say, it was a beautiful experience because everybody was so out of their element."

Because of the inherent difficulties and obstacles, the young adult mentees experienced considerable personal growth during these service experiences. They had to work with different groups, traverse unusual circumstances, and address societal challenges to complete meaningful service. Consequently, the encounters helped them develop resilience, empathy, and a more expansive view of the world. These negative experiences gave them a sense of responsibility and self-discovery, making them more socially conscious and caring.

RQ3 Theme 2. Mentoring emerged as a dynamic force for community participation and impact, fusing personal development with collective influence through meaningful relationships and contributions. I created this theme using the Values and Ethics and the Community and Service categories. The codes of "open-mindedness," "integrity," "caring," "values," "respect," "compassion," "honesty," and "global perspective" created this theme. The most frequent code

was “open-mindedness.” One young adult participant shared how he opened his mind after visiting Nicaragua with CFMP. He stated,

> Nicaragua [was] my first experience going to a place that often gets a bad rap or has negative perceptions attached to it. You get there, and you’re like, “99% of these people are good people. They have no intention of doing any wrong to you.” That was a nice building block for future travel experiences. You maintain a certain sense of caution. But you don’t go at it with a very close-minded view of scary foreign citizens.

Other participants explained how they gained a new understanding of the importance of values. One young adult described his view of integrity while on a service trip to Nicaragua:

> [Integrity] fed into everything we did. I think that taking on responsibilities, such as painting a bed frame by yourself and making sure you’re not messing it up for other people. Also, in terms of integrity, [you must make] sure you’re a good person in terms of who you’re [hanging out] with [or] not. [You also must have] some social integrity, being there for others and kind to others.

Another young adult shared their enlightened understanding that the world is much bigger than she perceived. She said,

> Being in a different environment is definitely impactful, especially when you know you’re helping other less fortunate people just by being around them. It helps you remember that whatever your focus is in life, you aren’t the center of the world. It gives you a better perspective on the world and bigger things. After the mentorship program, I knew many of my problems seemed small, which gave me a lot of happiness. Even though many people were struggling, I saw they were still happy and kind to each other.

One participant shared how her views changed when considering other perspectives or cultures. She explained that “A major [lesson] was [gaining an] appreciation for everybody’s culture. I got back and wanted to continue learning more about all these different places.”

Through their participation in service projects, CFMP exposed young adult mentees to various cultures, viewpoints, and societal issues, which helped them widen their horizons and develop a worldwide appreciation. By immersing themselves in cross-cultural encounters, adolescents built empathy and a sense of interconnectedness while gaining a deeper grasp of global challenges. These encounters aided their development and strengthened their resolve to promote constructive change worldwide.

Summary

In this chapter, I conducted a qualitative descriptive study focusing on adolescent psychology to explore the influential role of adult mentors in fostering prosocial behaviors among teenagers. Employing Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis framework, I used a data analysis method involving descriptive coding. This approach allowed for an open and data-driven exploration, avoiding the imposition of preconceived categories on the data.

The study involved 11 young adult mentees who participated in programs organized by CFMP from 2016 to 2019. Their demographic information revealed a diverse group in terms of age (20–25), race/ethnicity (White, multiracial, Black, Asian), and gender (seven men, four women). I also engaged a focus group of five mentors, utilizing this setting as a platform for mentors to share their expertise and guidance.

I employed a meticulous six-step thematic analysis process to analyze the gathered data. I carefully reviewed transcripts, organizing words by research question and identifying 25,149

words for RQ1, 3,493 for RQ2, and 3,849 for RQ3. I then coded and collated actual data extracts within each code, categorized codes, and compiled pertinent data extracts into probable themes.

Six themes emerged from the analysis, two for each research question. For RQ1, the themes focused on the impact of mentoring on prosocial behavior and the transformative essence of empowerment and support. RQ2 explored the lasting effects of exposure to mentoring, revealing themes of holistic development and global citizenship. RQ3 delved into the mentoring program's most successful components, highlighting themes of cultivating potential and dynamic community participation.

These findings underscored the significant role of mentoring relationships as nurturing conduits for holistic growth, transformative empowerment, and lasting impacts on individuals' perspectives and actions. I highlighted the constructive influence of mentorship on postprogram views, emphasizing resilience, self-discovery, and a commitment to societal well-being. The chapter concluded with a comprehensive overview of the identified themes, providing a rich understanding of mentorship's profound and multifaceted impact within the CFMP programs.

In the following chapter, I describe how this study fits in with current mentoring research and how it will broaden mentoring knowledge for the geographical location of the study. Furthermore, I address the study's practical and theoretical implications. Finally, in Chapter 5, I provide recommendations for future research in the context of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The fifth chapter of this dissertation delves into a critical examination of the processes surrounding adolescent antisocial behavior in the United States and its long-term consequences into adulthood. The potential life-altering results documented in studies by Nair et al. (2022), Russell and Gordon (2017), and Spirito et al. (2018) show correlations with increased mortality rates, suicide, truancy, academic underachievement, and a heightened vulnerability to long-term addiction. According to Hill and Mrug (2015), the far-reaching influence of adolescent antisocial behavior extended beyond individual lives and into communities, with implications influencing crime rates, socioeconomic stability, and family structures.

I aimed to understand the critical importance of addressing these issues and created a qualitative case study of young adults participating in CFMP from 2016 to 2019. In this study, I aimed to examine the role of mentors in shaping teenage prosocial behavior through individual interviews and a focus group, using the analytical framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to provide insights into the effects of mentorship on adolescent development and community well-being.

RQ1: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens describe how mentoring relationships shaped their attitudes and perceptions of prosocial behavior?

RQ2: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe their postprogram views of prosocial behavior?

RQ3: How do young adult alums of CFMP for teens retrospectively describe the most successful elements of their program?

I used the theoretical guidance of SLT (Bandura, 1977). According to SLT (Bandura, 1977), individuals learned not just via direct experiences but also by observing and imitating the

behaviors of others. Bandura (1977) highlighted the importance of modeling, in which people observed the activities of others, evaluated the consequences, and either emulated or refrained from reproducing those behaviors based on their perceived outcomes. The idea emphasized the role of cognitive processes, such as attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation, in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977).

I also employed EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which provided a comprehensive framework for studying human development within numerous linked systems. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), multiple nested environmental systems influenced an individual's growth and development, ranging from the microsystem (individual's immediate environment) to the macrosystem (cultural values and societal structures). This theory highlighted the dynamic interplay between the individual and their surroundings, recognizing the reciprocal effects of different ecological layers.

I chose 11 young adult mentees who actively participated in programs organized by CFMP between 2016 and 2019 for this study. The study comprised a voluntary sample of 11 respondents who agreed to participate in individual, video-recorded interviews. These young adult mentees ranged in age from 20 to 25. The cohort's racial and ethnic composition included five White, four multiracial, one Black, and one Asian participant. Among the young adult mentees were four female and seven male participants. I established a focus group including five adult mentors with central Florida experience. Four of these mentors were female, and one was male; all added insightful viewpoints to the research.

I extensively examined the data using the six-step data analysis process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). From conducting interviews and focus groups to coding and categorizing, I identified and delineated six overarching themes, effectively addressing two

topics for each research question (RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3). This systematic approach enabled a thorough examination of the participants' ideas and allowed for a deeper understanding of the many elements included within the study.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Past Literature

RQ1 Themes

RQ1's inquiry aimed to understand how mentoring shaped young adult perceptions and attitudes toward prosocial behavior. I aligned the themes for RQ1 with the questions in the data collection tool to comprehend the impact of mentoring. The first theme of RQ1 was "Mentoring relationships served as nurturing conduits for the holistic growth of individuals, fostering personal development, shaping values, heightening social awareness, and providing opportunities for overcoming challenges." Young adults had unanimous attitudes about the significant influence of mentorship on their personal growth when they shared their experiences. Several participants expressed how mentors played a crucial role in influencing their principles, acting as beacons of guidance in the frequently ambiguous process of self-exploration. In addition to personal development, these mentorship connections were emphasized as channels for increased social consciousness, exposing mentees to various viewpoints and cultivating a deep understanding of society dynamics.

Previous research repeatedly emphasized the diverse influence of mentorship in different areas. Researchers linked mentoring to favorable outcomes in human growth, including heightened self-esteem, self-efficacy, and greater interpersonal abilities (Padilla-Walker et al., 2020; Piliavin & Siegl, 2015; Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). Mentors frequently had a pivotal impact on forming values through transmitting knowledge, acting as examples, and fostering a solid moral compass and honesty in their mentees. In the literature, I also underscored the impact

of mentoring on social consciousness, emphasizing how mentorship relationships exposed individuals to a wide range of ideas, cultures, and social circumstances, thus expanding their comprehension of the world (Batson et al., 2015). In addition, researchers acknowledged mentoring for helping mentees to overcome challenges. The existing body of research continuously underscored the significant impact of mentoring, which extended beyond personal growth and encompasses shaping values, fostering social awareness, and enhancing the capacity to persevere.

One young adult mentee highlighted the profound influence of their mentor, emphasizing the significance of constant support, responsive listening, and the ability to bring positivity even in challenging moments. The mentor's impact extended to instilling values of reliability and optimism within the young adult mentee's family, emphasizing the importance of finding purpose in overcoming obstacles and guiding the participant toward setting attainable personal and professional growth goals.

RQ1 Theme 2 was "Mentorship went beyond guidance; it embodied the transformative essence of empowerment, unwavering support, and profound connection, creating a lasting impact on individuals' perspectives and actions." All young adult mentees, except for one, explained how relationships with their mentors continued. One participant remarked on a transformative conversation with her mentor and how the mentor genuinely connected with her, creating lasting mentorship to date. Researchers emphasized the enduring impact of mentorship on self-esteem, confidence, and the acquisition of valuable skills, indicating that these impacts last over time and help continuous personal development (English, 2020; Raposa et al., 2019). The literature consistently presented mentorship as a catalyst for long-term transformations in mentees' perspectives and behaviors.

RQ2 Themes

The objective of RQ2 was to investigate the enduring impact of mentoring on the postprogram perspectives of young adult mentees concerning prosocial behavior. RQ2 Theme 1 was "Young adults constructed a narrative of holistic development and flourishing as mentorship influences their postprogram perspectives, supporting resilience, self-discovery, and meaningful relationships within the sphere of prosocial conduct." The young adult mentees of CFMP expressed the significant influence of mentoring on their overall growth and development. The mentees frequently emphasized the profound impact of mentorship, to date, in cultivating empathy, underscoring how these interactions enhanced their comprehension of various perspectives and contributed to a more empathetic outlook on life. In addition, the mentees constantly reported a notable change in their views, attributing their evolving goals, ambitions, and optimistic mindsets to the impact of their mentors. One adult mentor shared in the focus group that her mentoring relationship evolved into a friendship. She explained that the growth observed in how her mentee continuously reached out to give life updates, request advice for relationship issues, and request support was rewarding.

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that having support and a sense of connection were vital for the well-being and growth of adolescents (Austin et al., 2020). Supportive interactions and positive social relationships influenced beneficial outcomes, and research has shown that having positive interactions with people who are not parents can enhance the well-being and health of young adults (van Dam et al., 2021)

RQ2 Theme 2 was "Mentoring's transformative impact on the postprogram perspectives of young adults revealed a pattern of global citizenship and social responsibility through a philosophy of positive change, ethical principles, and a collective commitment to societal well-

being.” The young adult mentees of CFMP explained how their mentors played a crucial role in fostering a mindset of global citizenship and social responsibility, leading to significant personal growth. One participant described how the program impacted him by its commitment to creating an increasing worldview and the desire for a more equal and just world. Research consistently demonstrated that mentoring was a potent catalyst for cultivating global citizenship and social responsibility patterns among mentees (Austin et al., 2020; DuBois et al., 2002; English, 2020). Furthermore, the evidence suggested mentoring was a dynamic force in shaping mentees into socially responsible individuals with a global perspective and a commitment to making meaningful contributions to their communities and the world. CFMP mentors played a crucial role in broadening mentees’ understanding and admiration for the interdependence of the world by exposing them to various cultures, perspectives, and global concerns.

RQ3 Themes

RQ3 aimed to understand the most impactful elements of CFMP. RQ3 Theme 1 was “Mentorship was a catalyst for cultivating potential and promoting comprehensive personal development among young adults.” Several young adult mentees described the program as an experience with various levels of discomfort. However, several participants expressed the encounters as opportunities to build character. One young adult mentee said she learned “to be comfortable in the uncomfortable” while participating in an international service project organized by CFMP. She explained that the phrase has remained a crucial pillar in her life. Studies highlighted the profound influence of resilience (Green et al., 2022; Kuperminc et al., 2020; Michael, 2021), clarifying its diverse role in fostering overall well-being and favorable developmental outcomes. Resilience, defined as the capacity to recover from difficulties, played a crucial role in assisting teenagers in dealing with the challenges they faced during their

developmental stage. CFMP strongly emphasized developing coping mechanisms, with mentors playing a vital role in teaching practical ways to manage stressors. The young adult mentees recounted their adverse conditions while on each CFMP experience. Consequently, the relationship between the mentor and mentee cultivated emotional intelligence and self-control, promoting the growth of resilient mindsets that enabled teenagers to face and conquer challenges in life.

RQ3 Theme 2 was "Mentoring emerged as a dynamic force for community participation and impact, fusing personal development with collective influence through meaningful relationships and contributions." Numerous studies have demonstrated that mentoring and peer interactions established a supportive community that gave teenagers a sense of social connectedness, diminished feelings of loneliness, and improved overall well-being (English, 2020; Kashani et al., 1989; Keating et al., 2002; Miech et al., 2023). Sharing everyday life experiences and struggles among peers fostered mutual understanding, leading to camaraderie and creating a supportive and empathetic environment. Young adult mentees noted that engaging with peers enabled them to cultivate vital social skills, such as effective communication and collaboration, fostering individual and community development. One young adult mentee told of how he was able to enjoy new experiences with people he had never met, ultimately helping him learn to share his emotions and find support. Additionally, young adult mentees acted as supplemental role models, establishing a favorable influence on the actions and attitudes of their peers, while the sense of being a member of a group and feeling included in these relationships had a positive impact on their self-esteem.

The themes presented in RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 established a deep correlation between mentoring relationships and the comprehensive growth of young adults. Based on SLT (Bandura,

1977), these mentorship dynamics were opportunities for observational learning, where young adult mentees gleaned positive behaviors, values, and social awareness by observing and interacting with mentors. EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) illuminated the broader context in which mentoring relationships occurred, highlighting their influence on several systems—micro, meso, exo, and macro—within an individual's environment.

As the themes described, mentorship transcended ordinary guidance, encompassing transforming empowerment and constant support. This support was consistent with learned behaviors in SLT, which involved acquiring habits through positive reinforcement and observing others (Bandura, 1977). In addition, EST emphasized the cascading influence of mentorship, affecting the individual's immediate environment and extending its transforming effect to broader social systems, resulting in a holistic and integrated developmental story (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The narratives generated by young adults after receiving mentorship demonstrated resilience, self-exploration, and prosocial behavior. SLT highlighted the significance of observational learning in developing these concepts among young adults (K. Hall, 2020; M. Kelley et al., 2022; Smith & Petosa, 2016). In contrast, EST emphasized the microsystem's impact and subsequent consequences on the broader social environment (Athamanah et al., 2019; Hines et al., 2023; Sheerin et al., 2023). Moreover, the themes demonstrated that mentorship catalyzed nurturing potential and fostered personal growth, consistent with both theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, mentorship had a profound effect that went beyond individual growth and included a sense of global citizenship, social accountability, and a shared dedication to the welfare of society. This concept aligned with the emphasis of the SLT on the acquisition of

ethical ideals and the awareness in EST of how mentorship influenced the macrosystem. Ultimately, I saw mentoring as a powerful and active influence that combined personal growth with social impact and contributed to community involvement and effectiveness through significant relationships.

Limitations

The present study is subject to several limitations that warrant consideration. First, I confined the research to a single teen mentoring program in central Florida. Consequently, the findings may lack generalizability to the broader population of teens in the United States or other global contexts. The specificity of the study site raises concerns about the external validity of the results and calls for caution when applying the findings to diverse geographic or cultural settings.

Another notable limitation is the absence of input from young adults who did not have mentors during their teenage years. By incorporating interviews with adults who lacked mentorship experiences as teenagers, the study could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of mentorship by offering a basis for comparison. This absence limits my ability to explore the potential differences between individuals who had mentorship during their formative years and those who did not.

Furthermore, relying on young adult mentees' recollections of their teenage years introduced a potential limitation. Memories were inherently subjective and susceptible to recall bias, which may have influenced the accuracy and reliability of the data. It is essential to acknowledge that various factors, including personal biases and the passage of time, may have influenced retrospective accounts, affecting the precision of the study's insights. The participants may have also influenced the data, excluding negative experiences due to the fear of disappointing me.

Additionally, this study exclusively focused on one specific teen mentoring program and did not encompass individuals involved in alternative teen programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters. The narrow scope limits the generalizability of findings to a broader spectrum of mentorship experiences. Including a more diverse range of teen programs in future research could provide a more nuanced understanding of the varied impacts of mentorship across different organizational structures and objectives.

It is essential to acknowledge and address the potential limitation stemming from my own biases regarding the impact of mentoring on individuals. In alignment with Darawsheh's (2014) concept of reflexivity, which emphasizes self-awareness and critical analysis of one's assumptions and biases, I was committed to maintaining a mindful approach, which involved continuously questioning and challenging my presumptions and viewpoints, ensuring that the study's inquiries remained objective rather than subjective. I took specific measures to mitigate the influence of my biases. I regularly practiced self-reflection and thought about how my background, values, and individual experiences might have influenced my viewpoints and interpretations to become aware of my prejudices, preconceptions, and assumptions that might have affected the research. I made a detailed positionality statement at the beginning of the study, outlining my personal and professional views, history, and potential biases.

Additionally, I presented the results to participants and asked for their input. Through member checking (Darawsheh, 2014), participants confirmed that my interpretations were accurate. I reduced the impact of individual biases by cross-referencing information from various sources using several data sources and triangulation techniques.

I carefully formulated the line of questioning during the semistructured interviews to uphold the integrity of the study, and I designed the interview sheet to present questions without

additional commentary that may reflect personal biases. Moreover, I developed a standardized questionnaire to serve as the interview foundation to minimize subjectivity. By adhering to these principles of reflexivity, I aimed to enhance the reliability and credibility of the study's findings while reducing the potential impact of personal biases on the research process.

While this study contributed valuable insights into the specific teen mentoring program under investigation, the outlined limitations highlight the need for caution in generalizing the findings to broader populations and contexts. Future research should consider addressing these limitations to enhance the robustness and applicability of results in teen mentoring.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

Establishing an effective mentoring program requires careful consideration of critical elements. One recommendation of this study is for mentoring programs to begin by identifying clear program goals connected with the organization's objectives. This guarantees that the mentoring effort is a deliberate tool for the growth of both mentors and mentees. The recommendation to establish a mentor network comprised of selfless role models expands the program's impact by providing expertise, encouragement, wise guidance, and a careful listening ear. This mentoring focus is especially beneficial for impressionable adolescents, helping them navigate hurdles, set meaningful goals, and develop the confidence required for personal and academic progress. Mentoring programs can generate a loving environment that encourages the overall development of young people by establishing a mentor network based on selflessness and genuine support.

Another recommendation is for mentoring programs to include community service projects in their programming. CFMP focused on the community's needs and was impactful on

multiple levels. Teens benefited greatly from service-oriented activities, which supported their overall development in several ways. Teens who participated in service projects discovered virtues like empathy and responsibility and had an opportunity to practice and hone essential abilities like problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership. Through service-oriented mentoring, students received practical experience beyond standard classroom settings and provided an influential education in real-world settings. Designing prosocial mentoring programs could have a significant community impact by instilling a sense of civic responsibility and a commitment to positively impacting society, paving the way for continued community involvement and volunteerism, and fostering a lifelong dedication to social responsibility.

One final recommendation is for mentoring programs to establish minimum match commitments. Long-term mentoring programs that last a year or more provide tremendous advantages to adolescents by cultivating strong, lasting relationships and providing ongoing assistance. With CFMP, young adult mentees participated for at least 1 year, allowing mentors to play a regular role in the mentee's life, developing trust and rapport while guiding them through numerous life challenges. Mentors helped with overall skill development, enhanced confidence and self-esteem, improved academic performance, and provided critical career counsel over a long period. Furthermore, the mentor's effect extended beyond academics, including life skills, crisis response, and social and emotional growth. The long-term influence of these interactions not only assisted adolescents in navigating problems but also added to community and network building, laying the groundwork for their holistic development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this study and acknowledging its constraints, some suggestions for further research on mentorship programs arise. Researchers should prioritize enhancing diversity

in the selection of mentorship programs being studied (Raposa et al., 2019). It is essential to explore a more comprehensive array of programs with different structures, goals, and participant demographics to have a more thorough understanding of the diverse consequences of mentorship. This inclusivity could encompass a broad range of geographical locations and cultural backgrounds, guaranteeing that the research outcomes are more comprehensive and relevant to a larger demographic (Hines et al., 2023).

Future studies might enhance their methodology by including robust reflexivity assessments to mitigate the possible impact of researcher bias. Researchers must openly accept their personal preferences and employ methods, such as standardized questionnaires and well-crafted interview protocols, to reduce the inclusion of subjective factors. In addition, investigating various types of studies, such as mixed-methods research, may provide a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate dynamics inside mentoring programs. For example, researchers need longitudinal qualitative data to understand the mentoring process over time to truly comprehend its efficacy (M. Kelley et al., 2022).

Researchers should consider longitudinal studies that monitor individuals over a prolonged duration to improve the dependability of results. Implementing this technique would provide a comprehensive analysis of the enduring impacts of mentoring on individual growth and community involvement. Adding a control group of persons who did not participate in mentorship programs throughout their adolescence would enhance the capacity to make significant comparisons and establish cause-and-effect relationships. Moreover, future investigations could explore the intricacies of mentorship encounters by including the viewpoints of individuals who lacked mentors during their developmental years. Analyzing the results from

individuals with mentorship experiences and those without can offer significant insights into the distinct benefits of mentoring relationships.

Finally, researchers must prioritize collaborating with practitioners and organizations actively engaged in mentoring programs. This partnership can enhance the smooth integration of research findings into the development and enhancement of mentoring interventions, guaranteeing that academic insights align with practical applications. In the future, meta-analyses should examine more complicated interactions between moderating variables. For example, they should study how well youth demographic factors work together to affect the mentoring program's outcomes (Raposa et al., 2019). Future research should also investigate unsuccessful mentoring connections and the precipitating causes for failure. By implementing these suggestions, future research efforts can enhance the field of mentorship programs by providing a more detailed and comprehensive understanding. This will result in valuable insights applicable and relevant to a broader range of contexts.

Conclusions

I have examined the complexities of adolescent behavior, specifically focusing on acts of kindness and the significant consequences of negative behavior. The decisions made by adolescents to participate in either prosocial or antisocial activities have substantial implications for their individual growth and the more comprehensive social structure. Prosocial activities, defined by helpful, cooperative, and caring behaviors, have enhanced social skills, empathy, and positive connections among teenagers. Furthermore, participating in prosocial actions leads to increased self-worth, decreased engagement in risky behaviors, and a reinforced feeling of purpose and community, promoting the growth of responsible and empathetic individuals who make beneficial contributions to society.

In contrast, engaging in antisocial activities that deviate from cultural norms might result in harmful consequences, such as substance use. The study recognizes the concerning prevalence of substance use among adolescents, highlighting its correlation with addiction, violence, and other high-risk behaviors. The results emphasize the necessity of thorough comprehension and intervention in dealing with antisocial behaviors to reduce their adverse effects on individuals and public safety.

Although the study has limitations, such as its narrow emphasis on a particular mentorship program and the potential impact of researcher biases, the findings provide valuable contributions to the current discussion on teenage behavior. Subsequent studies should evaluate a broader array of mentoring programs, integrate rigorous measures of self-awareness to tackle biases and investigate longitudinal methods to assess mentorship's enduring impact on prosocial behaviors thoroughly. I better understand how prosocial and antisocial tendencies interact during adolescence. This study offers valuable knowledge for educators, practitioners, and policy makers who aim to encourage positive development in young people and address the difficulties linked to antisocial behaviors. Understanding the factors influencing teenage behavior is crucial to creating a society where young people are responsible, empathetic, and contribute constructively.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Study for Young Adult Mentees

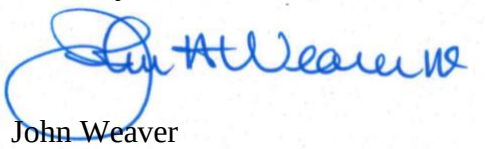
Dear Young Adult,

I am a student at Abilene Christian University, completing my Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership with a focus on positive leadership. As a requirement for graduation, I must conduct research focused on an area of interest with a leadership concentration. Consequently, I aim to gather information from adults involved with mentoring programs as teens. Another central part of my research is teen prosocial behavior. I am conducting interviews as a part of my doctoral research. Since you have been a part of a mentoring program as a teen, you are in a great position to provide important information from your point of view and firsthand experience.

The interviews will be video-recorded and should take 45 minutes. Participation in this research is voluntary, and your responses will be strictly confidential. You will choose a fictitious name; no other identifiable information will be used in this research. While there is no compensation for participating in this study, your feedback can help school and community leaders develop effective programs to help teens navigate some of the most critical years of their lives.

If you are interested in learning more about what is expected in the study, please call, text, or email me to receive the Consent Form. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John Weaver

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Young Adult Mentees

Introduction: How adults describe their experiences as teens before and after being introduced to mentoring programs

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask I any questions that you may have about the study. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION: This researcher is completing a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership with a focus on positive leadership. As a requirement for graduation at Abilene Christian University, I must conduct focus on an area of interest with a concentration on leadership. The purpose of this research is to gather information from adults who have been involved with mentoring programs as teens. Another central part of this research is teen prosocial behavior. This researcher is conducting interviews as a part of the doctoral process.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend one visit with the study staff over the course of one day. The visit is expected to take 45 minutes. During the course of this visit, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures: one-on-one, audio-recorded interview with researcher in person, over the phone, or through video conferencing.

RISKS & BENEFITS: There are risks to taking part in this research study. Below is a list of the foreseeable risks, including the seriousness of those risks and how likely they are to occur:
Although highly unlikely, there is a small risk that the audio recording may become compromised in the event of hacking. However, there is no plan to use identifying information during the audio recording of the interview.

There are potential benefits to participating in this study. Such benefits may include enhancements to mentoring programs through process modifications. Is cannot guarantee that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the A.C.U. Institutional Review Board. Otherwise, your interview will be protected by confidentiality. The recording will be stored on a digital recorder. A.C.U. data storage requirements state that all data must be securely stored on campus with the faculty mentor for a period of 3 years after the completion of the study and then destroyed.

CONTACTS: If you have questions about the research study, the lead researcher is John Weaver and may be contacted at [redacted] or [redacted]. If you are unable to reach the lead researcher, or wish to speak to someone other than the lead researcher, you may contact Dr. Jeff Cranmore, Dissertation Chair, at [redacted].

If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Executive Director of Research, Qi Hang, at [redacted].

Additional Information

There are 11 expected participants to be enrolled in this study.

There may be unexpected risks associated with your participation in this study and some of those may be serious. We will notify you if any such risks are identified throughout the course of the study which may affect your willingness to participate.

Your participation may be ended early by Is for certain reasons. For example, we may end your participation if you no longer meet study requirements, Is believe it is no longer in your best interest to continue participating, you do not follow the instructions provided by Is, or the study is ended. You will be contacted by Is and given further instructions in the event that you are removed from the study.

Please let Is know if you are participating in any other research studies at this time.

Consent Signature Section

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining consent	Signature of Person Obtaining consent	Date

Appendix C: Data Collection Tool for Young Adult Mentees

Opening Comments:

Thank you for volunteering your time and providing valuable feedback. My goal is to study the influence of mentors on teenage prosocial behavior. This study defines prosocial behavior as actions that benefit others or society, including acts of kindness, empathy, sharing, cooperation, and helping. I have several questions that I will ask you. There are no right or wrong answers; feel free to elaborate. If a question is too difficult to answer, please let me know if you do not prefer to answer it. Before we get started, do you have any questions?

I will begin the recording and start with a brief introduction.

Hi, my name is John Weaver, and I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University. Today is _____. Thank you for volunteering your time today. I aim to understand how young adults describe their teen experiences before and after being introduced to mentoring programs. These open-ended statements will encourage you to reflect on your experiences and provide detailed feedback that can help improve the mentoring program. In this interview, the questions may be very personal. However, your responses are confidential, and I will try to limit any exposure risk with the information we discuss. After this study, I will delete this recording and the interview transcription. Do I have your permission to continue?

1. Please tell me about yourself, including your age, gender, ethnicity, and family dynamics.
2. Before becoming a part of the mentoring program, describe, in detail, your prosocial behaviors (i.e., helping others without expecting anything in return, community service, standing up for the under-served, etc.). Explain your motivation.
3. Tell me how you were introduced to the mentoring program, your first impressions, and your expectations.
4. The mentoring program focused on specific positive values (i.e., caring, equality and justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint). From your perspective, describe how the program incorporated those values.
5. The mentoring program highlighted specific social competencies (i.e., planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, and peaceful conflict resolution). Detail how the mentoring program helped you develop those competencies.
6. The mentoring program attempted to help each participant develop a healthy positive identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and positive view of their personal future). Explain the impact the mentoring program had on your growth.
7. Think about any new things you learned, skills you acquired, or different ways of looking at things through the mentoring program. Describe those new perspectives and how those new learnings are helpful to you today.
8. Think about how your mentor has influenced you when making wise choices about prosocial behavior as a teenager. Explain their influence.

9. To date, describe the most impactful elements of the program and why they stand out.
10. Express any suggestions or ideas to improve the mentoring program's activities or events and anything you think should have been included but were not. Add any other important information you feel I should know about the program.

Appendix D: Invitation to Study for Mentors

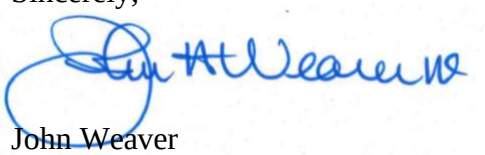
Dear Mentor,

I am a student at Abilene Christian University, completing my Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership with a focus on positive leadership. As a requirement for graduation, I must conduct research focused on an area of interest with a leadership concentration. Consequently, I aim to gather information from adults who volunteered as mentors with mentoring programs. Another central part of my research is teen prosocial behavior. I am conducting a focus group as a part of my doctoral research. Since you have been a part of a mentoring program as a mentor, you are in a great position to provide important information from your point of view and firsthand experience.

The focus group will be video-recorded and should take 45 minutes. Participation in this research is voluntary, and your responses will be confidential. While there is no compensation for participating in this study, your feedback can help school and community leaders develop effective programs to help teens navigate some of the most critical years of their lives.

If you are interested in learning more about what is expected in the study, please call, text, or email me to receive the Consent Form. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John Weaver

Appendix E: Data Collection Tool for Mentor Focus Group

Opening Comments:

Thank you for volunteering your time and providing valuable feedback. My goal is to study the influence of mentors on teenage prosocial behavior. This study defines prosocial behavior as actions that benefit others or society, including acts of kindness, empathy, sharing, cooperation, and helping. I have several questions that I will ask you. There are no right or wrong answers; feel free to elaborate. Before we get started, do you have any questions?

I will begin the recording and start with a brief introduction.

Hi, my name is John Weaver, and I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University. Today is _____. Thank you for volunteering your time today. I aim to understand how young adults describe their teen experiences before and after being introduced to mentoring programs. These open-ended statements will encourage you to reflect on your experiences and provide detailed feedback that can help improve the mentoring program. In this interview, the questions may be personal. However, your responses are confidential, and I will try to limit any exposure risk with the information we discuss. After this study, I will delete this recording and the interview transcription. Do I have your permission to continue?

1. How were you introduced to the mentoring program, and what were your first impressions? What were your expectations?
2. The mentoring program focused on specific positive values such as caring, equality and justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint. From your perspective, how did the program incorporate those values?
3. The mentoring program highlighted specific social competencies like planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, and peaceful conflict resolution. How did the mentoring program help teens develop those competencies?
4. The mentoring program attempted to help each participant develop a healthy positive identity by assisting young adult mentees to develop their personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and positive view of their personal future. Explain the mentoring program's impact on mentees' growth in those areas.
5. Think about any new things mentees learned, skills they acquired, or different ways of looking at things through the mentoring program. How would you describe those new perspectives? How do you believe these new learnings will be helpful to them in the future?
6. Consider your influence in helping mentees make wise choices about prosocial behavior as a teenager. How would you explain your impact?
7. Share any suggestions or ideas for enhancing the activities or events organized by the mentoring program. Is there anything you would have liked to see included that was missing?
8. Is there any other information you would like to share?

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Mentors

Introduction: How adults describe their experiences as teens before and after being introduced to mentoring programs

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask I any questions that you may have about the study. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION: This researcher is completing a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership with a focus on positive leadership. As a requirement for graduation at Abilene Christian University, I must conduct focus on an area of interest with a concentration on leadership. The purpose of this research is to gather information from adults who have been involved with mentoring programs as teens. Another central part of this research is teen prosocial behavior. This researcher is conducting interviews as a part of the doctoral process.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend one visit with the study staff over the course of one day. The visit is expected to take 45 minutes. During the course of this visit, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures: focus group, audio recorded interview with researcher in person, over the phone, or through video conferencing.

RISKS & BENEFITS: There are risks to taking part in this research study. Below is a list of the foreseeable risks, including the seriousness of those risks and how likely they are to occur:
Although highly unlikely, there is a small risk that the audio recording may become compromised in the event of hacking. However, there is no plan to use identifying information during the audio recording of the interview.

There are potential benefits to participating in this study. Such benefits may include enhancements to mentoring programs through process modifications. Is cannot guarantee that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the A.C.U. Institutional Review Board. Otherwise, the focus group will be protected by confidentiality. The recording will be stored on a digital recorder. A.C.U. data storage requirements state that all data must be securely stored on campus with the faculty mentor for a period of 3 years after the completion of the study and then destroyed.

CONTACTS: If you have questions about the research study, the lead researcher is John Weaver and may be contacted at [redacted] or XXXXXXXXXX. If you are unable to reach the lead researcher, or

wish to speak to someone other than the lead researcher, you may contact Dr. Jeff Cranmore, Dissertation Chair, at [redacted].

If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Executive Director of Research, Qi Hang, at [redacted].

Additional Information

There are six expected participants to be enrolled in this study.

There may be unexpected risks associated with your participation in this study and some of those may be serious. We will notify you if any such risks are identified throughout the course of the study which may affect your willingness to participate.

Your participation may be ended early by Is for certain reasons. For example, we may end your participation if you no longer meet study requirements, Is believe it is no longer in your best interest to continue participating, you do not follow the instructions provided by Is, or the study is ended. You will be contacted by Is and given further instructions in the event that you are removed from the study.

Please let Is know if you are participating in any other research studies at this time.

Consent Signature Section

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining consent	Signature of Person Obtaining consent	Date

Appendix G: Codes and Frequencies

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	FG	Totals
accountability	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	**6**
achievement	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	**5**
adaptability	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	**6**
admiration	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
adversity	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	1	2	**15**
altruism	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	**10**
anxiety	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	**4**
bonding	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	3	**16**
caring	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	**7**
comfort zone	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	**4**
communication	1	0	3	2	1	3	2	3	4	1	2	3	**25**
community building	4	3	2	2	3	3	7	4	6	4	0	7	**45**
community service	2	1	0	3	4	2	3	5	4	1	6	3	**34**
compassion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	**5**
connection	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	4	**14**
courage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
cultural competence	6	1	7	4	5	1	1	2	1	4	3	4	**39**
decision-making	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	**3**
diversity	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	**6**
effort	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
emotional intelligence	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
empathy	3	7	4	6	2	3	5	6	1	6	6	5	**54**
empowerment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	**6**
encouragement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
equality and justice	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	4	1	**15**
expectations	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	**10**
family influence	0	0	0	2	3	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	**10**
feelings of inadequacy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
friendship	1	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	**11**
generosity	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	**5**
giving back	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	**5**
global perspective	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	**4**
gratitude	8	0	2	2	2	7	1	7	0	3	3	4	**39**
growth	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	4	**12**
growth mindset	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
happiness	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	**4**
hard work	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	3	0	**12**
helping others	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	**7**

honesty	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	**5**
humility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
impact	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	3	**11**
inclusion	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	**5**
integrity	0	0	1	1	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	2	**11**
interpersonal competence	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	**4**
kindness	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	1	0	4	3	1	**18**
leadership	2	0	0	1	2	5	5	0	0	4	1	1	**21**
long-term impact	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	**10**
long-term relationship	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	**7**
mentoring	2	2	11	2	1	8	7	5	4	3	3	12	**60**
mentor's influence	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	4	**17**
open-mindedness	0	2	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	**11**
opportunity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	**2**
perception	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
perseverance	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
personal growth	1	8	9	6	2	10	10	3	1	1	4	2	**57**
personal power	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	**4**
perspective shift	0	1	8	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	**22**
planning	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	**6**
positive influence	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	**5**
privilege	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
reflection	8	2	14	5	2	10	9	2	2	6	7	3	**70**
relationship-building	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	**9**
resilience	2	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	**13**
respect	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	**6**
responsibility	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	2	**9**
restraint	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
role model	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	**6**
self-acceptance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	**3**
self-awareness	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	**9**
self-confidence	0	2	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	**9**
self-esteem	1	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	**11**
selflessness	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	**9**
self-motivation	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	**4**
sense of belonging	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**3**
sense of purpose	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	**6**
social competencies	0	1	1	4	2	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	**13**
support	2	5	5	3	1	5	2	3	2	1	0	6	**35**
teacher-student relationship	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
teamwork	0	7	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	6	4	**25**

trust	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	**7**
understanding	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	**3**
values	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	**7**
vulnerability	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**3**
Totals	**63**	**76**	**103**	**91**	**48**	**96**	**83**	**67**	**63**	**80**	**103**	**127**	**1000**

Note. P = participant FG = focus group.

Appendix H: RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 Code Frequencies

Code	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	Total
accountability	4	2	0	**6**
achievement	1	1	3	**5**
adaptability	3	1	2	**6**
admiration	1	0	0	**1**
adversity	5	3	5	**13**
altruism	7	0	0	**7**
anxiety	3	1	0	**4**
bonding	8	1	4	**13**
caring	3	0	0	**3**
comfort zone	3	0	0	**3**
communication	20	1	0	**21**
community building	19	3	4	**26**
community service	8	1	1	**10**
compassion	4	0	1	**5**
conflict resolution	13	0	0	**13**
connection	8	1	2	**11**
contentment	2	0	0	**2**
courage	0	1	0	**1**
cultural competence	19	5	6	**30**
decision-making	3	0	0	**3**
diversity	4	0	1	**5**
effort	0	2	0	**2**
emotional intelligence	0	2	1	**3**
empathy	32	3	5	**40**
empowerment	5	0	0	**5**
encouragement	2	0	0	**2**
equality and justice	13	1	1	**15**
expectations	6	0	1	**7**
faith	2	0	0	**2**
family dynamics	1	0	0	**1**
family influence	1	0	1	**2**
feelings of inadequacy	1	0	0	**1**
friendship	7	1	0	**8**
generosity	3	0	0	**3**
giving back	2	1	0	**3**
global perspective	1	1	2	**4**
goal-setting	4	0	0	**4**
gratitude	23	2	3	**28**

growth	10	0	0	**10**
growth mindset	2	0	0	**2**
happiness	2	0	2	**4**
hard work	5	0	4	**9**
helping others	3	0	0	**3**
honesty	2	1	1	**4**
humility	1	0	0	**1**
humor	3	0	0	**3**
impact	5	0	3	**8**
inclusion	3	0	1	**4**
inspiration	2	0	0	**2**
integrity	9	2	0	**11**
interpersonal competence	2	0	0	**2**
joy	2	0	0	**2**
kindness	13	0	1	**14**
leadership	8	2	0	**10**
long-term impact	5	4	0	**9**
long-term relationship	5	0	0	**5**
mentoring	41	3	1	**45**
mentor’s influence	18	1	0	**19**
open-mindedness	3	3	2	**8**
opportunity	1	0	0	**1**
optimism	5	0	0	**5**
perception	2	0	0	**2**
perseverance	2	0	0	**2**
personal growth	33	9	6	**48**
personal power	3	0	0	**3**
perspective shift	12	2	6	**20**
planning	6	0	0	**6**
positive influence	5	0	0	**5**
privilege	0	1	0	**1**
program improvement	0	0	1	**1**
reflection	46	3	7	**56**
relationship-building	5	1	3	**9**
resilience	9	0	1	**10**
respect	4	1	0	**5**
responsibility	8	1	0	**9**
restraint	0	0	1	**1**
role model	4	0	0	**4**
self-acceptance	1	1	0	**2**
self-awareness	8	0	0	**8**

self-confidence	5	1	0	**6**
self-esteem	7	2	0	**9**
selflessness	7	0	0	**7**
self-motivation	3	1	0	**4**
sense of belonging	1	1	0	**2**
sense of purpose	6	0	0	**6**
social competencies	10	0	0	**10**
substance abuse	1	0	0	**1**
support	25	2	1	**28**
teacher-student relationship	2	0	0	**2**
teamwork	15	0	1	**16**
trust	5	1	0	**6**
understanding	3	0	0	**3**
values	5	2	0	**7**
vulnerability	3	0	0	**3**

Appendix I: Qualitative Code Book for "Examining the Influence of Adult Mentors on Fostering Prosocial Behaviors Among Teens"

RQ	Code	Code Definition	Code Example
1: Mentoring program's impact	positive role modeling	situations in which mentors set a good example for others by changing their behavior and attitudes through their deeds and values	"I always really looked up to my mentor, so I really wanted to have him respect me as much as I respected him."
	personal growth and development	how people grow and change over time, including mental, emotional, and cognitive growth	"Being in that program definitely gave me a lot more confidence in myself, as well as confidence in others, which is really important."
	impact on values and beliefs	outcomes that can be seen in how events or interactions change people's beliefs and core values	"Social integrity, being there for others and, making sure that you're being kind to others were big things for me."
	challenges and growth opportunities	situations where people face problems or hurdles that help them learn and grow as people	"I still struggle with patience. I will admit. But, you know, think that that has been part of my identity is, you know, realizing who I am, and I might be a worrier and that I am impatient."
	enhanced social awareness	a greater understanding of and knowledge about social problems, situations, and other people's needs.	"Whatever your focus is in life, you aren't the center of the world. It kind of gives you a better perspective on the world and bigger things like that."
	empowerment and support	circumstances in which people feel strong enough, supported, or urged to face obstacles and reach their goals	"My mentor taught me that when things didn't go the way that you want them to, you must always understand that you still have a

			purpose. And if you understand that purpose, or if you find that purpose, then you become unstoppable."
	long-term impact on behavior	behavior changes that last for an extended period of time, showing that experiences or interventions have long-lasting effects	"I'm definitely saying equality. After being around a very diverse group of people, that kind of carried over with me for the rest of my life."
	learning by observation	obtaining information, skills, or habits by watching others and imitating what they do	"I would say it really is important the example a mentor is because a lot of times it wasn't actually what they said, but it was what they did or how they handled certain situations that we see, and then we've learned from that."
2: Current impact	personal development and well-being	the improvement and growth of people's physical, social, and mental health as a whole	"I've been grasping at this desire to want to stand more confidently in myself and my beliefs and voice my feelings and my emotions."
	interpersonal and social relationships	the type and quality of relationships people have with others, like friends, family, and other individuals in the community	"There were moments where outside of being able to help the village, we would spend time amongst ourselves. We were getting to know each other and everybody within the program."
	prosocial behavior and global citizenship	behaviors and actions that help other people and improve society's health on a local and world scale	"A major takeaway was learning appreciation for everybody's culture. I got back and I wanted to just continue to

			learn more about all these different places”
	ethical values and social justice	observing moral rules and making a promise to work for justice, fairness, and equality in society	“We’re very diverse groups, and this kind of brought us all together. It just reminded us that we’re all human. We all experience the same feelings. We all have the same desires. And so it kind of just put us all on the even playing field.
3: Most impactful elements of program	personal development and growth	the ongoing process of becoming more intelligent, happier, and better at getting along with others	“I grew mentally, physically, and spiritually, in a way. Mind over matter is something that I really learned on those two trips; that if I really set a goal in mind, I can achieve it.”
	social and interpersonal skills	skill at communicating with others, collaborating with others, and establishing friendships	“I’ve created a lot of meaningful friendships with the people that I chose to surround myself with that are in my life because of the type of accountability they expected for me and that I expected from them.”
	values and ethics	the morals and ideals that people use to make decisions	“What I was impressed was that there were core values that were set ahead of time that spoke to how young men should behave and that also spoke to how young women should behave.”

	community and service	taking part in initiatives that improve the community, usually by volunteering and community service	"Getting to speak to other people and see other people's life definitely makes you look back on your own. And then being able to give back when I can give back, volunteering my time, working with the community, makes it that much better."