Summary of Key Research Findings Highlighted in
the "Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring

OVERALL: What research findings are foundational to the other best practices?

- Longer-term mentoring relationships are more beneficial to youth than shorter-term relationships. (DuBois, et al, 2014)
- Mentoring pairs that meet frequently and regularly are more beneficial to youth. (Herrera et al, 2013)
- Mentoring matches that end prematurely (before the agreed upon period of commitment has been completed) can result in damage to a mentee's self-concept when compared with students who were never mentored at all. (LaRose et al, 2005)
- Parent/guardian involvement in the mentoring relationship can benefit the match. (Herrera et al, 2013)
- In order for a program to be "evidence-based," it must be rigorously studied/evaluated and peer-reviewed by experts in the mentoring field. "Evidence-informed" programs are those that use evidence-based information to inform their procedures and practices.

STANDARD 1: RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment materials need to inform mentors that they have or can acquire the basic skills needed to be an effective mentor, and that they will receive sufficient training and support from the mentoring program that will make them feel efficacious as a mentor. (Okun and Sloane, 2002)
- Positive emotional expectations predict volunteer persistence. Mentor retention may be enhanced by portraying mentoring as satisfying and rewarding. (Barraza 2011)
- When deviant or high-risk youth are grouped together in therapeutic or residential settings, they can negatively influence each other's behaviors (also known as "deviancy training"). (Dodge et al, 2006)

STANDARD 2: SCREENING

- Using research-validated instruments that measure mentors' personalities and motivations can help predict whether they have a youth development perspective that will help or harm their mentee. In a 2010 study, high school aged mentors who had negative perceptions of youth in their community had a negative impact on both academically connected and academically disconnected mentees. Academically disconnected mentees paired with a mentor who had negative attitudes toward youth were less emotionally engaged in the match, had lower quality relationships with their teachers, exhibited fewer instances of prosocial behavior, and were slightly more likely to be truant from school. (Karcher et al, 2010)

STANDARD 3: TRAINING

- Mentor training has been demonstrated to result in longer mentoring relationships that meet more frequently.
  - In a 2013 study, 15% of **mentors who received quality training early in the match** met with their mentees regularly, while only 10% of mentors who did not receive such training met with their mentee regularly.
  - 61% of **mentors who received quality early match training** had matches that lasted at least 12 months, while only 44% of mentors who did not receive training experienced matches that lasted at least 12 months. (Herrera et al, 2013)

STANDARD 4: MATCHING & INITIATING

- Positive youth outcomes result from matching mentors and mentees based on shared interests.

- Multiple reviews of youth mentoring research found that cross-ethnic matches are as supportive as same-ethnic matches, and that cross-gender matches are as supportive as same-gender matches, but that mentors and mentees who share similar interests (e.g. skills, goals, or hobbies) form closer, more emotionally supported relationships. (DuBois, et al, 2014; Herrera et al, 2000)
  - Cross-race matches and same-race matches exhibited no meaningful differences in mentees' feelings of competence in school and in their relationships with parents and friends; whether they had begun to skip school; and whether they had begun to use alcohol or drugs. (Jucovy, 2002)

STANDARD 5: MONITORING & SUPPORT
- Mentoring relationships that are monitored and supported by program staff via practices including phone calls -- to mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents -- and ongoing training are more likely to last longer and meet more frequently.
  - 15% of **mentors who received support calls** during 70% or more of their months together met with their mentee frequently, whereas only 9% of mentors who did not receive such consistent support calls met with their mentee frequently.
  - A total of 58% of **mentors who received support calls** during 70% or more of their months together were engaged in matches that lasted 12 months or longer, compared with 47% of mentors who did not receive such consistent support.
  - 17% of **youth who received support calls** during 70% or more of their months together met frequently, whereas 11% of mentees who did not receive such consistent support met with their mentors frequently.
  - 15% of **youth whose parents received support calls** during 70% or more of their months together met with their mentor frequently, compared with 10% of those whose parents did not receive such consistent support.
  - 66% of **mentors who received ongoing training** had matches that lasted at least 12 months compared with 48% of those mentors who did not receive ongoing training. (Herrera et al, 2013)

STANDARD 6: CLOSURE
- Research indicates that a lack of formal processing of relationship closure -- for both strong and weak relationships -- may contribute to negative emotional outcomes for the mentees such as feelings of disappointment or anger. (Spencer at al, 2017)
- There may be negative outcomes for mentees who experience premature closure and have been rematched. It is recommended that agencies create specific, written policies for rematching procedures.
  - In a test of academic performance, youth who experienced prematurely terminated mentoring relationships but were not rematched scored no better or worse than a control group of their peers, but **youth who experienced a prematurely terminated mentoring relationship and were rematched** performed 1.6 points lower than youth in the control group. (Grossman et al, 2013)
  - In a 2013 study, youth who had endured a greater number of life stressors prior to being matched were at greater risk for early match termination. (Grossman et al, 2013)