

Discussion Questions on Dr. Kent Pekel's TEDx Talk: *Getting Relationships Right*

1. In the talk, Kent Pekel shares a story of a time in his life when he came to understand the power of relationships in young people's development. Has there been a moment, experience, or situation in your own life that illustrated the role that relationships play in helping young people be and become their best selves?

2. Kent identifies five elements of developmental relationships that have emerged through Search Institute's research:

- expressing care
- challenging growth
- providing support
- sharing power
- expanding possibilities

Which of these five elements do you think you do most often and/or effectively in your work with young people? Which do you think you do least often and/or least effectively? In other words, what is an area of relational strength for you and what is an area for growth?

3. In the talk, Kent notes that Search Institute's research has found that in many settings, about 1 in 5 young people report that they do not experience any developmental relationships with adults. Have you observed this "relationship gap" in the lives of the young people that your school or program serves? What are signs have you seen that such a relationship gap exists? What could you or your organization do to help close that gap?

4. Kent suggests that many youth-serving organizations talk a good game about relationships, but that in reality they underinvest in relationships. He mentions several things that organizations can do to help staff who work with young people build more developmental relationships, such as providing them with professional development, practical tools and techniques, dedicated time, and data to inform improvement. How seriously do you think your organization invests in relationships? If you could make one change in your organization to strengthen the relationships you build with young people, what would it be?

5. Near the end of the talk, Kent describes the 4 S's interview, a tool that Search Institute has created to help adults get to know young people quickly and deeply. With what young person or group of young people in your personal or professional life would you like to conduct the 4 S's interview? Which of their 4 S's do you think you already know the most about: their sparks, strengths, struggles, or supports?

6. What practices, activities, or other tools have you used or created to build stronger relationships with young people?

7. What is the most important thing you will take away from today's discussion?