

Communicating about Developmental Relationships

New Insights from FrameWorks Institute

A two-part webinar series

Part 1—What to Do and Why It Works

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People Who Have Been an Important Part of Your Life

Places and institutions that may have been important to you

	Family (including extended family, caregivers)	School, College, Military, or Work	Neighborhood or Community	Religious or Civic Institutions	Arts, Sports, or Recreation	Other
Think about people who have been important in different parts of your life. Write their names in the columns that best represent where you know/new them, and write them at about the time (vertically) they entered your life. Then draw a downward arrow to show how long they were—or are—an active part of your life. (See samples.) Just pick 1 or 2 in each column. (Leave some columns blank or change the labels if you need or want to.)						
Birth	Mom ↓				Basketball coach ↓	
Now						

Reflection

- What have these people done to make them an important part of your life?
- Who might put you in one of these columns as an important person to them? What might they say you do?

Nurturing Developmental Relationships while Social Distancing

(From Search Institute)

Blogs on relationships during the pandemic

<https://www.search-institute.org/blog/>

- Social Responsibility Begins Here: Use the Pandemic to Teach Your Kids to Be Good Citizens
 - Nurturing Relationships Online: Advice from Experts (Youth)
 - Can Technology Help Cultivate Relationships While We're "Social Distancing"?
 - Pardon this Interruption: Flexibility for Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Resisting the Pandemic of Prejudice, Reclaiming the Power of Relationships
- ... watch for more!

Other resources

Online professional development

We are currently transforming several workshops on developmental relationships, Developmental Assets, and relationship-based family engagement for virtual delivery. If you're interested, contact Julia at Training@search-institute.org.

Digital check-in with parenting adults (prototype)

A series of guides for 30-minute check-in video or phone calls with small groups of parenting adults built around the Developmental Relationships Framework. Parenting adults learn about one of the elements of developmental relationships, and then they get several brief, no-cost activities that everyone in the family can do together to explore their relationships in the next week or two.

If you're interested trying these, send an email to Ellen Bergstrom (ellenb@searchinstitute.org). There's no cost for using the prototypes. We will be asking for feedback.

Framing COVID-19

(From FrameWorks Institute)

<http://frameworksinstitute.org/framing-covid-19.html>

One-page guidance for how to amplify the values of justice, inclusion, and interdependence during the coronavirus pandemic. New topics will be released every few days. (No charge.) Topics so far:

Topic #1: Deploying a common good frame

Topic #2: Making a powerful case for the role of government

Topic #3: Widening the circle of "we"

Topic #4: The power of how during the pandemic

Topic #5: Nonprofits are essential

Why “Developmental” Relationships?

1. Developmental relationships are **multi-dimensional, intentional** relationships.

Developmental relationships require more than “caring.” In addition to expressing care, they involve challenging growth, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibilities. (See page 5.)

2. Developmental relationships are the **roots of success**.

Developmental relationships are roots that provide stability as young people explore their world and discover their place within it. Relationships connect young people to resources in their environment. When young people experience developmental relationships, they are more likely to be resilient and grow up successfully as leaders in and contributors to their communities and society.

3. **Every young person** needs to be rooted in relationships that nourish their growth.

Each young person is unique and each culture has unique strengths and resources. At the same time, across all people, developmental relationships are part of being human. There are different emphases and strategies for nurturing relationship in different cultures and contexts (many of which we have not yet explored or articulated yet). Yet developmental relationships matter in each culture and context.

4. Developmental relationships are **two-way, reciprocal** relationships.

Each person in the relationship contributes to and benefits from the relationship. The reciprocity does not have to be the same or equal (consider, for example, an infant), but relationships have greater developmental power when they are mutually enriching.

5. Developmental relationships are essential for all young people across **different parts of their lives**.

All young people benefit from experiencing developmental relationships that provide nourishment in each part of their lives—from home to school to work to out-of-school-time programs to sports to a faith community. All young people should have a network of developmental relationships across different aspects of their lives, including family members, teachers and school staff, program leaders, coaches, and others.

6. Different young people need to be rooted in relationships that provide **the specific nutrients** they need.

Developmental relationships are responsive to who young people are and what they need at particular times in their lives. They will be expressed and experienced differently based on young people’s background, identities, unique strengths, needs, and circumstances. In times of high stress, for example, young people may need adults and friends to emphasize expressing care and providing support. Other times, they may need there to be more emphasis on challenging growth or expanding possibilities. In a developmental relationship, people are attuned to each other.






7. **Bias, discrimination, trauma, and inequities contaminate many of the environments** that could be nourishing development.

The toxins of individual and systemic bias, discrimination, trauma, and multiple forms of inequity contaminate many of the environments that should be nourishing young people’s development. Too many young people have historically been marginalized because of their race or ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other differences. The challenge and opportunity is to first examine and work to address our own biases and blind spots. Then we can work together honestly to discover ways we can address the systemic biases and inequities that must be dismantled if we are ever change the odds that all young people will, in fact, have the relationships and other resources they need to be successful, contributing members of our communities and society.

Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework

Developmental relationships are the roots of success and resilience that give young people the nourishment, support, and stability they need to grow, learn, contribute, and thrive. Search Institute research has identified five elements of relationships—expressed in 20 specific actions—that give relationships their power.

It is important to remember that the nourishment flows both ways in strong relationships. Each person gives and receives. However, for the purpose of clarity, the actions in the Developmental Relationships Framework are expressed from the perspective of one person in the relationship. Imagine each person saying it.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
 Express Care <i>"Show me that I matter to you."</i>	Be dependable Listen Believe in me Be warm Encourage	Be someone I can trust. Really pay attention when we are together. Make me feel known and valued. Show me you enjoy being with me. Praise me for my efforts and achievements.
 Challenge Growth <i>"Push me to keep getting better."</i>	Expect my best Stretch Hold me accountable Reflect on failures	Expect me to live up to my potential. Push me to go further. Insist I take responsibility for my actions. Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.
 Provide Support <i>"Help me complete tasks and achieve goals."</i>	Navigate Empower Advocate Set boundaries	Guide me through hard situations and systems. Build my confidence to take charge of my life. Stand up for me when I need it. Put in place limits that keep me on track.
 Share Power <i>"Treat me with respect and give me a say."</i>	Respect me Include me Collaborate Let me lead	Take me seriously and treat me fairly. Involve me in decisions that affect me. Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.
 Expand Possibilities <i>"Connect me with people and places that broaden my world."</i>	Inspire Broaden horizons Connect	Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.

More information on developmental relationships and their power in young people's lives:
www.searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships/

Four Messaging Tips on Developmental Relationships

1. **Define and describe** developmental relationships in terms of the **five key elements**.
2. **Use a comparison to “roots”** to explain the connection between developmental relationships and young people’s growth. Developmental relationships are the “roots of young people’s success.”
3. **Appeal to *Inclusive Opportunity*** to explain that relationships are critical for all young people.
4. **Engage unexpected messengers**—like mentors, friends, coaches, or teachers—who can highlight their experiences with developmental relationships.

Developmental Relationships Resources from FrameWorks

Developmental Relationships Communications Toolkit

This free online resource includes practical summaries of the FrameWorks research and recommendations. Then it provides several tools that model the recommendations, including talking points, a fundraising appeal, an e-letter mock-up, and a short slide presentation.

Reframing Developmental Relationships: A FrameWorks MessageMemo

The report outlines seven tested recommendations for communicating developmental relationships in a way that moves the public beyond preconceptions of relationships toward new, broader understandings of—and investments in—the kinds of relationships youth need to thrive.

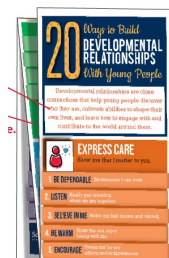
“They All Play a Role”: Mapping the Gaps between Expert and Public Understandings of Developmental Relationships

This qualitative study documents the communication challenges that emerge in the gap between researchers’ understanding of developmental relationships and the publics’ understandings of relationships in young people’s lives.

Access through: www.frameworksinstitute.org/developmental-relationships.html

Or: www.searchinstitute.org/reframing-developmental-relationships

Relationships-Building Tools and Services from Search Institute



People (mini poster)—

20 Ways to Build Developmental Relationships with Young People

This bilingual poster highlights the five elements of developmental relationships and the 20 actions that support those elements. Share with educators, parents, youth workers, and others who connect with youth. www.searchinstitute.org/shop/



Relationships First: Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive

This booklet introduces the Developmental Relationships Framework, research on the power of relationships, and strategies for becoming more intentional in relationship building. **Download for free:** www.searchinstitute.org/relationships-first.

Bring a Workshop to You

Now, more than ever, schools and programs need to be intentional about building relationships and make them part of practice. We would love to share Search Institute's relationship-building research with your program or community through high-quality professional development—onsite or online. Visit <https://www.search-institute.org/professional-development/bring-a-workshop-to-you/> or contact training@search-institute.org for more information.



Keep Connected: Strengthening Families by Strengthening Relationships

Keep Connected offers a **seven-session workshop series** for parents and their middle schoolers. Families explore the five essential elements of parent-youth relationships through a mix of learning and sharing activities. In-person and online training institutes equip leaders to offer this resource in their organization or community. Visit: www.KeepConnected.info.

Keep Connected also features activities and conversations on a **free website** for families.

Surveys

www.searchinstitute.org/surveys

Surveys examine developmental relationships, social-emotion learning, program quality, and developmental assets. Each survey is offered online.

Workshops

www.searchinstitute.org/professional-development

Build expertise and develop strategies to put Search Institute research into practice with a range of workshops.

Other Resources

www.searchinstitute.org/shop/

Search Institute offers a variety of print resources for educators, youth workers, parents, and other leaders.

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