

# THE MENTOR PROJECT <sup>at</sup> SUSAN HIRT HAGEN CORE

*Be respectful. Be reliable. Be positive. Be yourself.*



## WHAT IS... THE MENTOR PROJECT?

The Mentor Project brings students from Penn State Behrend to Erie's elementary and middle schools for weekly lessons with 5th & 6th graders and small-group mentoring.

The mentor groups do activities that build protective factors against mental health risks, including healthy coping strategies, empathy, setting boundaries, communication, and more. Ultimately, mentoring is about creating connected relationships between mentors and mentees.

## STUDENT SAFETY MENTOR CLEARANCES

*"All student and community mentors complete mandated state and FBI background checks and child abuse clearances. Iroquois Elementary requires an additional volunteer application. Each mentor signs in when they enter the school and out when they exit. Children's physical and emotional safety is our #1 priority."*

**DR. JAMES J. HODGE**  
Director, Susan Hirt Hagen CORE

## LESSONS TO HELP KIDS THRIVE



### STRESS & COPING

Identifying stressors, identifying healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress, sensitivity to others' feelings



### GROWTH MINDSET

Overcoming discouragement, learning from mistakes, and building upon existing skills to take on new challenges



### EMPATHY

Recognizing emotions in others, the difference between empathy & sympathy, feeling-thinking-behaving, helping others

### FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:

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### THE MENTOR PROJECT IS A PROGRAM OF



**PennState**  
Behrend

**Susan Hirt Hagen CORE**

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## WHY MENTORS FOR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS?

Between the ages of 10 to 14, early adolescents are living in a period of significant social and emotional development. They seek meaningful connections with peers, grapple with self-consciousness and self-evaluation, navigate intense and fluctuating emotions, and strive for independence while still relying on adult support. Understanding and supporting these developmental processes are crucial for fostering positive social and emotional growth during early adolescence.

Our research-based approach adjusts to the needs and resources of each site to best equip mentors to conduct activities that impart protective factors for adolescents, such as empathy, setting boundaries, trust, listening and communication, and more.

Summarized from: Social Emotional Development in Early Adolescence (2019), MENTOR  
By: Delia Hagan, Bernadette Sánchez, Jason Cascarino, Kilian White



Mentors can play a vital role in helping young adolescents navigate these changes by providing support, guidance, and a safe space for emotional expression.

- **Emotional validation:** Mentors can acknowledge and validate the range of emotions experienced by young adolescents, helping them feel heard and understood. This validation can provide reassurance and help adolescents develop a healthy relationship with their emotions.
- **Active listening:** Mentors can actively listen to the concerns, fears, and frustrations expressed by young adolescents. This attentive listening allows mentors to gain insights into their mentees' emotional experiences and offer empathetic responses.
- **Emotional awareness and regulation:** Mentors can assist young adolescents in developing emotional awareness by helping them identify and label their emotions. They can also provide strategies and coping mechanisms to regulate and manage intense or unpredictable emotions effectively.
- **Problem-solving and perspective-taking:** Mentors can guide young adolescents in problem-solving situations by encouraging them to consider different perspectives and potential outcomes. This approach helps adolescents develop emotional intelligence, empathy, and the ability to think critically about their emotions and their impact on relationships.
- **Modeling healthy emotional expression:** Mentors can serve as positive role models by demonstrating healthy ways to express and manage emotions. They can provide examples of constructive communication, conflict resolution, and self-care practices that promote emotional well-being.

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