



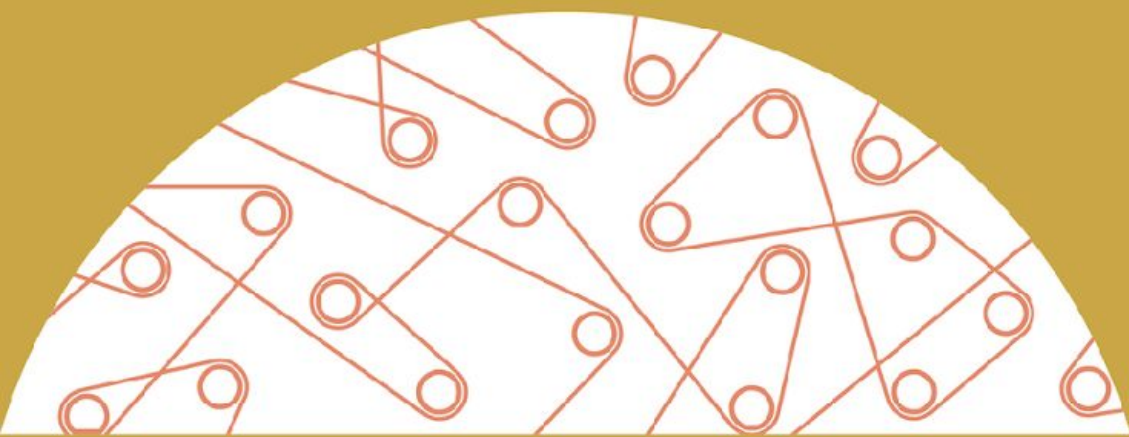
Supportive Accountability Mentoring:

A New Model of Improving Connections and Outcomes

Jean Rhodes

Frank L. Boyden Professor of Psychology

University of Massachusetts, Boston





Many college students are struggling...

40%

Undergraduate students dropout of college without finishing their degree (Hanson, 2022)

75%

Students who leave college do so for non-academic reasons (e.g., mental health, social) (Pell Institute, 2011)

60%

College students meet criteria for at least one mental health challenge (Lipson et al., 2022)

Students and universities are struggling to connect...

STUDENTS

01

Lack of knowledge and support for students to find, access, and engage in effective campus solutions

02

Unnecessary escalation of students' early concerns to highly-trained professionals who are scarce, expensive, and intimidating

UNIVERSITIES

03

Inefficiencies in connecting students to the right resources, measuring their effectiveness, and making adjustments

04

Ineffective responses to students' early struggles result in student cognitive load and stress, problem progression and attrition

The college to career pipeline is broken

STUDENTS

01

Lack of knowledge and support for findings and preparing for internships and jobs

02

Lost opportunities for interest-aligned work. 40% of jobs don't require a Bachelor's degree.

SOCIETAL TRENDS

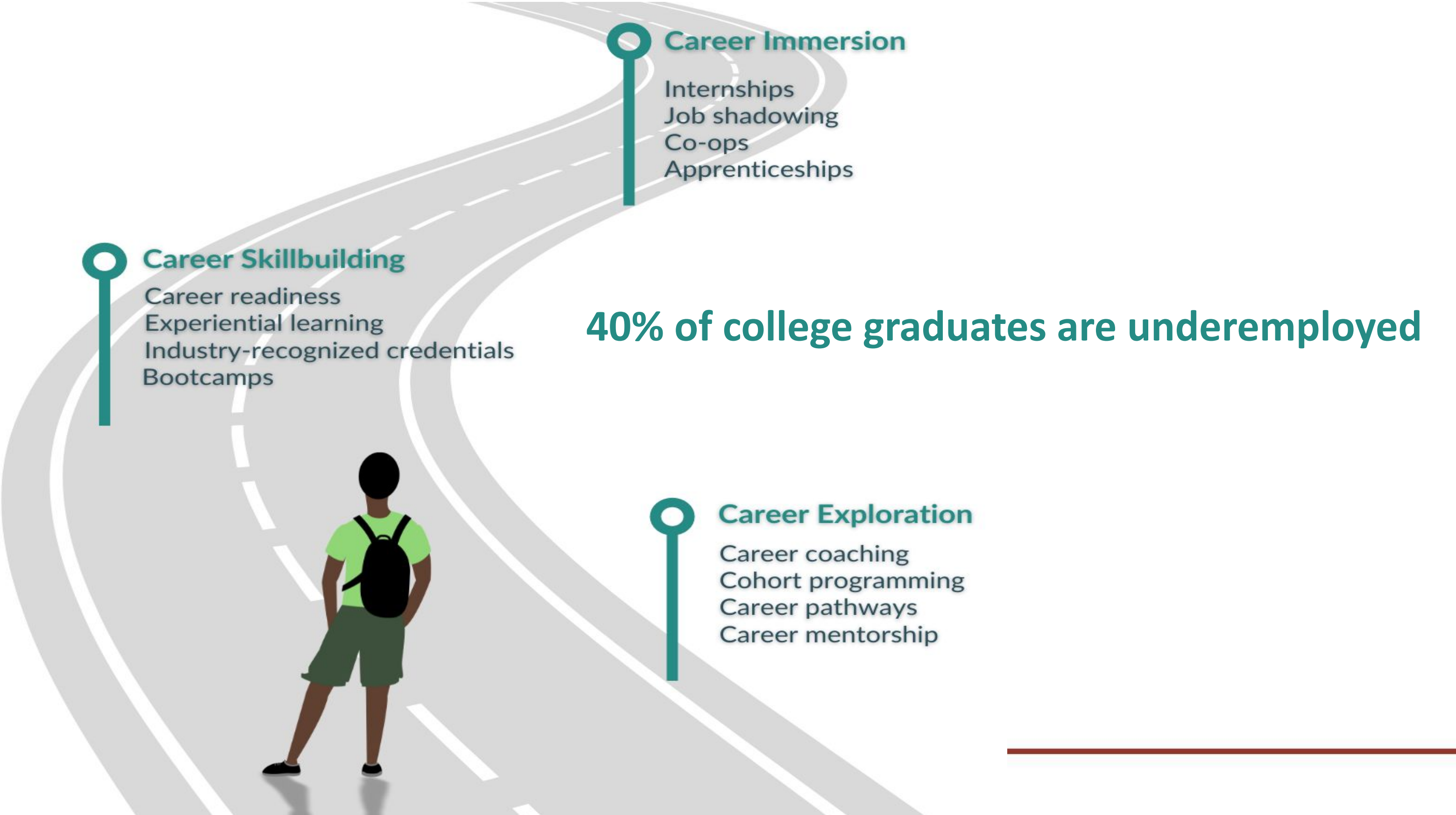
03

Skyrocketing tuition in the U.S. has not kept pace with inflation

04

Student Debt has increased dramatically as well

“Most colleges offer disjointed services and learning opportunities. Students are required to seek out and navigate supports on their own.” Deming et al, 2023



“The most effective college-to-jobs programs combine several interventions throughout the education cycle and support student career preparation and transition.”

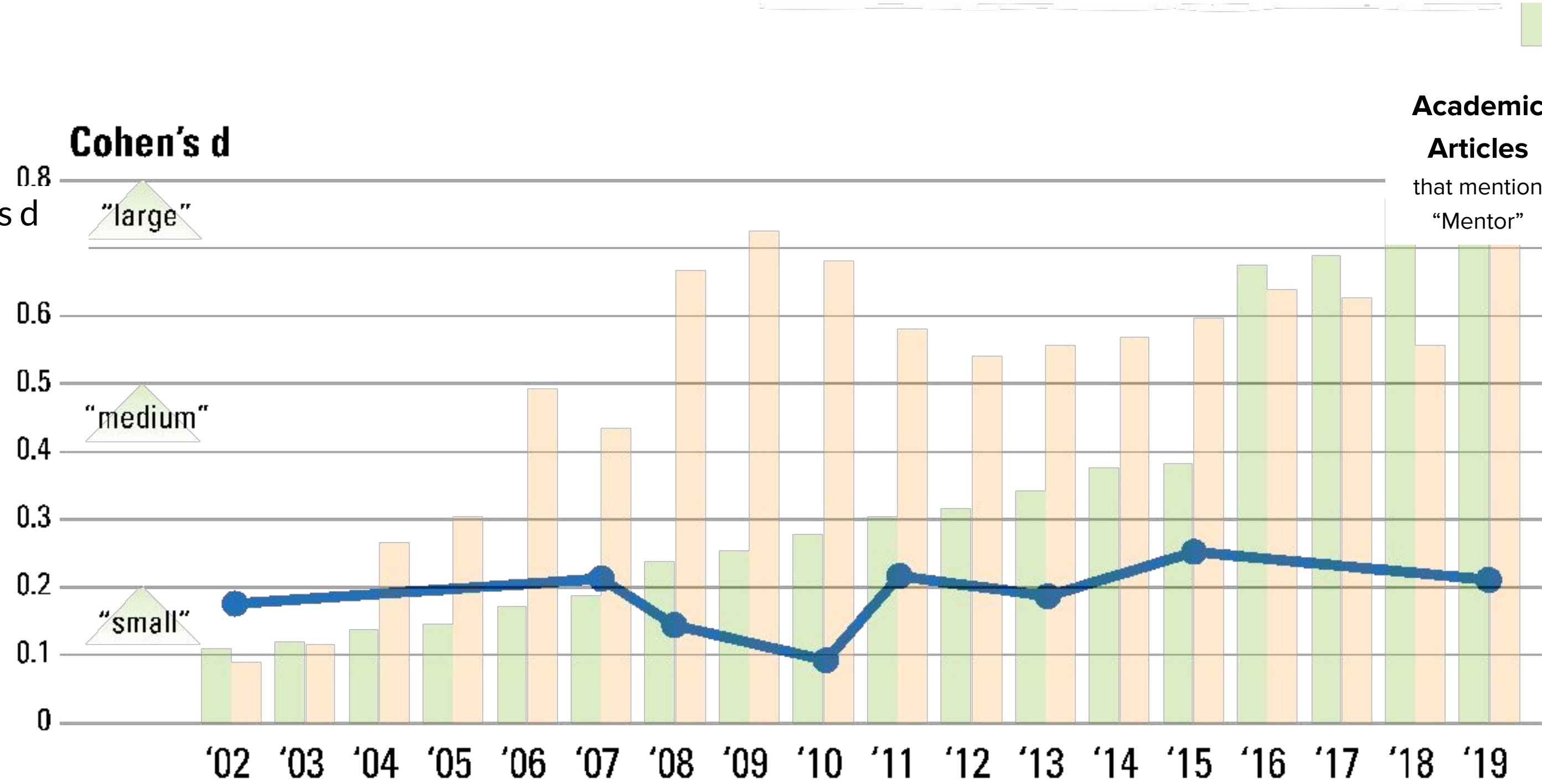
Deming et al, 2023





Effect Size
(Meta-analysis)

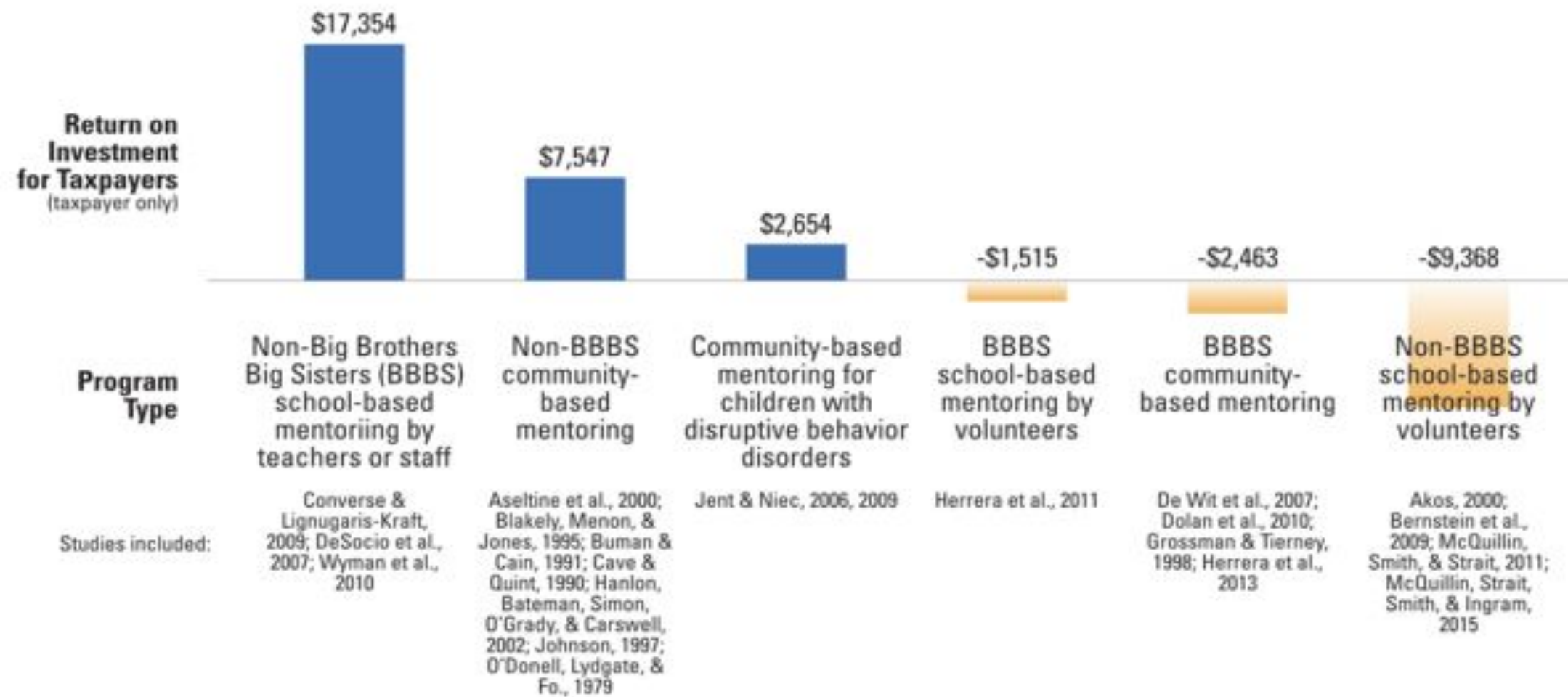
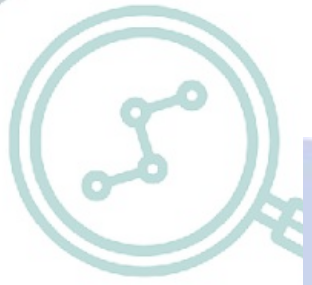
Effect Size
(Meta-analysis)



Academic Articles that mention "Mentor"

Academic Articles that mention "Mentor"

Federal Spending (\$ in millions)



Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2019)

Help Them Get There Be a Mentor

SERVE.GOV/MENTOR



You don't need special skills to be a mentor. You just need to listen, show that you care, and share your experience. Becoming a mentor is one of the best investments you can make for the future. Just imagine how you'll feel when graduation day arrives.

SERVE.GOV/MENTOR



Finding the sweet spot



Finding the Sweet Spot: Investigating the Effects of Relationship Closeness and Instrumental Activities in School-based Mentoring

Michael D. Lyons,¹  Samuel D. McQuillin,² and Lora J. Henderson¹

Highlights

- When mentors set goals and give feedback to mentees, youth experience better outcomes.
- When youth report a good relationship with their mentor, youth experience better outcomes.
- However, mentors maximize impact when they have a good relationship, set goals, and give feedback.

Mentoring is most effective when...

1

is delivered by credible, well
trained mentors (Burton,
Rhodes, et al., 2022)

“Effects of peer mentoring was more than
double that observed in past
meta-analyses”

2

focuses on specific
challenges and goals
(Christensen, Rhodes, et al., 2020)

“Effects of targeted programs are **two to
three times** that of non- specific
approaches.”

3

fosters a sense of
cultural inclusivity and
belonging (Hagler,
Rhodes et al., 2020)

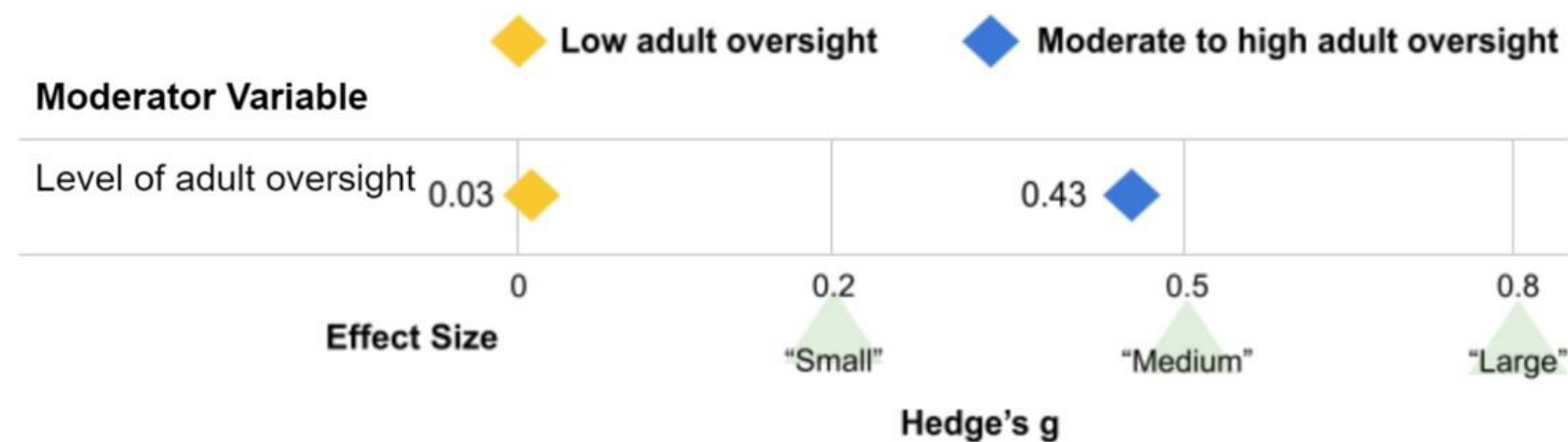
“newly acquired mentors during the
transition to college associated with sense
of belonging in the university.”

Trained, credible mentors are particularly effective

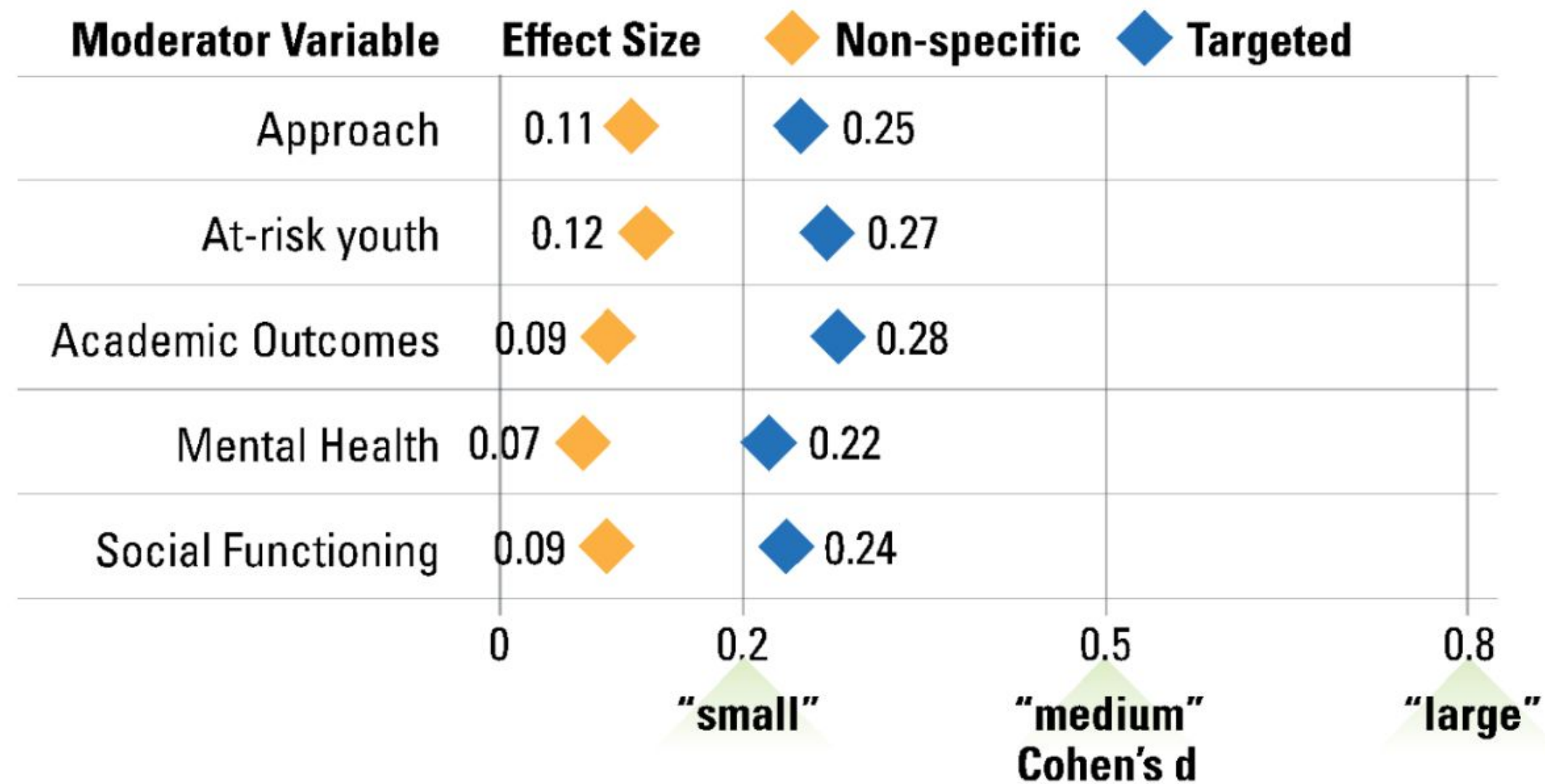
Meta-Analysis



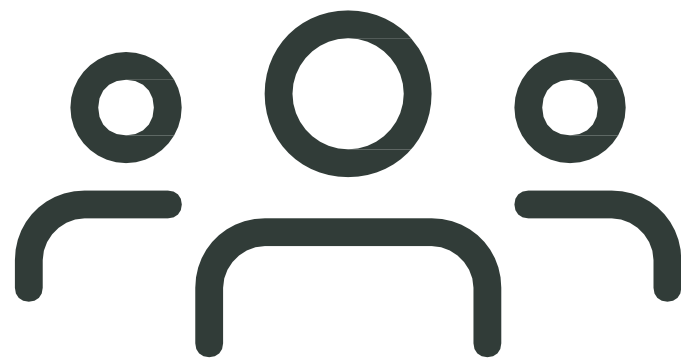
...but only with training and support



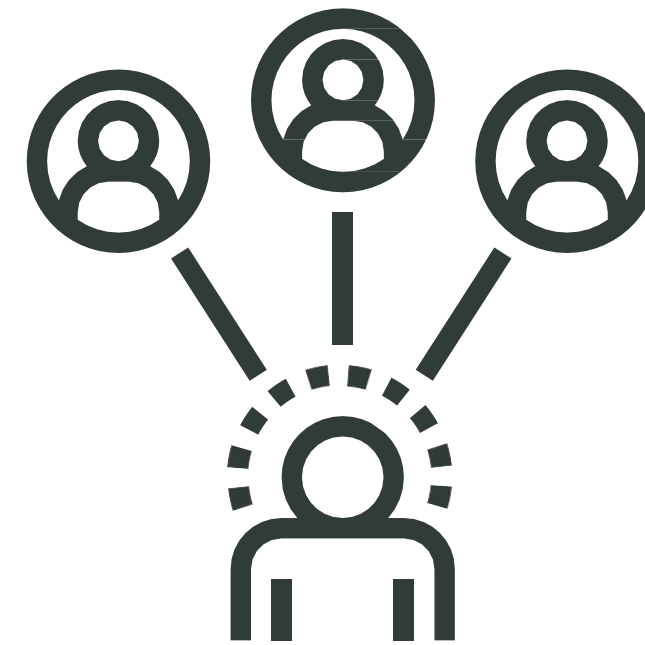
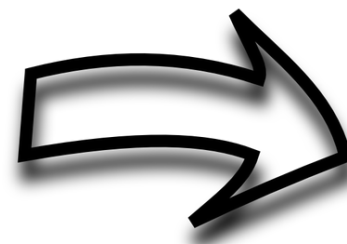
Targeted, goal-focused mentoring is particularly effective



Goal focused, blended approach



Relationships as the
intervention



Relationships as context for targeted,
evidence-based intervention

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Paraprofessional Youth Mentoring: A Framework for Integrating Youth Mentoring with Helping Institutions and Professions

Samuel D. McQuillin,¹ Matthew A. Hagler,² Alexandra Werntz,² and Jean E. Rhodes²

Highlights

- We propose a framework for delegating some mental health service tasks to paraprofessional mentors.
- Appropriately scaled, paraprofessionals can reduce the burden of youth's mental health difficulties.
- With training, a subset of mentors could increase engagement in and deliver mental health services.
- Training, supervision, and documentation of services will be critical to scale.
- Paraprofessional youth mentorship requires research to establish efficacy.



Supportive Accountability Mentoring

We have developed a model, referred to as “**Supportive Accountability**.” We argue that human support increases adherence through accountability to a coach who is seen as trustworthy, benevolent and having expertise. (Mohr et al., 2011)

Without **supervised practice**, it is highly unlikely that participants will be able to master new behaviors and apply them appropriately in the future. (Conley et al., 2015)

Review

Providing Human Support for the Use of Digital Mental Health Interventions: Systematic Meta-review

(*J Med Internet Res* 2023;25:e42864) doi: [10.2196/42864](https://doi.org/10.2196/42864)

KEYWORDS

digital mental health interventions; human support; supportive accountability; systematic meta-review

Alexandra Werntz, PhD; Selen Amado, MA; Megyn Jasman, BA; Ariel Ervin, BA; Jean E Rhodes, PhD

Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA, United States

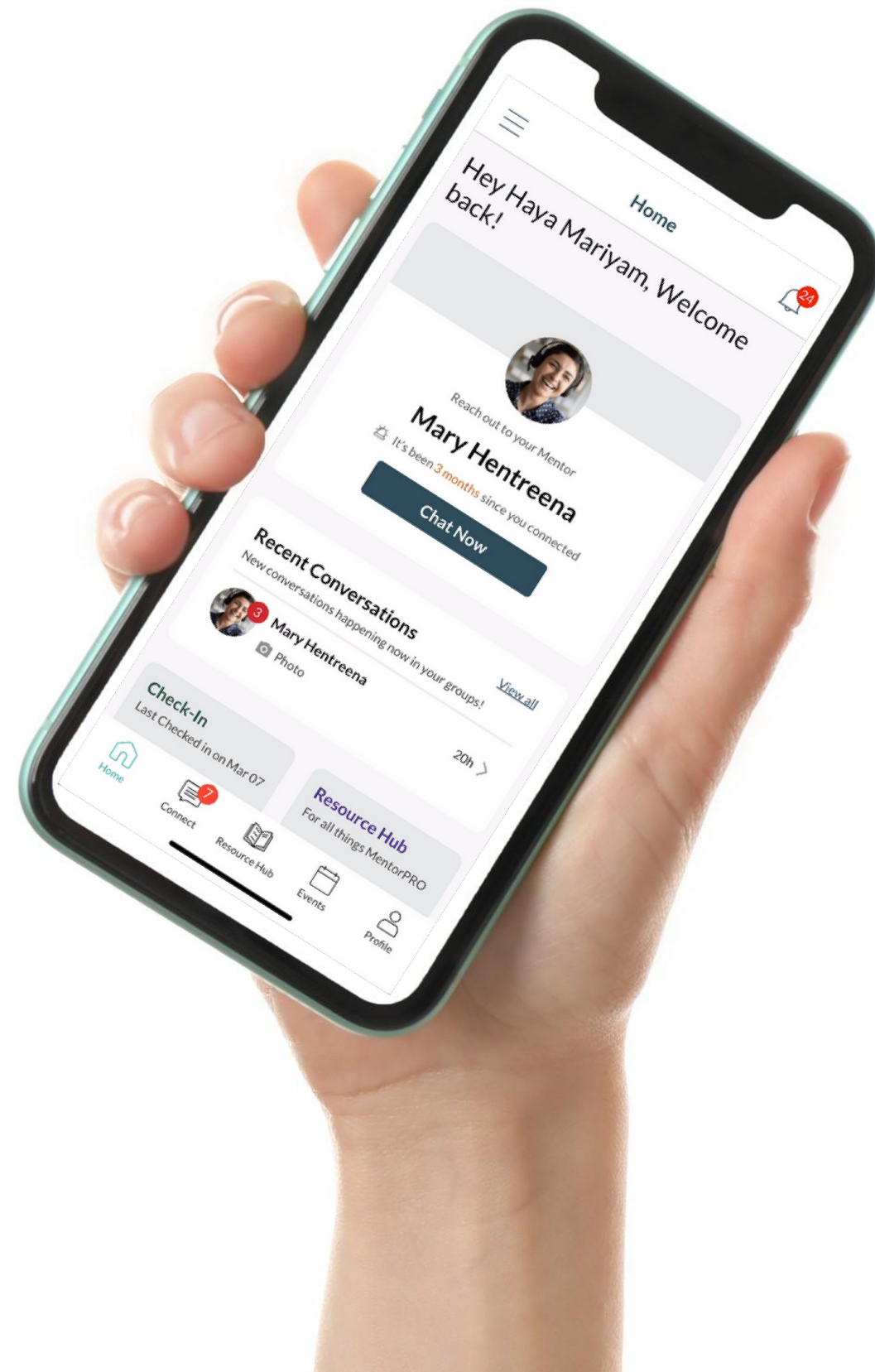
- 22 of 45 (48%) effect sizes showed supported interventions had stronger effects compared to unsupported interventions (only 4 showed stronger effects of unsupported interventions)
- No clear pattern emerged by outcome domain (e.g., depression vs. PTSD)
- Mixed findings for anxiety
- No clear differences between highly-trained (e.g., clinicians) and paraprofessionals



Youth Interventions With and Without Supervised Practice: A Second-Order Meta-Analysis

Kirsten M. Christensen¹ · Mark Assink² · Levi van Dam² · Geert-Jan Stams² · Cyanea Y. S. Poon¹ · Jeremy Astesano¹ · Jean E. Rhodes¹

- Supervised practice of skills with constructive and supportive feedback yielded stronger effects when compared to unsupervised practice across five meta-analyses, SMD=0.22
- Youth internalizing behavior showed the strongest effect



mentorPRO is built on this evidence



Student Success Platform

Our training, support, and expertise ensure high-impact mentoring



Seamless Connection

Learners and Mentors connect through MentorPRO app



Continuous Engagement

Daily incentives and customizable push notifications for students



Concierge Experience

Peer Mentors answer questions and create referrals



Let's see the  experience!

Student Experience

Set goals

The 'Set Goal' screen features a back arrow and a title 'Set Goal'. Below the heading 'What do you hope to accomplish this semester?', there are three main categories: Academics, Finances, and a custom goal option. The Academics section includes buttons for Academic support services, Attendance/participation, Course schedule, Disability Services, Grades, Majors and minors, Manage academic stress, Study/Organizational skills, Time management, and Transfer/International resources. The Finances section includes buttons for Billing/tuition, Financial literacy, Scholarships and grants, Student employment, and Student loans. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Add Custom Goal' and 'Save'.

Check-In

The 'Check-In' screen has a back arrow and a title 'Check-In'. It prompts the user to 'Drag the sliders to let me know how things are going this week.' There are three sections: Academics (e.g., time-management, grades, test anxiety, motivation, classes/major), Career (e.g., career goals, job search, applications, resume/CV, interview prep, networking), and Connections (e.g., belonging, social life, friendships, romantic relationships, roommates). Each section has a slider with three positions: 'Going Well', 'Somewhat Challenging', and 'Very Challenging'. A 'Finances' section is also visible at the bottom. A 'Save' button is at the bottom.

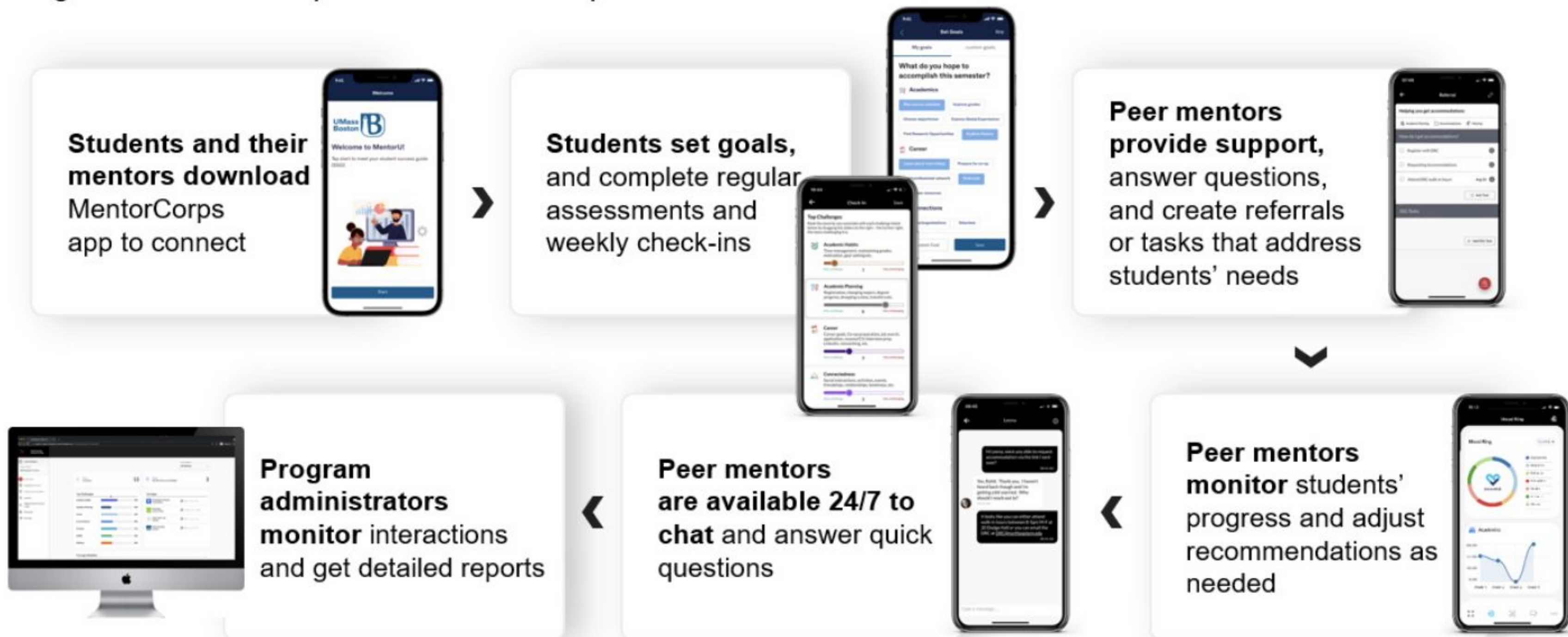
Chat

The 'Chat' screen shows a conversation with a 'Mentor'. The messages are: 'Hi Ani' (01:17 PM), 'Are you facing any challenges?' (01:17 PM), 'Hi Jean! Yes, I'm struggling with classes' (01:17 PM), 'How can I help you?' (01:17 PM), 'Where can I find information about extra-curricular options?' (01:18 PM), 'I have created a referral for you' (01:18 PM) with a heart icon and '1', 'You can follow up with your academic advisor' (01:19 PM), and 'Thank you so much!' (01:19 PM). A 'Type a message...' input field is at the bottom.

Find resources

The 'ResourceHub' screen has a back arrow, a title 'ResourceHub', and a notification badge with the number '4'. It features a search bar with the placeholder 'Start typing a question...'. Below the search bar are six resource categories: Clubs & Organizations, Internship, Health & Wellbeing, Academic Planning, Registration, and Finances. At the bottom, there is a 'Featured Announcements' section with a 'View all' link and an illustration of a megaphone. A bottom navigation bar includes icons for Home, Learners, Connect, Resource Hub, and Referrals.

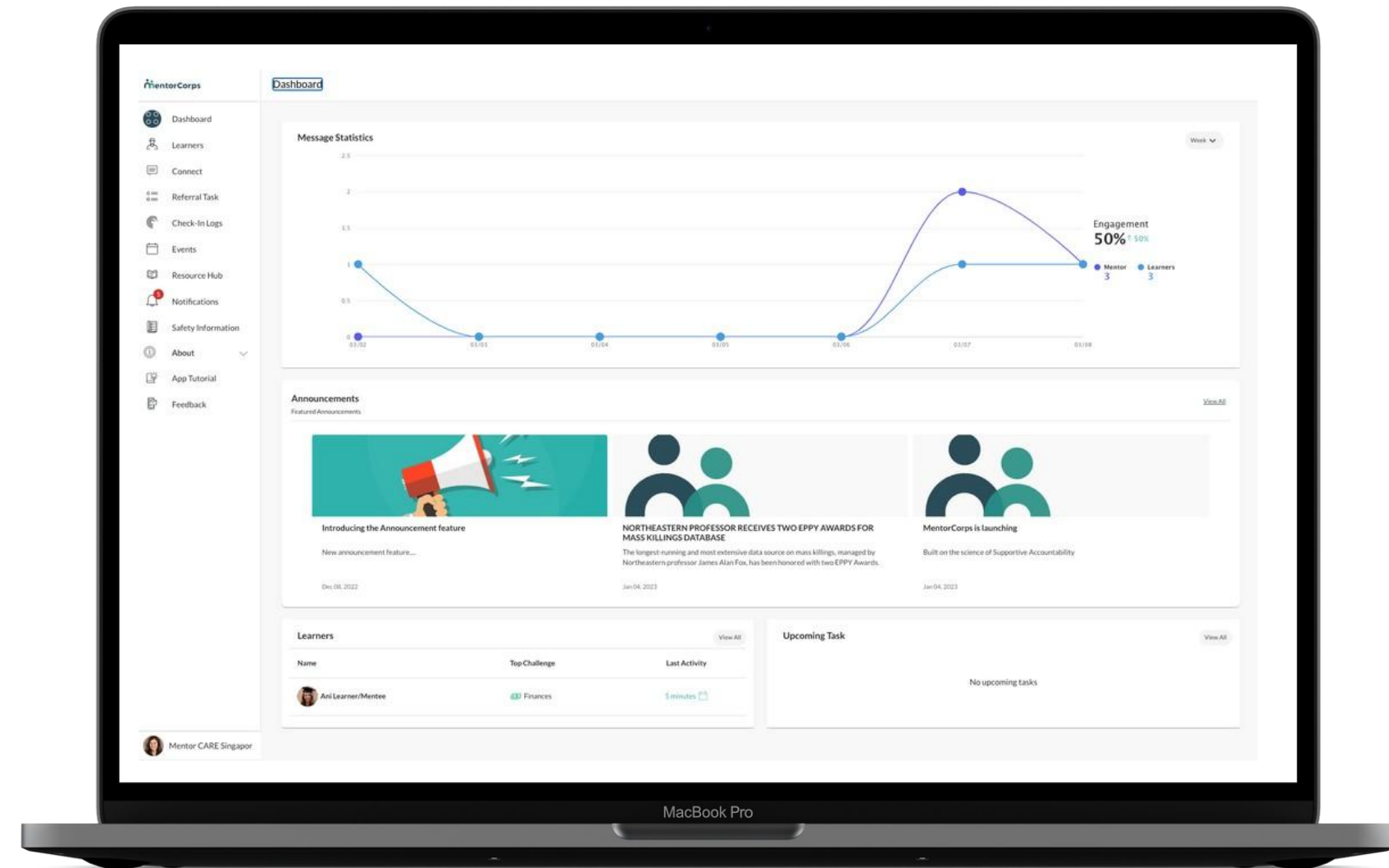
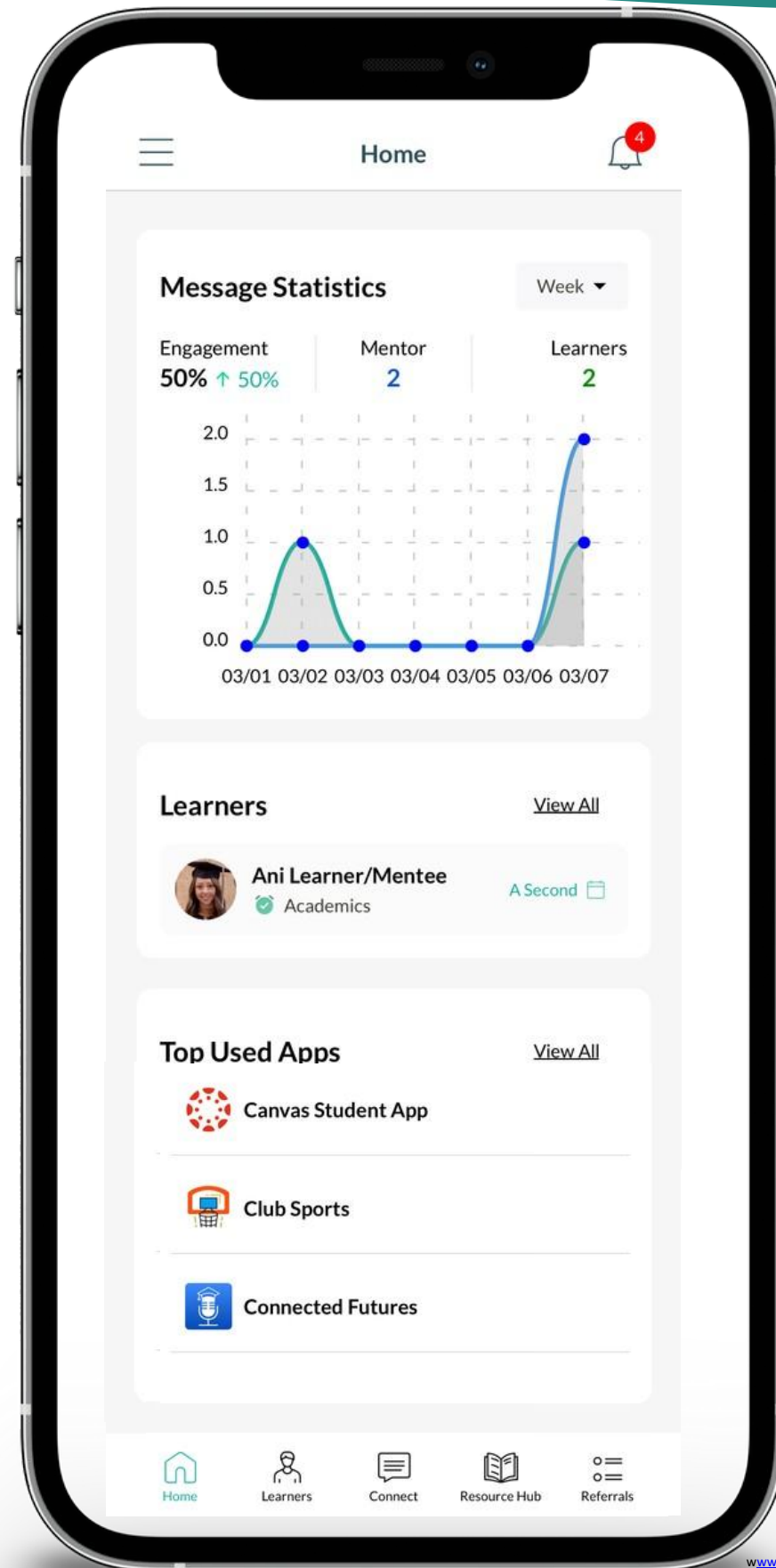
How it works



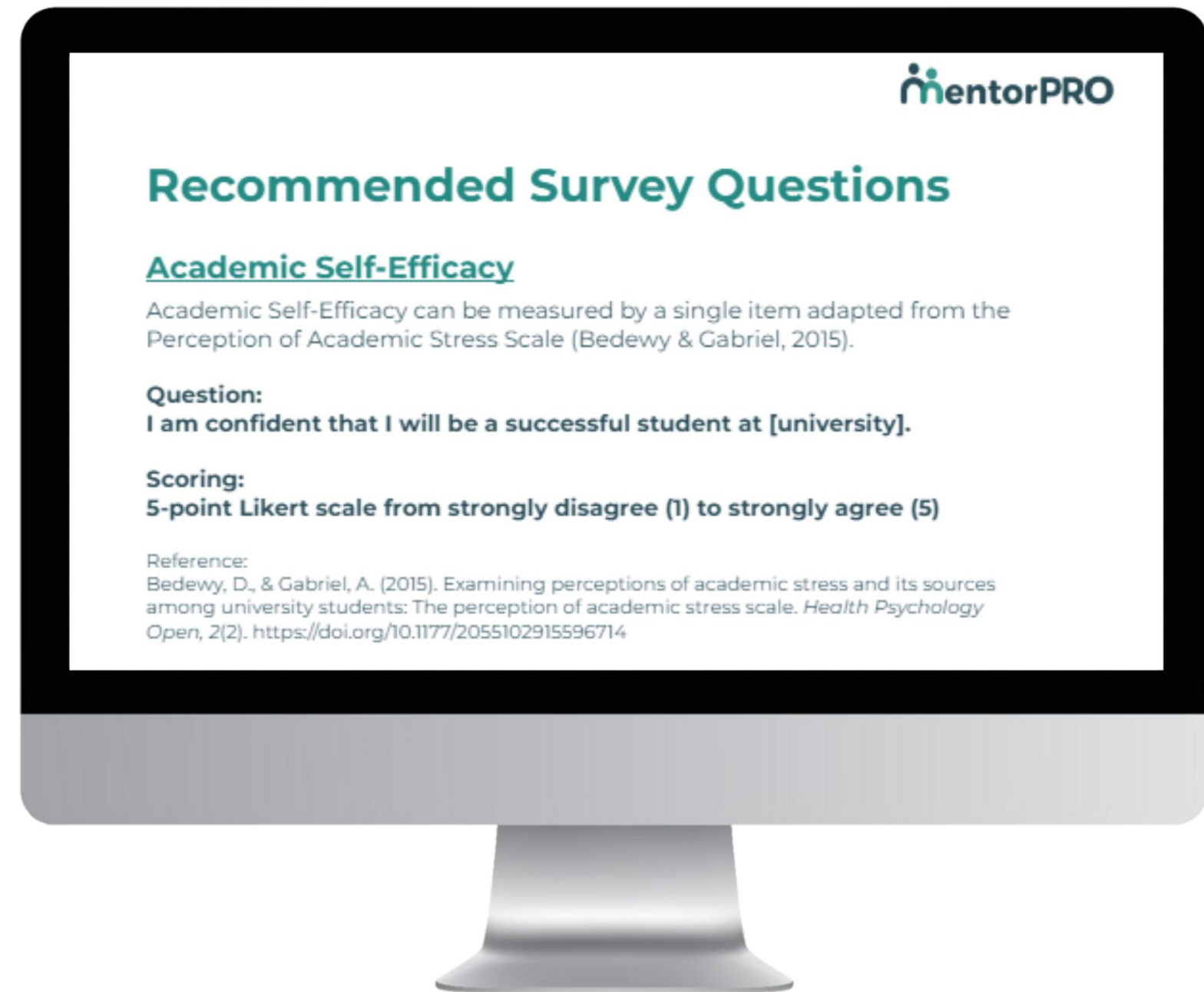
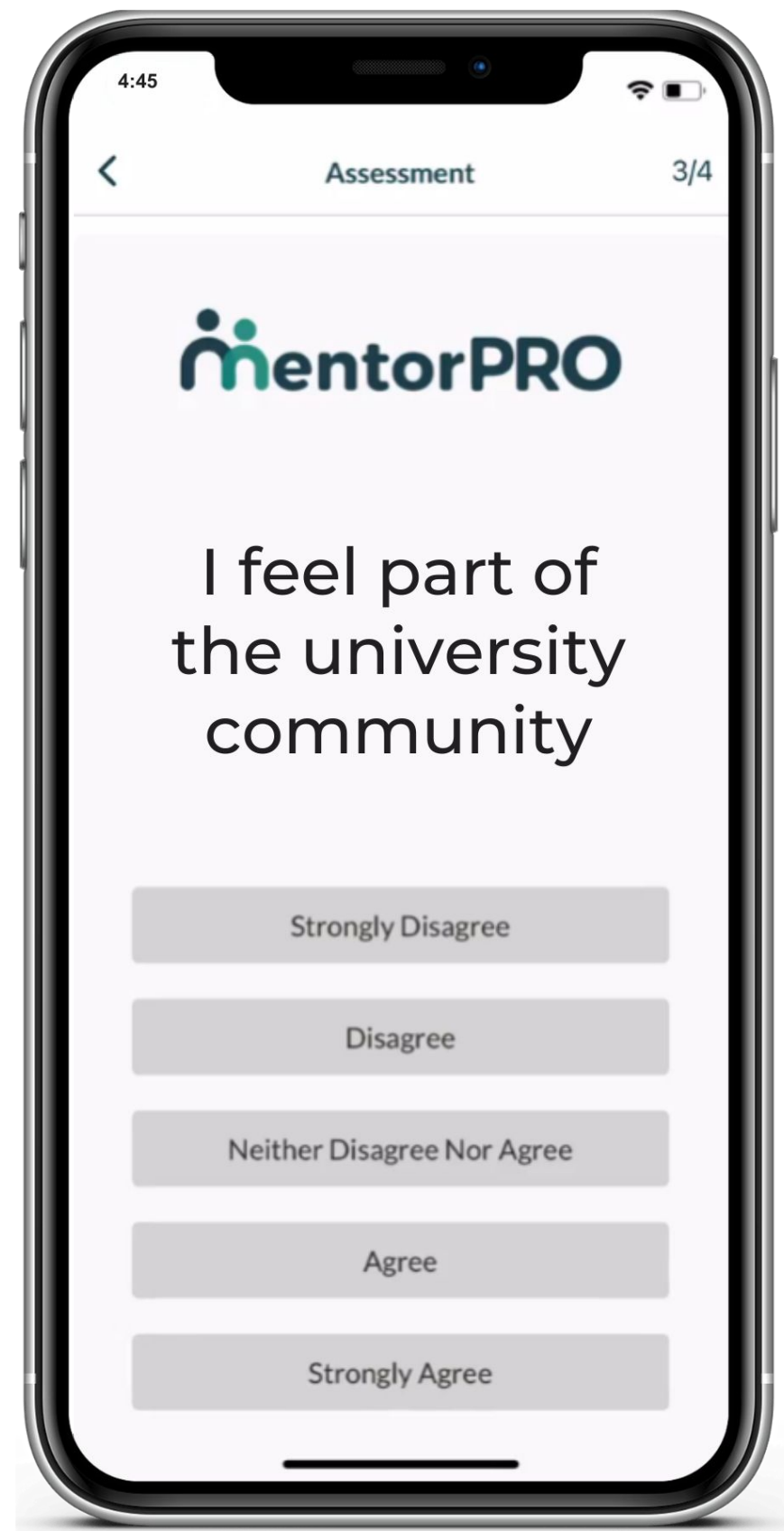


MentorPRO is an elegant, intuitive, all-in-one success platform that encompasses everything we know about effective mentoring.

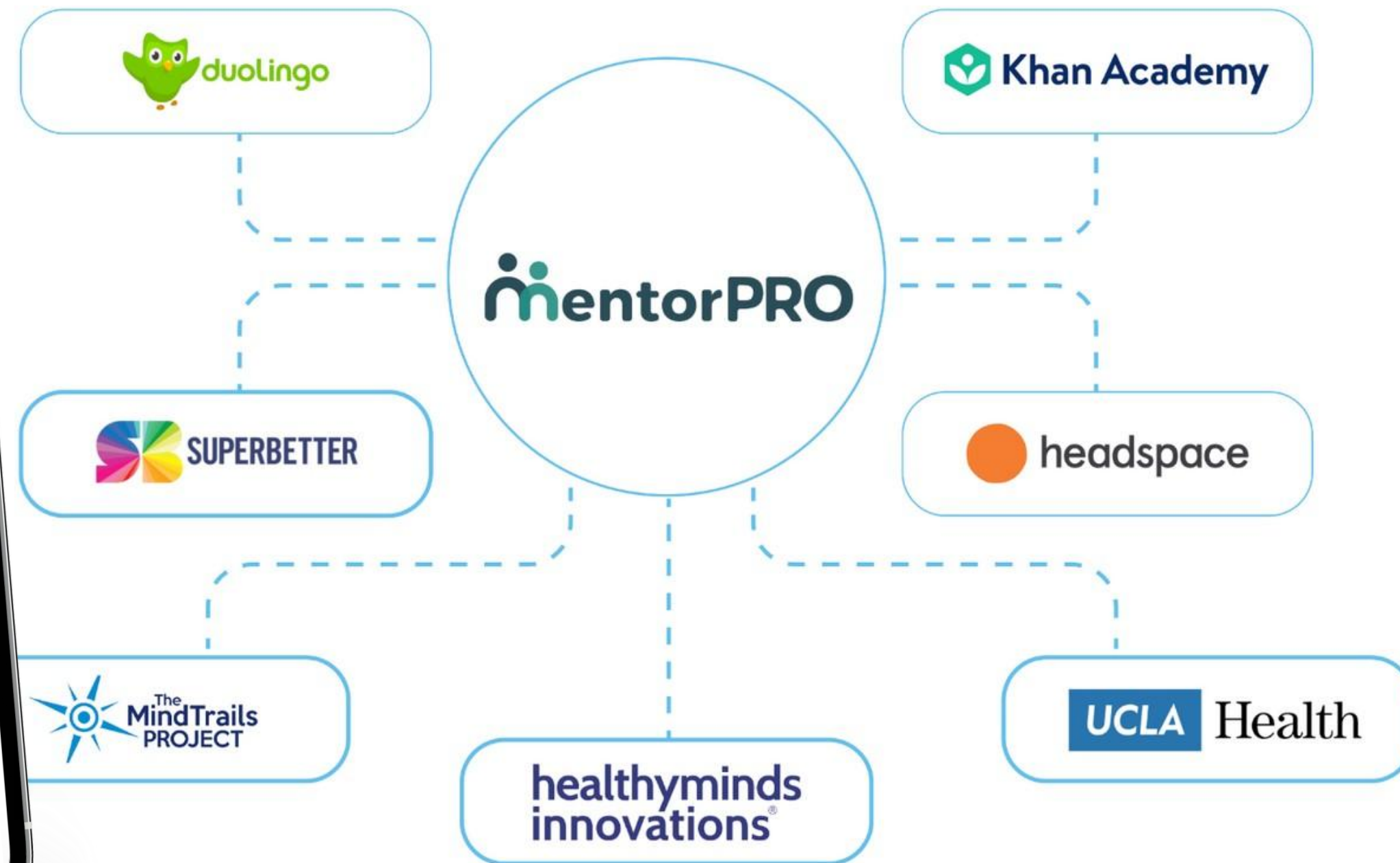
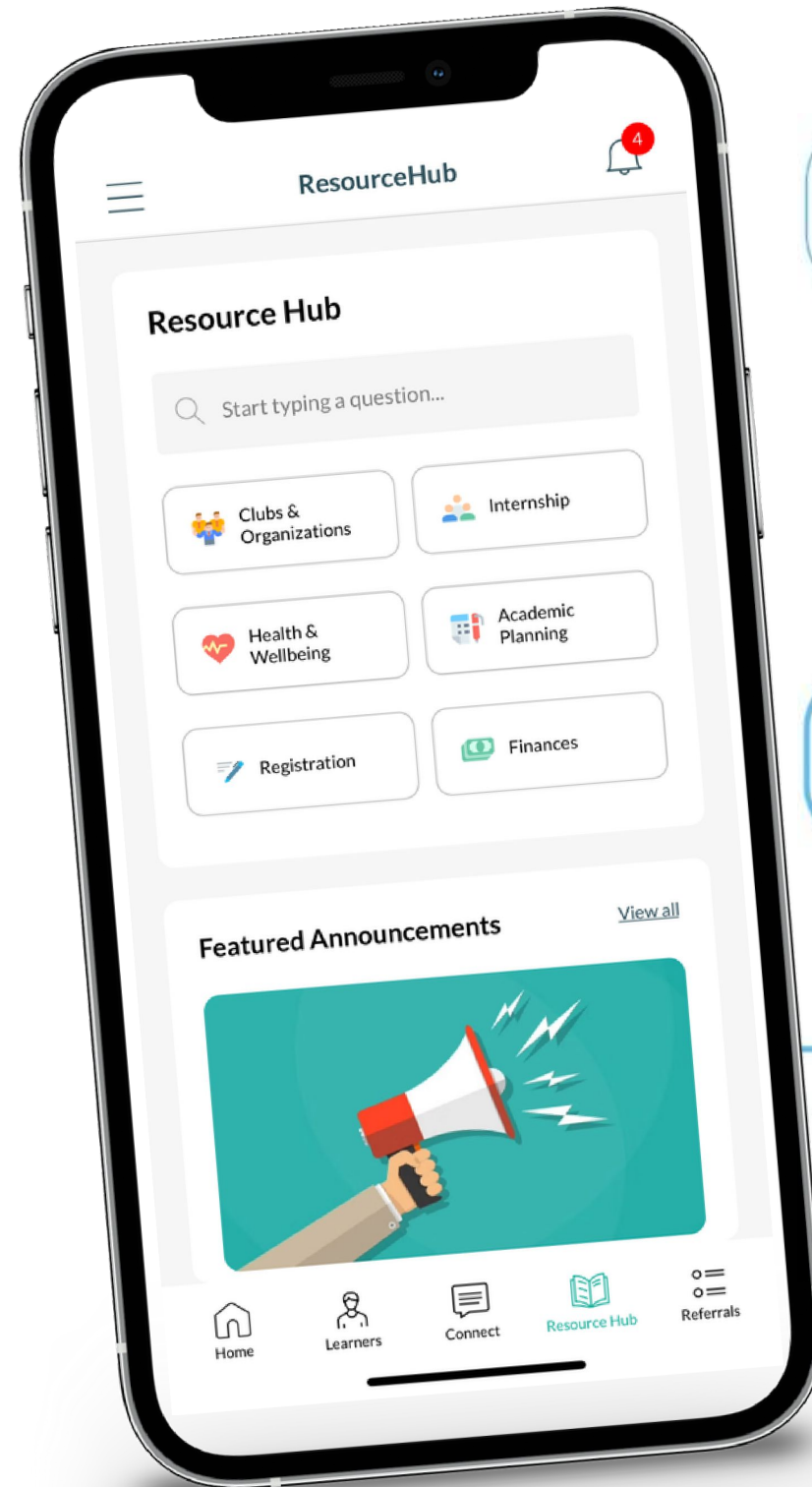
Backend Experience



Evaluation tools

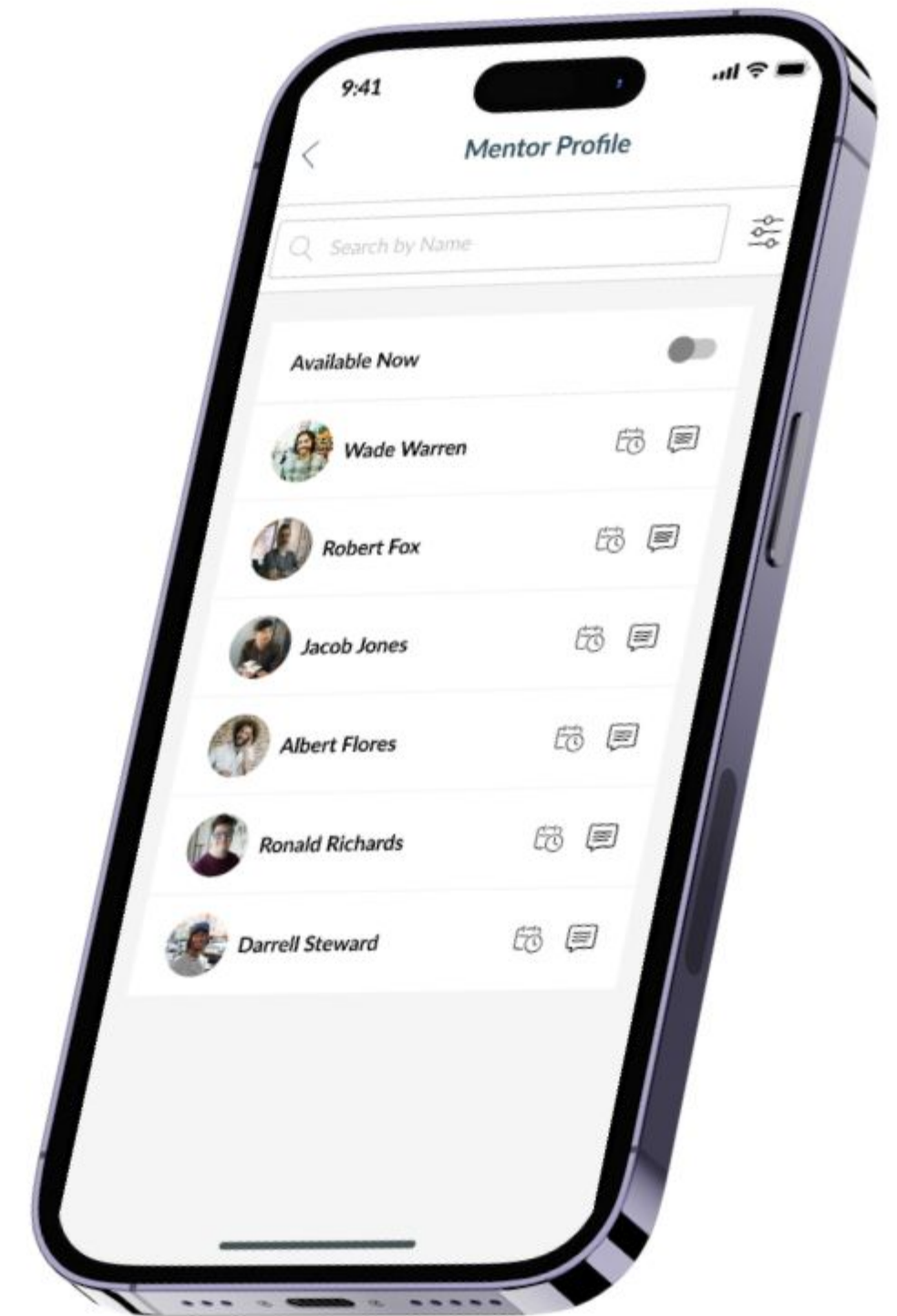


ResourceHub provides site-specific answers, announcements, and evidence-based tools



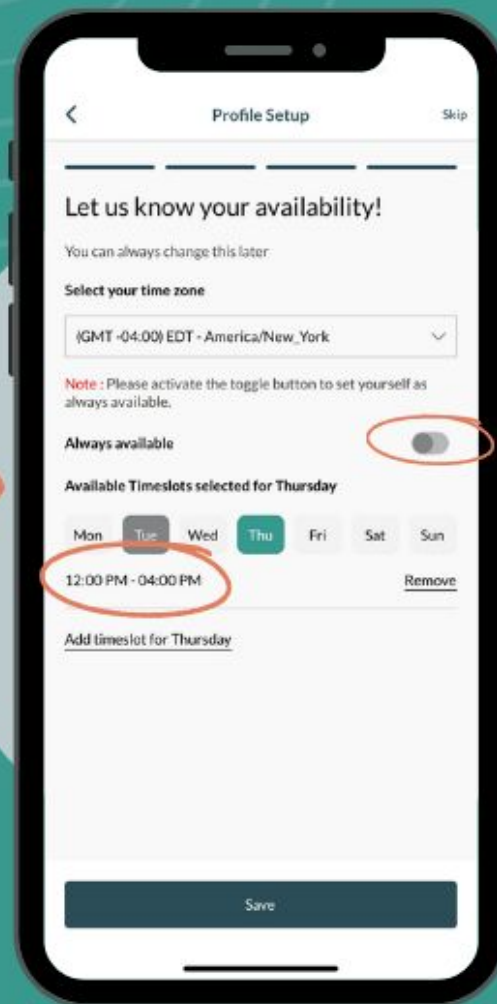
FLASH MENTORING

Flash Mentoring involves time-limited exchanges aimed at addressing mentees' specific needs or questions.



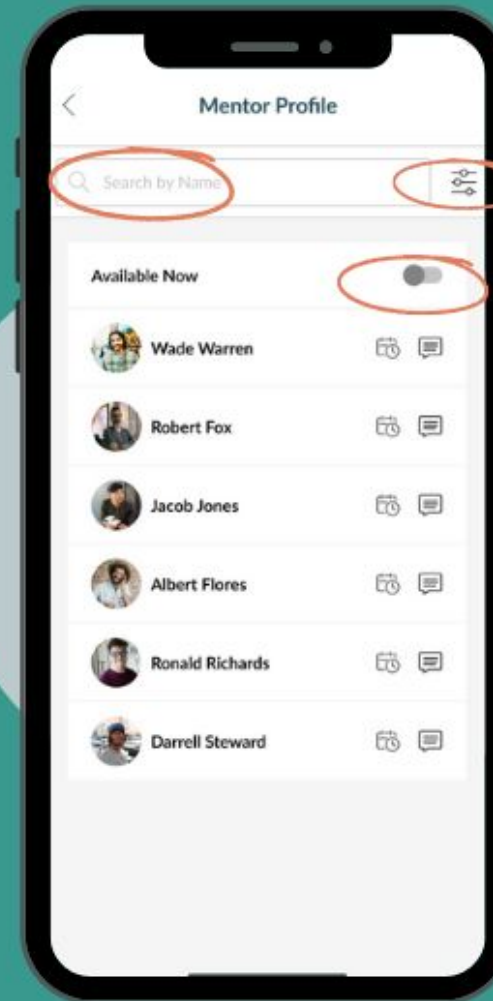
One platform, *unlimited* connections!

Personalize



Select availability

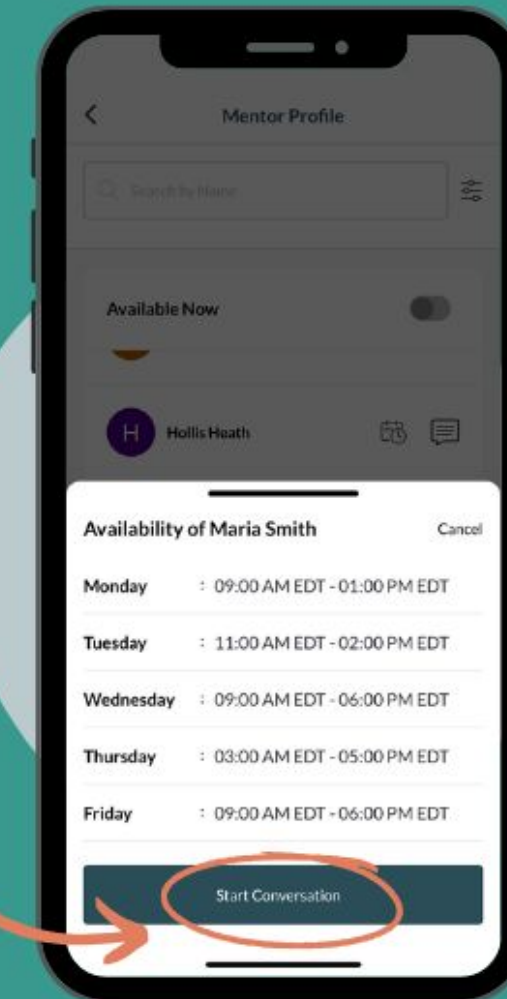
Mentors choose their available time slots for chatting with mentees.



Filter by your needs

Unlimited Connections

Mentees have access to a comprehensive list of mentors to interact with, based on their individual goals.



Start conversations in one click

Immediate interactions

Mentees can initiate conversations for swift responses or schedule meetings to engage with a mentor.

...and analysis/visualization of data



Mentor/Mentee Training



Mentor Training

Using
MentorPRO
to Connect
with
Your Mentee



[Details >](#)

Educational Pathways

SuperReady
to Learn:
The Science of
Academic
Planning and Success



[Details >](#)

Employment Pathways

Developing
Effective
Interview
Skills



[Details >](#)

Mentor Training

Supporting
Mentees'
Professional
Development



[Details >](#)

Educational Pathways

SuperReady
to Thrive:
The Science of
Resilience and
Stress Management



[Details >](#)

Educational Pathways

Setting
SMART Goals
in College
and Beyond



[Details >](#)

Mentor Training

Motivational
Interviewing:
Supporting
Mentee
Behavior Change



[Details >](#)

Educational Pathways

Connected
Futures:
The Science
of Building
Social Capital



[Details >](#)

Employment Pathways

Constructing
Your Resume
and
Cover Letter



[Details >](#)

Mentor Training

Supportive
Accountability:



Educational Pathways

Setting
SMART Goals
in College
and Beyond



Employment Pathways

Building
Your Career
Narrative



- In order for the course to be helpful, it’s really important to go beyond just reading the content and to try out the activities we suggest in real life. You might even want to choose a family member or friend who can help keep you accountable and help you practice new skills as you move through the activities.
- On the right-hand side of the course, you’ll see your Connected Futures Toolbox. This contains helpful tools that you’ll pick up throughout the Connected Futures Course. Return to your Toolbox at any time to find resources that can support you on your journey to building a social network.

Course Content

Expand All 

	Lesson 1: An Introduction to Mentors, Social Support, and Social Capital	4 Topics 4 Exercises	
	Lesson 2: Mapping Out Social Support and Building Social Capital	11 Topics 1 Exercise	
	Lesson 3: Navigating a Successful Mentoring Meeting	6 Topics 1 Exercise	
	Conduct Your Interview	3 Topics 1 Exercise	
	Lesson 4: Mentoring Relationships in College	7 Topics 2 Exercises	

Educational Pathways

Connected Futures:
The Science of Building Social Capital



Details >

Start Course

Course Includes

-  5 Lessons
-  31 Topics
-  9 Exercises

American Educational Research Journal
Month XXXX, Vol. XX, No. X, pp. 1–37
DOI: 10.3102/00028312231181096
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Teaching to Fish: Impacts of a Social Capital Intervention for College Students

Connected Futures: The Science of Building Social Capital



Am J Community Psychol (2017) 0:1–13
DOI 10.1002/ajcp.12206

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

“I’m Having a Little Struggle With This, Can You Help Me Out?” Examining Impacts and Processes of a Social Capital Intervention First-Generation College Students

Sarah E. O. Schwartz,¹ Stella S. Kanchewa,² Jean E. Rhodes,² Grace Gowdy,³ Abigail M. Stark,¹ John P. Horn,³ McKenna Parnes,¹ and Renée Spencer³

Highlights

- Social capital plays a key role in college and career success.
- Social capital is unequally distributed during the transition to college.
- Workshops can change students’ attitudes and behaviors related to the acquisition of social capital.
- A social capital workshop can improve first-generation college students’ academic outcomes.

© Society for Community Research and Action 2017

Abstract Social capital plays a key role in college and career success, and research indicates that a dearth of on-campus connections contributes to challenges first-generation college students face in effectively navigating the college environment. This study investigates a novel intervention that focuses on the development of skills and attitudes to empower first-generation college students to

Keywords First-generation college students · Transition to college · Social capital · Intervention

Introduction

There has been heightened emphasis on increasing



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Children and Youth Services Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/childyouth



“I didn’t know you could just ask:” Empowering underrepresented college-bound students to recruit academic and career mentors☆☆☆



Sarah E.O. Schwartz ^{a,*}, Stella S. Kanchewa ^b, Jean E. Rhodes ^b, Evan Cutler ^b, Jessica L. Cunningham ^b

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Adolescence
Education
Positive youth development

ABSTRACT

This study investigates a new approach to cultivating mentoring relationships in which adolescents participate in workshops to develop their capacity to recruit mentors and other supportive adults who can help advance their academic and career goals. Drawing on in-depth pre- and post- interviews, research observations, and participant feedback and workshop materials from a pilot intervention conducted with 12 ethnic minority students in their senior year of high school, this study explores whether and how the intervention influenced participants, as well as mechanisms of change. Results suggested that the intervention increased the value students placed on social capital and mentoring relationships, developed their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy in how to develop such connections, and influenced their interactions with potential academic and career mentors. Although additional research is needed, this study highlights the potential of a relatively low-cost intervention to support underrepresented college-bound students in developing relationships that are crucial to college and career success.
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1. Introduction

In the current paper, we propose a new approach to cultivating mentoring relationships that seeks to empower adolescents and emerging adults to recruit mentors and other supportive adults from their existing social networks. Substantial research indicates the key role of mentoring relationships and social capital in adolescents and emerging adults’ transition to college, particularly among low-income, racial or ethnic minority, and first-generation college students (e.g. Crisp, 2010; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Stanton-Salazar, 2011; Tinto, 1993). Unlike traditional mentoring programs, which have focused primarily on developing relationships by assigning formal mentors to youth, this intervention focuses on training youth so they can identify, recruit, and maintain the support of adults whom they believe would help advance their academic and career goals. The current qualitative study represents an initial step in developing and exploring whether and how a group intervention for underrepresented students transitioning from high school to college may influence students’ capac-

1.1. Educational attainment among underrepresented students

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in expanding college access to students historically underrepresented in higher education, including those from first generation, low-income, and racial or ethnic minority backgrounds. This interest stems from the significant disparities in college retention among these groups (e.g. Chen, 2005; Mortenson, Stocker, & Brunt, 2010; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Indeed, the United States has the highest college dropout rate in the industrialized world (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011), and low-income, first-generation students are nearly four times more likely than their higher income and continuing generation peers to leave after the first year of college (Engle & Tinto, 2008). There is, therefore, a critical need for the development of new strategies that support low-income, racial or ethnic minority, and first-generation college students in achieving their educational goals.

Connected Futures: The Science of Building Social Capital

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Teaching to Fish: Impacts of a Social Capital Intervention for College Students

Sarah Schwartz 

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Laura Austin

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University of Massachusetts

Janis Kupersmidt

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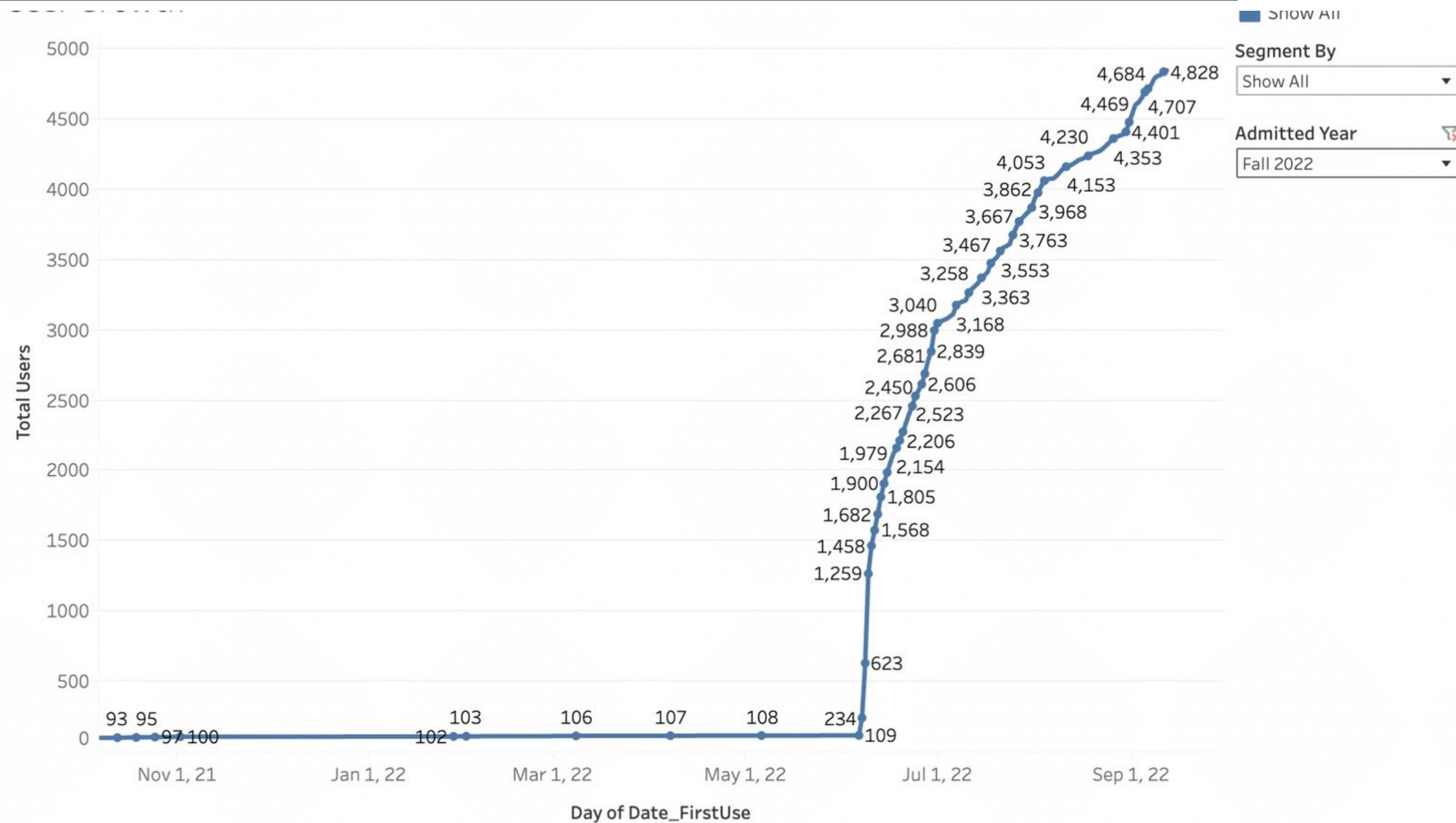
Stella Kanchewa

Bellarmino University

Social capital plays a key role in college students' academic and career success. Using a random assignment design, the current study evaluated the impacts of a one-credit college course designed to increase student help-seeking and social capital within a racially diverse sample of college students. Compared to the control group, students in the treatment group reported improved attitudes towards help-seeking, increased help-seeking behavior, and higher levels of social capital and mentoring support. Academic benefits

The transition to college

Summer 2022



Preliminary Findings



92%

Incoming students used MentorPRO with less than 5% attrition.

9.4

Net Promoter Score: 9.4/10 (higher than Amazon or Google).

$p < .05$

MentorPRO associated with significantly higher GPA (Werntz et al., 2023).

87%

Found the resources they were referred to helpful.

97%

Students have used the check-in feature.

$p < .05$

MentorPRO engagement associated with improved well-being.



Implementation of a Technology-Enhanced Peer Mentor Referral System for First-Year University Students

Alexandra Werntz¹ · Megyn Jasman¹ · Katherine Simeon² · Harun Gunasekaran² · Constance Yowell² · Jean E. Rhodes¹

Received: 12 July 2022 / Revised: 14 December 2022 / Accepted: 17 January 2023
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Abstract

COVID-19 forced college administrators to reassess how they provide students with the most effective methods of support. This project examined the first year of a novel digital peer mentoring program with the goal of connecting diverse students to campus resources they needed to navigate the transition to and through their first year of college. MentorHub, a referral and supportive accountability mobile application, was implemented with first-year undergraduates at a large, private university in the northeastern region of the USA. MentorHub tracked students' current challenges and connected them with trained peer mentors who provided students with support and referrals to campus resources (e.g., mental health, financial, academic). Analyses were not hypothesis-driven, but instead were exploratory and intended for improving the platform. In the first year of the program (August 2021 to June 2022), 47% ($N = 3141$) students logged onto the platform at least once. Patterns of self-reported challenges revealed that career concerns were the most challenging at the beginning of the fall semester, and that academic habits were most challenging over the course of the year. Referrals ($N = 756$) were made by mentors, 13% of which were for health and well-being. First-generation and underrepresented minority students showed distinct patterns in referrals. Findings revealed distinct patterns in self-reported challenges across the academic year. Students' use of MentorHub and responses to in-app questions allowed for a real-time understanding of student challenges and patterns of engagement with peer mentors. Implications for a stepped-care approach to addressing student challenges are discussed.

Keywords Peer mentoring · College transition · Supportive accountability · Technology

Although completing a college degree confers a range of financial, social, and health benefits (Ma et al., 2016), 30% of college freshmen drop out before their sophomore year. Dropout is most salient for first-year students (Engle & Tinto, 2008), especially for those of first-generation, non-white, and low-income populations. Student engagement with campus resources often leads to positive academic outcomes and connectedness to the university (Wilson & Gore, 2013), particularly among more marginalized students. Researchers have found that using social and academic support services and college-based mentoring is associated with better grades (see Crisp et al., 2015) and lower stress (Garriott & Nisile, 2018). Unfortunately, the complex university administrative

structure can leave students feeling unsure of how to access services, which may increase stress and delay their access to campus resources. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges and highlighted the need for innovative strategies that improve students' support experiences.

The current study describes the first test of a novel technology-enhanced peer mentoring support and referral system for first-year college students during the 2021–2022 academic year at a private, large university in the northeast part of the United States. This program was designed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal of providing first-year students a stepped-care approach to academic, social, and wellbeing support through a digital peer mentoring system. More advanced undergraduate and graduate students at the same institution (i.e., peer mentors) were trained to respond to students' needs by monitoring challenges, providing support and referrals to campus resources, and ensuring sustained engagement in those resources. All first-year students were invited to participate and connect with their peer mentors through a mobile application, MentorHub.

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Published online: 04 February 2023

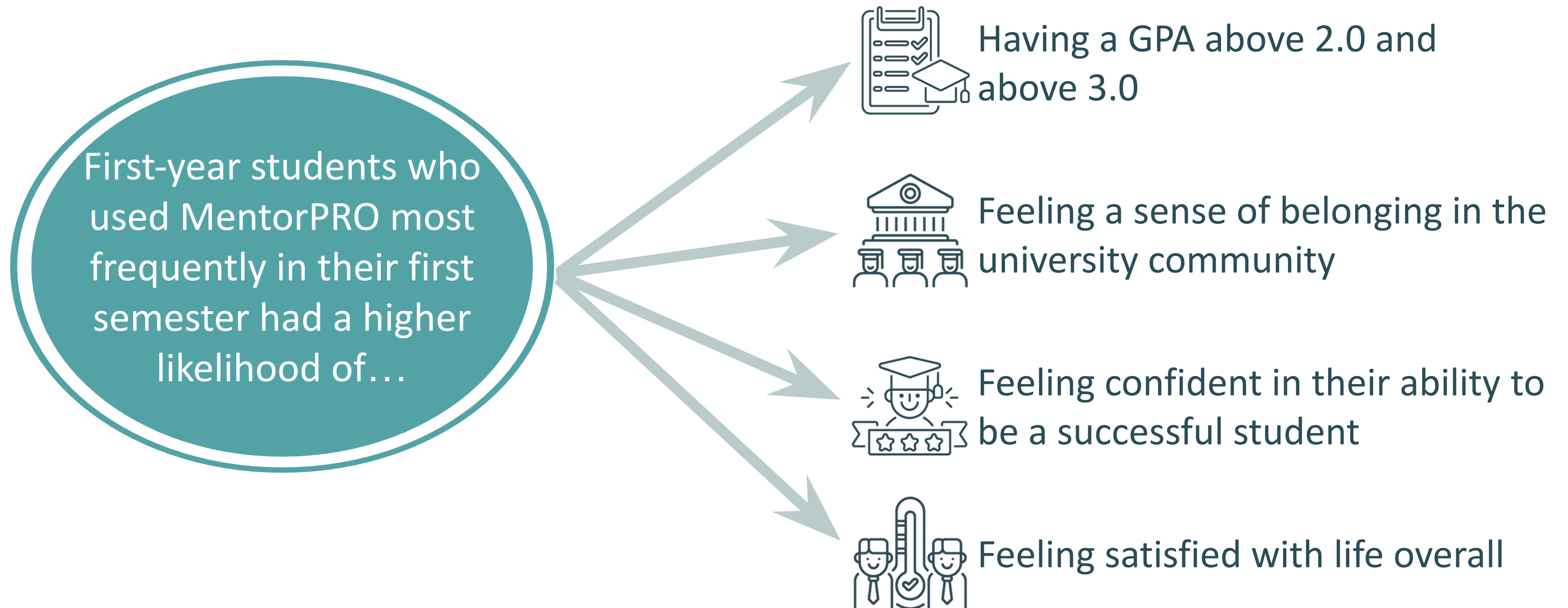
Springer

First-generation students received a significantly higher proportion of financial, academic habits, and health and wellbeing referrals.

Greater number of completed Check-Ins was associated with significantly higher GPA.

Werntz et al. (2023). Implementation of a Technology-Enhanced Peer Mentor Referral System for First-Year University Students. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*

Latest findings...



After controlling for known risk factors (i.e., age, gender, under-represented minority, first-generation, and high school GPA)

Future Directions...

1

UX/UI

2

RCT and SA Studies

3

Natural Language
Processing/AI
Functionality

Future Directions...

1

UX/UI

2

RCT and SA Studies

3

**Natural Language
Processing/AI
Functionality**



Learn more about

mentorPRO



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Any Questions?

Jean Rhodes

Frank L. Boyden Professor of Psychology

University of Massachusetts, Boston

