



Developing a typology of mentoring programmes for young people attending secondary school in the United Kingdom using qualitative methods

Heide Busse*, Rona Campbell, Ruth Kipping

Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom



ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Mentoring program
Adolescent
Schools
Classification
United Kingdom
Qualitative research

ABSTRACT

Mentoring programmes are commonplace and delivered in a range of different ways in the United Kingdom and North America. To better understand the type of programmes available and to inform future evaluations, we developed a typology of formal mentoring programmes for young people in secondary schools in the United Kingdom. Telephone interviews with 23 programme managers from purposively sampled mentoring organisations were conducted and analysed using thematic and framework analysis. The typology was consulted on with five experts in mentoring. The final typology differentiates mentoring programmes by three overarching categories: type of mentor (older student, school staff, adult volunteer, paid adult), programme setting (school, community, online) and programme aim. The findings suggest that although mentoring programmes are heterogeneous, it is possible to group programmes into ‘personal and developmental’ and ‘academic and employability’ mentoring programmes and to differentiate between 12 overall mentoring models. The typology helps understand what is being delivered and how, which is a necessary precursor to any evaluation of health, educational, relational and social outcomes.

List of abbreviations

UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
PDM	Personal and Developmental Mentoring
AEM	Academic and Employability Mentoring
BBBSA	Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

1. Introduction

An increasing number of young people experience psychological, social and behavioural difficulties in their transition to adulthood (Inchley et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2016) which can have deleterious consequences for the young people and society (Mokdad et al., 2016; Sawyer et al., 2012; Scott, Knapp, Henderson, & Maughan, 2001). A range of approaches, based upon different levels of the socio-ecological model of health (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991), are utilised to advance the health and wellbeing of young people. One individual-level intervention that is commonplace, popular and perceived by many to be effective is formal youth mentoring (Colley, 2003; Raposa, Dietz, &

Rhodes, 2017; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Compared to informal ways of mentoring, formal mentoring programmes explicitly recognise the mentoring relationship and usually involve matching a selected young person (mentee) to another individual (mentor). The establishment of a close relationship between mentor and mentee, characterised by mutuality, trust and empathy, is hypothesised as key in leading to beneficial socio-emotional, cognitive and identity development (Rhodes, 2005).

Influenced by developments in North America, formal mentoring programmes have grown rapidly in the United Kingdom (UK) and now operate in various settings and contexts (Philip, 2003; Philip & Spratt, 2007; Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). Youth mentoring is an approach which was advocated in the recent Lancet Commission on adolescence (Patton et al., 2016) and it attracts support from national and local government (UK Government, 2017), from third sector organisations (Philip & Spratt, 2007) and is widely used in schools (Parsons et al., 2008).

Given the plethora of mentoring programmes in existence, it is important to assess whether formal mentoring programmes in the UK are effective and cost-effective in improving young people's health, wellbeing, educational, employment and training outcomes.

* Corresponding author at: Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences, University of Bristol, Canynge Hall, 39 Whatley Road, Bristol BS8 2PS, United Kingdom.
E-mail addresses: Heide.Busse@bristol.ac.uk (H. Busse), Rona.Campbell@bristol.ac.uk (R. Campbell), Ruth.Kipping@bristol.ac.uk (R. Kipping).

In the following sections, we review what formal mentoring programmes are, what is known about the effectiveness of mentoring programmes and previous ways that have been used to make sense of the multiplicity of what is considered as ‘mentoring’ programmes.

1.1. Definitions of formal mentoring programmes

As Freedman noted in 1991, “Mentoring is flexible, accommodating whatever attributes people want to give it” (Freedman, 1991, p. 37). Various definitions have been proposed in previous research (DuBois & Karcher, 2005) with no commonly used definition of youth mentoring in either research or practice (Stewart & Openshaw, 2014). Definitions generally focus on three core elements: (i) the mentor being someone with greater experience than the mentee, (ii) the mentor offering guidance or instruction with the intent of facilitating the mentee’s growth and development, and (iii) the fact that there is an emotional bond between mentor and mentee (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Regardless of definition, the centrality of the establishment of a trusting and supportive relationship between mentor and mentee is key in most programmes that are referred to as mentoring programmes (Rhodes, 2005).

Given this broad and flexible definition, there is a range of different types of programmes that are referred to as ‘mentoring’ and that these programmes can vary widely (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006; Raposa et al., 2017). The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) programme is arguably the most well-known mentoring programme, currently operating across all States in America and in 14 other countries (Big Brothers Big Sisters International, 2014; Stewart & Openshaw, 2014). BBBSA typically involves matching a young person with an unrelated adult volunteer mentor to engage in regular meetings for a minimum of one year duration (Big Brothers Big Sisters International, 2014). Whereas historically programmes consisted of one-to-one mentoring approaches and in-person meetings using adult volunteers like the BBBSA model, programmes and approaches to youth mentoring have extended to group mentoring (Jent & Niec, 2009), programmes using online mentoring (Rhodes, Spencer, Saito, & Sipe, 2006), and programmes working with paid, professional mentors (Eddy et al., 2017). In addition to differences between programmes in their formats and type of mentor used, programmes also differ in other characteristics. For example, each BBBSA agency has their own requirements regarding the frequency of meeting and length of each meeting between mentor and mentee (Tierney, 1995).

1.2. Evidence of effectiveness of formal youth mentoring programmes

The earliest robust evaluation of a formal mentoring programme, employing a randomised control trial design, concerned the BBBSA community-based programme which paired young people from typically single-parent households with a mentor (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tierney, 1995). The evaluation involved 1138 young people aged 10–16 years and highlighted that young people that received a mentor, compared to the wait-list control group, showed lower drug and alcohol use, improved attendance and performance at school, improved relationships with parents and peers and less fighting at the 18 months follow-up (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). No impact was reported on feelings of self-worth, self-confidence or social acceptance (Tierney et al., 1995). A few years later, the BBBSA school-based programme was evaluated and highlighted that those who received a mentor achieved better educational outcomes and reported more positive perceptions of their academic abilities at the end of the school year, but there was no strong statistical evidence with regard to relationships with others or problem behaviours (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011).

When looking at mentoring programmes in the UK, a few individual programmes have been subject to robust evaluation, with no randomised control trial yet undertaken of a mentoring programme for young

people of secondary school age. Past evaluations include a national evaluation of youth justice board mentoring schemes for young people who already had or were at risk of offending. This evaluation concluded that programmes resulted in re-enrolling approximately 45% participating young people back into education or training (St James-Roberts, Greenlaw, Simon, & Hurry, 2005). Another evaluation was conducted of the ‘Mentoring Plus’ programme revealing that the programme generally led to increased engagement in education, training and work but reported that no clear evidence was found on offending behaviour, family relationships, substance misuse and self-esteem (Shiner & Barriers, 2004). The evaluation of the London Major’s mentoring scheme reported improved school and academic outcomes for young people with a mentor, however, the evaluation also revealed that particularly youth with high needs were less likely to sustain the mentoring relationship, highlighting that programme outcomes might have differed for the individual young people (Greater London Authority, 2015). It has to be noted that evaluations of UK mentoring programmes mainly used qualitative methods such as case studies, without control groups and are therefore limited in their design.

A range of systematic reviews have been undertaken to scrutinise the available evidence on mentoring with regard to a range of different outcomes including academic, health, relational, and social outcomes of young people. Whereas only some reviews focussed solely on randomised control trial evaluations (Thomas, Lorenzetti, & Spragins, 2011; Thomas, Lorenzetti, & Spragins, 2013a; Thomas, Lorenzetti, & Spragins, 2013b), others included a variety of study designs. The majority of reviews were based on programmes in the United States of America (USA) where most studies have been undertaken. In their review of 73 youth mentoring programmes, involving 83 independent research samples, DuBois and colleagues revealed modest effect sizes across emotional, behavioural and educational domains (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). Meta-analyses have revealed that compared to non-mentored individuals, mentored individuals were more likely to perform better (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008), report positive interpersonal relationships (DuBois et al., 2011; Eby et al., 2008) and were found less likely to engage in delinquency (Tolan et al., 2013) and present with conduct problems (DuBois et al., 2011) or withdrawal behaviours (Eby et al., 2008). Reviews of school-based mentoring programmes have concluded that mentoring might be able to positively influence a young person’s relationships and connectedness to others (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012) and improve self-esteem (Randolph & Johnson, 2008) and educational outcomes such as school attendance, academic achievement and attitudes towards school (DuBois et al., 2011; Eby et al., 2008; Tolan et al., 2013).

Despite some promising findings, not all reviews reported evidence of statistical significance in the outcome domains and effect sizes reported have generally been described as moderate or small (Eby et al., 2008; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008) and some may have been due to chance. For instance, no statistically significant effects was found in the health domain in DuBois’s systematic review (DuBois et al., 2011) nor was any effect of mentoring observed on academic attitude, achievement and attendance in Randolph’s review of school-based programmes (Randolph & Johnson, 2008). Meta-analyses have reported no statistical significant effect of mentoring on young people’s evaluation of psychological stress and strain (Eby et al., 2008), motivation or involvement (Eby et al., 2008), helping others (Eby et al., 2008), measures of aggression (Tolan et al., 2013), smoking (Thomas et al., 2013b) and there have been mixed findings with regard to young person’s drug use or alcohol use (Thomas et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2013a).

When trying to make sense of the available evidence, it is important to consider that systematic reviews differ in the type of studies that they included as ‘mentoring programmes’. This might in part be due to the lack of a unifying definition of mentoring or mentoring programmes [18]. For instance, DuBois’s systematic review explicitly stated that the definition of mentoring was kept broad and that some programmes “fell at the conceptual boundaries of traditional conceptualisations of youth

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6833223>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6833223>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)