

Caregivers in mentoring programmes

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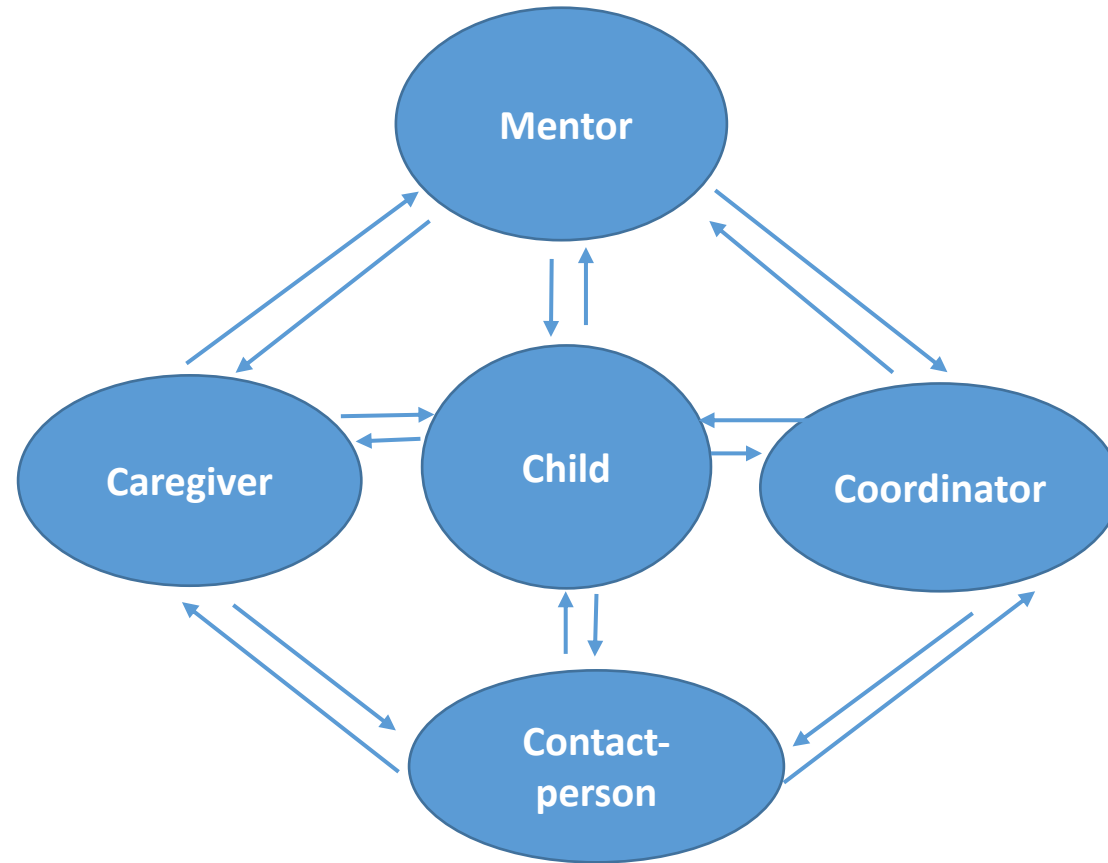
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“If she’s building this relationship with my daughter, then she’s gonna be part of this family, too” (Spencer et al. 2011)

“If momma ain’t happy with the mentoring relationship, aint nobody happy with the mentoring relationship” (Shamblen et al. 2019)

Theoretical framework – systemic model



Background for the presentation

- Own experience involving the caregivers – before – under – after
- Meeting different groups, from newcomers to families with caregivers born in Norway
- The need for examining the role of the caregivers and the implications for the programme and the future

My presentation

1. Caregivers perspective

- what is caregivers perspective in our context?
- why are the caregivers perspective important?

2. Theoretical framework

3. Potentials and implications for practice

The questions to be examined: Firstly: why is it important to focus on caregivers role in the mentor programmes? Secondly: what are caregivers perspective in mentoring programmes?

Partents voice and parents involvement

- **What are their motivations, expectations and goals?**
- **What do they say about their expectations about the mentors role?**
- **What do they say about their own role?** Observative passive – partnering actively with the mentor and advocating for the youth
- **In witch ways are the programme helpful in the short or long term?**

Why is it important to focus on caregivers role in the mentor programmes?

The caregivers are «gatekeepers» allowing the mentoring programme access to the child

They are the key figures in children's lives, therefore it is an ethical imperative to include the caregivers

The idea that the mentor becomes part of an interrelated family system where caregivers play a key role in the lives of their children can also influence the future relationships in a family

Caregiver's perspective in mentoring programmes

Which role(s) are the caregivers playing in a mentoring programme?

Wanting to focus on the larger contexts in which mentoring occurs and discuss some of the different roles that caregivers may play

How does the mentoring process make sense from the caregivers perspective?

And why are the caregivers perspective important?

Traditionally, mentoring relationships have been thought of as only encompassing the relationship between a mentor and a mentee

The interests and preferences of the parents in mentoring relationships may receive little attention

(Shamblen 2019, Keller et al. 2018)

What do we know about the caregivers' views?

1. Experience through the ongoing programmes

- What do the caregivers say about expectations and outcome

2. Research focusing specifically on the caregivers'

- Example 1
- Example 2

Experience from the ongoing programmes:

Experiences from Norway: Even though the scheme does not focus on the families of the mentored kids, it still sees contact with the kids' parents as important.

Indeed, our experience has been that some parents are sceptical to the scheme, making parents having an informed sense of what the scheme is about extremely important.

Experiences from Sweden: Näktergalen shows that the active participation of parents is a key for the success of the mentoring scheme - that they themselves started to reflect on the future education of their child more than before (Vaksjø 2016 p28-29)»

In the literature, parents' wishes to include their children in the mentoring scheme is often portrayed as them either wanting to compensate for what they see as their own short-comings as parents, or it focuses on parents' negative influence on the mentoring process, for example through miscommunications or keeping themselves at a distance (Spencer et.al 2011 p52)

Example 1 : Keller et al. (2018). I really wanted her to have a big sister.

Caregivers perspectives on mentoring for early adolescent girls

Questions and findings

What did they hope and expect?

Caregivers had a variety of motivations for wanting the mentors to befriend their children

They sought mentors who would support their daughters as **companions - confidants - conduits**

The program offered them respite and support

Conclusion

Benefits for the children and for the parents

A holistic view of the mentoring process

Example 2: Spencer et al (2011) Working to make it work

The role of parents in the youth mentoring process

Questions and findings

Purpose – to explore parents own understanding of the mentoring process

1. What did parents hope the mentor could offer their child? Most of them expressed they had the desire that the mentor serve as an additional positive adult role model and confidant.

2. Parent's roles in the relationship. There were three main types of parental roles: Collaborator – Coach - Mediator

Conclusion

All were active participants in their childrens' relationship with their mentor

For most of the parents, developing some type of relationship with the mentor was important and the quality of the relationship established with the mentor seemed to influence the role that a parent would play in the mentoring process

Holistic perspective

The model focuses on patterns of interpersonal exchange among several key individuals

Interdependent web of relationship between the participants

Keller's framework (2005) mentoring relationship consists of various interconnected combinations of dyads between the mentor, child, caregivers and coordinator

Each dyad is reciprocal in that interactions may occur in both directions, as well as **transitive triadic interactions** between the caregiver, mentor and child (Scamblen 2019)

So: the relationship a mentor develops with the child can not be understood without also understanding the family and agency contexts in which it develops (Keller 2005)

The programme's aim for:

The mentors to:

- Develop communication skills
- To understand economically, cultural and social conditions in modern family life

For the children to:

- Develop social, emotional, communication skills and get motivated to attend school and choose education

But our question is:

In which ways is the programme helpful on a short term or a long term for the caregivers?

A wider conceptual framework opens for

Caregivers play a critical role in mentoring programmes that should not be overlooked

They want to have an active role

Developing a greater understanding of the goals, values and perspectives of caregivers will help to advise programmes how to prepare mentors and caregivers to have a positive impact (Keller 2018)

And - to prepare for the family to still feeling the benefit even after the programme finishes

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