

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH MENTORING IN A CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONTEXT

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Abstract

The overall aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring as a criminal justice intervention. It not only analyses the effect it has on offending behaviour, but also assesses the impact it has on other aspects of a young person's life. In addition, it examines the importance of a meaningful relationship between a youth and their mentor in achieving a successful mentoring outcome. A comprehensive review of the current literature in relation to youth mentoring suggests that it can have a number of benefits, including increased school competency, enhanced social skills and improved family relationships to name a few; however, the findings do not support its use as a criminal justice intervention on such a large scale, as the impact it has on offending is argued to be modest at best. As youth mentoring is an increasingly popular method of crime reduction and prevention in the United Kingdom (UK), it is important to examine its effectiveness in greater detail. A case study of a sixteen year-old youth and his male mentor from a local Youth Offending Team was carried out using two semi-structured interviews. Through a process of thematic analysis, it is suggested that youth mentoring can have a significant impact on a young person in a number of ways, particularly in the presence of a good quality relationship between mentee (youth) and mentor.

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Introduction

The use of mentoring as an intended activity has expanded considerably over the past twenty years, so much so that it *'can now be regarded as a social phenomenon in its own right'* (Colley, 2003: 1). Mentoring is used as a support tool in a number of fields, including business management, education and healthcare, but has become particularly popular as a form of intervention for disadvantaged and socially excluded youths in the criminal justice sector (Colley, 2003).

The term 'youth' is described as *'the period between childhood and adult age'* (Oxford Dictionary, 2013); whilst Muncie (2009) suggests that unlike the terms 'child' and 'adult', which are generally neutral words that describe a period in life, the term 'youth' conjures up troubling and emotive images ranging from irresponsibility and violence to vulnerability and immaturity.

In addition, the term 'mentor' is defined as *'an experienced and trusted advisor'*, who is there to *'advise or train'* (Oxford Dictionary, 2013); and Holmes et al (2010:336) suggest that *'mentoring is best described as a series of complex interactions between 2 individuals who have as their primary purpose the growth of the mentee'*.

Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2007) suggest that youth mentoring is essentially a supportive, non-related adult who is there to help to ease the sometimes difficult transition from childhood to adulthood. The majority of mentoring schemes that target youth offenders are the responsibility of local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), which in turn are managed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB); a public body which provides funding for many of the youth mentoring programmes in the UK. The YJB suggest that youth mentoring is primarily about being a positive role model for a young person and *'may involve coaching and encouraging, constructive criticising, explaining, listening and guiding'* (YJB, 2008).

Youth mentoring is a vastly popular form of intervention, particularly for youths who have offended or are at risk of doing so; yet the existing research into its effectiveness does not fully justify its use on such a substantial scale (Colley, 2003). Although some of the literature on youth mentoring identifies a variety of benefits outside of offending, such as improvements in school competency, reduction in truancy, improved social skills and improved relations with family and peers, others suggest that the positive effects are modest at best and there is very little evidence to suggest that it is an effective tool of crime prevention (Newburn and Shiner, 2006).

The use of mentoring as a preventative tool in the youth justice system is ever increasing in the UK and as a result, it is important to assess how successful it is at achieving its aims, not only in terms of offending but also at improving youth competency across a range of settings. This study will examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring as a criminal justice intervention, by assessing how efficient it is at reducing youth crime. It will also analyse whether mentoring has an impact on other aspects of a young person's life and will examine the importance of a meaningful relationship between mentor and mentee.

The first chapter of this study examines the existing literature on youth mentoring by describing, comparing and analysing the findings. The literature examined in this section is grouped into four different sections according to their focus and findings as follows:

- Effectiveness according to gender
- Effectiveness of different mentoring relationship styles
- Effectiveness according to duration of mentoring relationship
- Overall effectiveness according to primary research and meta-analyses

The findings from the literature are then summarised and concluded. In order to justify the purpose of this study, a gap in the existing research is identified before the aims of this study are examined in further detail.

The next chapter examines the methodology that was used to carry out this study; including a description and critical analysis of the qualitative approach that was taken, the sample of two participants in the form of a case study that was chosen and the use of semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection. This chapter also discusses and analyses alternative approaches and justifies the use of the methods that were ultimately chosen for this study.

The third chapter consists of a critical analysis of the findings from the two semi-structured interviews that were carried out with the participants. Three key themes were identified from the findings which are as follows:

- Relationship between youth and mentor
- Impact on offending behaviour
- Impact outside of offending

This chapter analyses a number of key findings in relation to each theme whilst comparing it to the existing research that was examined in the literature review. The findings from the semi-structured interviews and literature review are also compared to relevant theories.

The final chapter concludes with a reminder of the research aims and summarises the methodological approach that was taken. It then provides a summary of the key findings in relation to the literature review and the themes that arose from the semi-structured interviews; before examining the implications for practice, the limitations of the present study and suggesting recommendations for further research.

Literature review

The concept of childhood changed dramatically following the abduction and murder of two-year-old James Bulger by two ten-year-old boys in 1993; an event which is argued to have been a major turning point in the approach to youth crime and justice in England and Wales (Barry, 2006). In 1996, the Labour Party released a consultation paper named '*Tackling Youth Crime, Reforming Youth Justice*', which critiqued the youth justice system and made particular reference to the lack of community-based interventions for youths who had offended, or were at risk of doing so (Newburn, 1998). Following on from their 1997 election, the Labour Party proceeded to introduce the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998, which included a number of provisions that were aimed at overhauling the youth justice system. This included a number of community-based interventions and youth mentoring swiftly became one of the most popular kinds (Newburn and Shiner, 2006).

The concept of youth mentoring was first developed in the United States (US) in 1904, when the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) programme was established as a formal response to concerns over social welfare and social exclusion (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). By the 1980's, youth mentoring in the US had become a well-established intervention which had expanded rapidly; which Freedman (1993) argues was a result of fears over a collapse of social cohesion.

The first mentoring schemes that developed in the UK were the Dalston Youth Project (DYP) and the Big Brothers/Big Sisters UK in the mid to late 1990's. They were based heavily on the programmes in the US and were filled with promises of endless potential and great success for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). The DYP, argued to be the most influential youth mentoring programme in the UK, targeted 'at risk' youths between the ages of 11 and 18 and involved year-long mentoring, with a focus on personal development and education (Benioff, 1997). A period of development followed and a number of Mentoring Plus schemes were set up by Crime Concern across the UK, which targeted disaffected youths and involved a 'plus' element of education and employment training (Shiner et al, 2004).

Initially, the Labour Party introduced mentoring into a wide range of settings; the New Deal initiative had an element of mentoring in helping unemployed youths into work, the Social Exclusion Unit mentored youths who were at risk of social or educational exclusion and other agencies championed the use of mentoring for homeless youths, ex-prisoners and young entrepreneurs (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). The Youth Justice Board (YJB) was established through the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 and introduced mentoring for youth offenders and by the year 2000, had funded and supported almost 100 mentoring schemes. Mentoring grew rapidly to become a well-established intervention in the contemporary youth justice system and '*can now be regarded as a social phenomenon in its own right*' (Colley, 2003: 1).

In order to examine the existing research on the effectiveness of youth mentoring, a literature review was carried out, of which can be split into four key themes – effectiveness by gender, relationship style, duration and overall effectiveness.

Gender

Zand et al (2009) carried out a study in the US which aimed to investigate the role of youth-mentor relationships and the way in which they promote youth competence. They surveyed 219 youths who were being mentored at the eight month follow up stage and the findings suggested that girls had better quality relationships with their mentors than boys. The authors suggest that boys may take longer to benefit from a mentoring relationship, so further research may reflect more competencies at a later stage. The findings of this study should be treated with caution however, as the sample used for this study were selected from one mentoring programme in the US; so it can be argued that the findings may not be generalisable to other mentoring schemes, especially those outside of the US. The mentors at the programme were also paid members of staff, so the same findings may not apply to voluntary organisations. The study was also carried out between 1998 and 2002, so the findings are not particularly recent; however, the youths who took part in the study were selected at random from a range of locations across the US, so it can be suggested that the sample was representative of the population geographically. It can be argued that this study

produced significant findings, as it was one of the first to generate empirical data about gender-specific effectiveness.

The findings from this study are supported by Rhodes et al (2008), who carried out research in the US that specifically examined the role that gender plays in mentoring relationships. Previous research into work and school-based mentoring suggests that women are more likely to give emotional support than men, so female to female mentoring provides a deeper and more satisfying relationship than any other pairing. The authors hypothesised that the same will apply to youth mentoring. They analysed the findings from a large scale study by Grossman and Tierney (1998) on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) programme, which will be discussed in further detail in the final theme. They found that gender does have an impact on the effectiveness of youth mentoring, as girls' relationships with their mentors lasted longer and were more satisfying overall.

Two further US studies support the view that males and females experience mentoring in different ways. A study on female mentor relationships carried out by Spencer and Liang (2009) found three key themes in terms of positive development – engaged emotional support, development of confidence and skills and companionship that helps to alleviate daily stresses. Meanwhile, a study on male mentor relationships by Spencer (2007) found six different themes – importance for male youths to have relationships with adult men, the male mentors desire to be a role model with an emotional connection, the continuing close nature of emotional connections formed, the way that their relationship provides emotional safety and support, the way in which some relationships helped with anger issues and the vacillations of masculinity on the part of the male mentor. Both studies interviewed 12 same-sex pairings from the BBBSA programme in Boston, United States, so the sample was fairly small. The authors only interviewed 'successful' relationships and the lack of geographical diversity means that the study is not necessarily generalisable; however, it does support previous findings into the differences between male and female experiences of youth mentoring. Further research that also looks at unsuccessful mentoring relationships may provide more insight.

Relationship style

The majority of the literature that examines the effectiveness of youth mentoring focuses its research on the role of the relationship; including the style, the duration and the characteristics of the mentor. Sale et al (2008) carried out a large-scale study in the US which examined the importance of relationship quality between youths and their mentors from prevention service providers. The study found that youths who felt higher levels of trust, empathy and mutuality from their mentors reported significantly higher levels of improvement in their social skills. Differences were evident across the two age groups assessed in terms of which social skills had developed; however, both groups reflected improvement overall when the relationship quality was strong. This study involved 1,165 youths from seven different prevention programmes in the US. The strong sample size and geographical spread of participants suggest that the findings may be generalisable to mentoring schemes within the US, but not necessarily to other countries. The study is significant in that it identifies the importance of a good quality mentoring relationship; however, it fails to provide any insight on how to build such relationships so further research into this may prove useful.

Further studies support these findings and examine the style of mentor relationships in further depth. Goldner and Maysless (2008) carried out a study in Israel using attachment, social learning and social support theories, alongside previous research to conclude that the success of mentoring relationships is reliant on the mentors' ability to transverse between the roles of other key caregivers such as parents, friends, teachers and therapists. The authors note that a successful mentor should not personify each role, but will reflect similarities of each. They recommend that mentoring programmes identify the need for mentors to transverse between such roles, in order to improve the training they give and increase levels of success. The authors carried out a comprehensive literature review of mostly US and UK studies to reach their recent conclusion, so it can be suggested that their findings are reliable. Further empirical research is needed in order to support such findings and establish whether certain youths will benefit from different roles more than others.

Langhout et al (2004) carried out a study which identified different categories of mentoring styles and examined their individual effects on the youths involved. The four mentoring styles identified were moderate, unconditionally supportive, active and low-key. Each style of mentoring produced different benefits to the youths, with the 'moderate' group reporting improvement in the most areas, despite rating their mentors lowest in terms of support. According to the authors, the most surprising of the findings were that the 'unconditionally supportive' group reported the least benefits and an increase in alienation from their parents. They conclude that the findings are significant and mentor programmes need to train staff to be less like friends and more like parents.

This is supported by findings from Rhodes and Lowe's (2008) study, which identified that mentors who are unconditionally supportive 'friends' are not necessarily beneficial to youths, as guidance and boundaries are also crucial in the success of mentoring. Their study is discussed in more depth in the next section. This is a slight contradiction to Goldner and Maysless' (2008) findings, which suggest that mentors should be able to transverse between a number of caregivers roles, including friends.

Keller (2005) offers an alternative perspective, suggesting that the success and strength of a mentoring relationship is dependent upon the collective support of three key individuals – the mentor, the parents/guardians and the youth worker. The support of such individuals is a key characteristic of the BBBSA programme in the US, so the author suggests that this approach is taken by other mentoring schemes in order to improve results. Again, this study was carried out on the BBBSA programme only, so the findings cannot necessarily be generalised to other organisations.

Rhodes et al (2008) carried out primary research in the US, which found that relationships with mentors can have a positive influence on a number of factors such as personal relationships, academic success, behaviour and self-perception; however, if the youth lacks a strong bond with their mentor, feels that they cannot trust them or has been let down by them, then the mentoring can have a damaging effect which outweighs any positive impact it may have had. The study involved 347 youths who had been, or were being mentored by the BBBSA programme. The sample included a mixture of male and female youths from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, who were asked to complete a survey based on their experiences. A limitation to this study is that the findings were based on youth perspectives only. It can be argued that youths may find it difficult to express how they feel or how they are progressing, so further research should involve mentor and/or parent/guardian

perspectives for more reliable findings.

Duration

Grossman and Rhodes (2002) carried out a study which specifically examined the effects of time in youth mentoring relationships. They analysed data from Grossman and Tierney's (1998) study on the BBBSA and found that youths who had been in mentoring relationships for more than a year reported academic, behavioural and psychosocial improvements. Those in mentoring relationships that lasted six to twelve months reported much less improvement and those who had been mentored for less than six months reported a decrease in sense of self-worth and perceived academic ability, as well as an increase in alcohol use. They note that younger youths had longer relationships and mentor characteristics had an impact on duration, so this could possibly have implications for practice amongst youth mentor programmes. This is supported by the primary research carried out by Rhodes et al (2005) discussed previously, which found a link between long-term mentor relationships and successful outcomes, whilst relationships that dissolve quickly can have a negative and sometimes harmful effect.

These findings are further supported by Rhodes and Lowe (2008), who found that the longer the overall duration of the mentoring relationship, the more positive effect it has on the youth. Whilst they do note the importance of long relationships that coincide with regular contact, the authors also identify the importance of a good quality relationship that is youth-focused and provides structure. The authors conclude that mentoring is modestly effective for youths who are in difficult situations, but are coping well and that in some cases, mentoring can be more harmful than beneficial. The literature that was reviewed for this study is mostly American, so it can be argued that the findings are generalisable to the US only; however, the study was recent and supports findings from other research.

Overall effectiveness

A large-scale study into the effectiveness of youth mentoring was carried out by Grossman and Tierney (1998), which studied 1,138 youths who were involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) programme between 1991 and 1993. The youths selected for the study were both male and female and included a wide range of ethnicities, ages and characteristics such as households, family backgrounds and individual risk factors. The study found a wide range of benefits for youths involved in mentoring with the BBBSA. They were less likely to drink alcohol or use drugs, had increased competency in their school work, less truancy, better grades and improved relationships with their families and friends. No negative effects were found on the youths involved. The authors noted that the BBBSA guide mentors to be like friends, rather than parents or figures of authority. This is a contradiction to previous studies which suggest a more parent-like approach is needed. The sample size used is one of the biggest to date in this particular research area; however, the use of one mentoring programme only in the US results in a lack of generalisability to other mentoring schemes. The study is also fairly dated, as the research was conducted over 20 years ago; however, it is suggested by many to be the biggest and most influential study into the effectiveness of youth mentoring to date.

A more recent study was carried out in the UK by St-James Roberts et al (2005), which evaluated Youth Justice Board (YJB) mentoring schemes from 2001 to 2004. They reviewed

80 mentoring programmes that are supported by the YJB and the findings support many of those discussed previously - mentoring relationships that lasted longer were more successful; girls benefited from it more than boys, particularly when paired with female mentors and mentored youths are more likely to enter education or employment. They did, however, find that mentoring failed to improve problematic behaviour and basic education skills, did not reduce drug or alcohol use and more than 50% of the youths referred refused to take part. They acknowledge that mentoring is cost effective; however, they do argue that this is because the majority of mentors are voluntary and if they were all paid for their work, then it would not be cost effective at all. The authors conclude that the findings are not positive enough and do not support a more wide-spread roll out of mentoring schemes in the UK as a means of crime prevention. They make a number of recommendations for practice, including the creation of a new profession that involves elements of mentoring (e.g. trust and competency building), alongside other prevention skills. This research included four studies which involved a mixture of statistical reviews and in-depth interviews. It can be suggested that this study is significant in the field of youth mentoring, as it reviewed a large sample of 80 mentoring schemes in the UK and was carried out fairly recently. The mixture of in-depth methods used to collect data suggests that the findings are reliable and can be generalised to mentoring schemes across the UK.

A meta-analysis carried out by DuBois et al (2002) is argued to be a key study into the effectiveness of youth mentoring. The authors analysed the findings of 55 studies with two main aims; firstly, to assess the overall effectiveness of mentoring and secondly, to investigate whether certain factors impact on its success. The overall findings suggested that mentoring has a modest benefit only for the average youth; however, when best practices are followed and the mentor-mentee relationship is strong, results are significantly improved. Their findings also suggest that poorly led programmes can have a damaging effect on youths. As suggested, the meta-analysis carried out by DuBois et al (2002) is argued by many other researchers to be a key study in the effectiveness of youth mentoring. The authors analysed a large amount of studies from a wide range of sources, so it can be suggested that this is a comprehensive review with relevant and significant findings. The authors are able to make strong recommendations for practice based on their findings; however, they also identify that youth mentor programmes evolve with time and as such, findings from future meta-analyses may vary to their own. Two limitations to the study are that the majority of the 55 studies analysed were American, so the findings are not necessarily generalisable to UK programmes. The majority were also based on youth, mentor and parent perceptions, so they could involve elements of bias. A future meta-analysis could include scientific evidence such as re-offending rates, improvement in school grades and employment etc., to further support their findings.

A similar review of previous research was carried out more recently by Rhodes (2008), whose findings support those of DuBois et al's (2002) study. Rhodes concluded that positive effects of youth mentoring are modest at best, whilst poor relationships can have a negative impact. Rhodes also recommends that youth mentoring programmes should follow evidence-based best practices as a means of improving success rates.

A further meta-analysis was carried out by Philip and Spratt (2007) for the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation in the UK. The authors stated that the majority of the research reviewed was on mentoring rather than befriending and found a number of positives. Firstly, youths in meaningful mentor relationships that were long in duration and included regular contact reported the most benefits, which supports the findings of studies discussed

previously. They also found that mentoring provides youths with another positive relationship outside of the family and when implemented alongside other interventions, can produce positive outcomes; however, they cannot be sure whether the same positive effects occur as a result of mentoring alone. They also found that in some cases, mentoring helps to improve family issues, encourages youths into education and increases involvement with the community.

However, despite such positive findings, they found that some UK studies reported that mentoring has little impact on offending, which suggests that such an intervention may not be suitable for all types of youths. They also found that many youths rejected the opportunity to be involved in mentoring or dropped out mid-way through, whilst many failed to develop a good relationship with their mentor. Some youths who did create meaningful relationships found it traumatic when they came to an end, which potentially risks undoing any positive impact it had had so far. The authors conclude that mentoring in the UK needs to be tailored specifically to meet individual needs, rather than being a 'catch all term' – they argue that this is the reason behind the negative findings that arose. This study reviewed a large quantity of previous studies; however, some of those were carried out by the mentor programmes themselves so this could potentially involve bias findings. The findings of this research are significant and relevant, as it was carried out in 2007 and involved a large number of UK studies.

A UK study by Piper and Piper (2000) also reflects a number of positive mentoring outcomes in the areas of education, training and employment, as well as the simple factor of having a supportive adult who encourages them to do well. However, the authors suggest that this only applies to the average youth. Those who are labelled as disaffected are stigmatised and involving them in mentoring programmes actually reinforces that stigma, as it suggests that there is something wrong with them that needs to be changed. This is further emphasized by the vast difference in status between the youth and the mentor, which again reinforces the negative effect. The authors suggest that an empowerment approach should be taken as means of improving mentoring success. This study provides an alternative perspective based on the effects of labelling and supports previously discussed findings that suggest mentoring is beneficial to those already coping well, as opposed to more serious cases.

To conclude, a number of key themes and findings can be identified in relation to the effectiveness of youth mentoring. Firstly, a successful mentoring outcome appears to be dependent on the strength of the relationship between mentor and mentee. A sense of trust and mutuality increases the benefits to the youth, whilst mentoring relationships that are long term and involve regular contact are more successful than others. Short term relationships that are poor in quality are argued to have negative effects on the youths involved.

It is also suggested by a number of researchers that girls benefit more from mentoring than boys; however, it is recommended that further studies are carried out at a later stage of the mentoring process, as it may be identified that boys benefit more at a later point than girls do. There is some contradiction in relation to the most effective relationship style, with some researchers suggesting that a friendship role is more beneficial, whereas others recommend that mentors are trained to be like parents as boundaries are crucial in ensuring a successful outcome. In terms of benefits to the youths involved in the studies, it is generally suggested that mentoring can help to improve school competency, social skills and personal relationships, but a number of studies reflect modest benefits only, with some even suggesting that poorly-led programmes can have a damaging effect. The majority of the

literature did not discuss youth mentoring in a crime prevention context; however, those that did identified that it has little impact on offending behaviour as a single form of intervention and recommend that changes are made to improve its success in this remit.

The findings discussed above suggest that youth mentoring is not a particularly successful form of crime prevention and as a result, does not justify its use in this remit on such a widespread scale. As youth mentoring is an increasingly popular form of criminal intervention in the UK, it is important to assess whether it is effective in its primary aim of reducing youth crime and increasing youth competency. This study aims to do this by examining how efficient youth mentoring is at reducing youth crime and assessing whether it has an impact on other aspects of a young person's life. In addition, it will examine the importance of a meaningful relationship between mentor and mentee in achieving a successful mentoring outcome, as this was a common theme identified through the literature review.

Methodology

In order to gather data in relation to the research topic and aims, a case study of a sixteen year-old youth and his male mentor from a local Youth Offending Team was carried out using two semi-structured interviews. A case study allows the researcher to focus on one instance of the topic that they are investigating and as a result, the data gathered is generally more detailed and in-depth than other approaches to small-scale research (Bryman, 2012; Crow and Semmens, 2007). A case study also allows the researcher to examine the relationships and processes that occur within a particular social phenomenon, as there is an opportunity to go into a sufficient amount of detail to examine the complexities of the situation (Bickman, 2009; McNeill, 2004). According to Denscombe (2010), a case study is appropriate in a situation where the researcher has no control over the events that take place, as they are concerned with examining the phenomenon as it occurs naturally. As this small scale study is interested in analysing the effectiveness of youth mentoring and establishing whether the nature of the relationship has an impact on its success, a case study was deemed to be the most appropriate and effective form of examining this process. Despite its strengths, the case study approach is most commonly criticised for its lack of generalisability to other situations. Whilst the findings can still be reliable, it is important for the researcher to recognise this and be cautious when making assumptions about the ability to generalise the findings to a wider setting (Curtis, 2011; Gray, 2009).

Due to its in-depth nature, a case study is associated with an interpretivist approach; which is of the view that the world is seen through the creation of the mind and that the study of social sciences requires researcher subjectivity and respect for difference (Walliman, 2006; Gorard, 2004). In addition, a case study is also associated with the qualitative approach to research, as it focuses on the interpretation of participants (Ruane, 2005; Walker, 2010).

The qualitative research approach is generally associated with written or spoken words and observations and as such; data is commonly collected through interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus groups (Patton, 2002; Hennink, 2010). The qualitative approach was chosen for this study as the data gathered is generally rich, detailed and reliable, as the participants can be studied in greater depth and are able to express their opinions freely (Silverman, 2004; Flick, 2009). This is supported by Bryman (2012), who suggests that qualitative research is focused on the perspective of the participant rather than the concerns of

the researcher. Qualitative research is also more lenient towards ambiguity and contradictory findings (Berg, 2009; Denscombe, 2010). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) argue that this is important as there is a strong element of uncertainty in the social world and ambiguity does not suggest a weakness in findings, but provides a realistic reflection on society. Despite its strengths, qualitative research has, like the case study approach, faced criticism for its lack of generalisability. Weinburg (2002) and Todd and Madill (2008) argue that the in-depth research of a small sample makes it difficult to generalise to other settings and is therefore less representative than quantitative data. Qualitative research has also been criticised for being too subjective, as the findings are reliant upon the researchers' opinion on what is important when the data is being analysed (Wengraf, 2001; Breakwell, 2004). The nature of qualitative research and the presence of subjectivity also makes it difficult to replicate in future studies of a similar nature (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009).

An alternative research method is the quantitative approach, which is concerned with numbers and statistics and such data is generally collected through the use of questionnaires, observations and experiments (Gorard, 2004; Bickman, 2009). There are a number of advantages to using a quantitative research method. Firstly, quantitative research is argued to be more scientific than qualitative, as it generally involves statistical and mathematical techniques, which Denscombe (2010) suggests makes it less open to researcher interpretation. Quantitative research is often based on a larger sample size than qualitative, due to the methods of data collection used. As a result, it is more feasible to generalise quantitative findings to the wider population (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001; Singh, 2007). Despite its strengths, quantitative research has also faced a number of criticisms. Firstly, the methods of data collection commonly used in qualitative research methods do not allow the participant to speak freely, or expand on particular opinions they may have. As a result, it is argued that quantitative data is not as in-depth as qualitative and lacks ecological validity (Brannen, 1995; Silverman, 2004). Walker (2010) also argues that quantitative research can accumulate an overload of data, which creates difficulties as the analysis becomes too complex.

Due to the topic and aims of this study, it was important that the participants were able to express their views freely and in-depth when necessary. In addition, the use of a case study to examine one instance of youth mentoring does not particularly require the use of scientific or mathematical data and as a result, the qualitative approach was deemed to be the most appropriate in this instance.

In order to carry out this study, a sample was needed to gather information relating to the aims of the research. It is rarely possible for a researcher to study a whole population, so a smaller sample is selected in a way that ensures the conclusions are valid (Herzog, 1996; Crow and Semmens, 2008). A sample can refer to a range of different units, including people, objects, places or events (Carlsmith, 1990; Lewin and Somekh, 2005). There are two different types of samples: exploratory and representative. An exploratory sample, which was used in this study, is generally associated with qualitative research, as it is used in small-scale studies when the researcher is looking at relatively new ideas and topics (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Walliman, 2006). An exploratory sample allows the researcher to generate useful insights in relation to the aims of the study (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2010), which is why this approach was selected. A representative sample is often used in large-scale studies where the researcher wishes to generalise the findings; therefore, it is generally associated with quantitative research (Black, 1999; Hennink, 2010). This method of sampling generally involves a cross-section of the relevant population and was therefore not deemed to be appropriate in this small-scale case study.

Probability and non-probability are the two main approaches to selecting a sample. Due to the nature of this study, a non-probability sample was used as it involves an element of choice by the researcher (Bickman, 2009; Curtis, 2011). A non-probability sample does not entail a random selection of participants and is often the approach used in small-scale studies, when the researcher feels that a smaller sample size would be more beneficial or it is not feasible to use a large sample group (Denscombe, 2010). There are a number of ways in which a non-probability sample can be selected, including quota, snowball and purposive (Gray, 2009; Lewin and Somekh, 2005). A purposive sampling method was used in this research, as it allows the researcher to hand-pick the participants based on their knowledge and relevance to the study (Bryman, 2012). This was the most appropriate method of sampling to use as it is a case study and therefore the participants needed to be selected based on their experience and willingness to be involved. It was also important that the two participants were from a successful mentoring relationship, as one of the aims of this study is to examine how a good quality relationship plays a role in the mentoring outcome.

The alternative approach of probability sampling involves a random selection of the population and is often used in large-scale quantitative research (McNeill, 2004; Ruane, 2005). Probability samples are argued to be more representative of the population being studied, as the researcher has no influence on the sample selection process (Walliman, 2006; Breakwell, 2004). Bryman (2012) also suggests that probability sampling allows the researcher to generalise the findings to the wider population, which is not always possible when using a non-random sample approach. However, Curtis (2011) suggests that probability sampling is generally used for large scale research and as a result, it was not the most effective method of sample selection for this study.

For this case study, two semi-structured interviews were carried out with a youth and his mentor as a means of data collection. A semi-structured interview involves a series of questions which are chosen by the researcher, but there is an element of flexibility to allow the participant to expand on their answers (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Walker, 2010). The questions may also be changed or reordered by the researcher if it is relevant to the previous answer provided (Drew et al, 2005). Alternatively, it is possible to use structured interviews, but they do not allow for flexibility in the questions or answers (Gray, 2009; Denscombe, 2010). Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, allow for complete flexibility and are often likened to conversation (Bryman, 2012; Somekh and Lewin, 2011). Although this allows the participant greater freedom and interpretation in their answers, the interview is more likely to go off topic due to its lack of structure (Drew et al, 2005; Weinberg, 2002). An alternative method of data collection is questionnaires, which are more commonly used in large-scale quantitative research. Questionnaires provide a set of structured questions that cannot be changed, which restricts freedom of interpretation and prevents participants from providing in-depth answers (Black, 1999); however, they are less time consuming than interviews and the data gathered is generally easier to process (Singh, 2007; Silverman, 2004). It is also possible to observe the participants as an alternative to questioning them about their feelings or opinions, which allows for substantial data collection and ecological validity; however, it is also time-consuming and lacks generalisability to future studies (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999; Bloor, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate for this case study, as they allow for structure but flexibility in the questions, which in turn is likely to result in more in-depth responses from the participants involved (Breakwell, 2004; Creswell, 2009).

Findings and discussion

The data gathered from the two semi-structured interviews with a youth and his male mentor was analysed using the six stage thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). Three key themes were identified from the findings – relationship between youth and mentor, impact on offending behaviour and impact outside of offending. A number of points surrounding each theme were identified as being important and are discussed below.

Relationship between youth and mentor

Being a friend, not a parent

A large proportion of the literature discussed previously analyses the effectiveness of different mentoring relationship styles, which is something that was identified by the mentor as being an important factor:

“I think so long as the role models, the mentors, do not try to enforce their authority on them, the mentees really accept that, accept them as being on their side”.... “it is an adult friend rather than being a parent, who’s always telling them ‘they shouldn’t be doing that, they can’t do that’, it’s a bit more relaxed with ourselves”

This directly supports the findings and recommendations by Grossman and Tierney (1998), who suggest that mentors should be trained to be like friends rather than authoritative parent figures. They base this recommendation on their positive findings of the effectiveness of the BBBSA programme, who are understood to train their mentors in this way.

In addition, these findings both support and contradict those from Goldner and Maysless’ (2008) study, which suggests that mentoring is most successful when elements of different caregivers’ characteristics are present, including that of friends. However, they also suggest that elements of parents and teachers are needed; roles which naturally express aspects of authority and therefore directly contradicts the opinion of the mentor. Further to this, Langhout et al (2004) suggested that youths who had ‘unconditionally supportive’ mentors reflected the least improvement across the different relationship styles; as such they recommended that mentors should be trained to be more like parents rather than friends. This is further supported by Rhodes and Lowe (2008), who suggested that mentors who are ‘unconditionally supportive friends’ do not benefit the youths, as boundaries and guidance are crucial in building successful relationships with positive outcomes.

Despite this, it is reasonable to suggest that the mentor provides plenty of guidance to his mentee, which is evident from some of the discussions he says they have in relation to his offending behaviour, anger management and goals for the future; therefore, it is possible that he just takes a non-authoritative approach to giving guidance, similar to the way a friend would.

It can be suggested that the variance in findings is simply a result of difference in individual needs. Some youths who are mentored may have a lack of authority in their life and therefore having a mentor who provides this may benefit them, whereas others may experience too much authority and therefore benefit more from having an 'adult friend' to talk to, who does not tell them what they can and cannot do. This is supported by Philip and Spratt (2007), whose findings suggest that mentoring should be tailored to suit the individual characteristics of each youth involved, to cater for the wide variety of backgrounds that they may come from and provide different levels of support they may need.

Getting on well and the presence of trust

Both mentor and mentee talked about the importance of having a trusting relationship where both get on well with each other. The mentor said:

"We sort of hit it off straight away, and erm, it's been a very simple relationship to deal with"... "he doesn't stop, you know, there's no quiet sessions, we talk all the time which is really nice. It's not always constructive stuff that we're talking about, it can be complete rubbish..."

This was further supported by the mentee, who said that he feels he has a good relationship with his mentor and that he believes it plays an important role, because *"if you didn't get on with your mentor you wouldn't talk to them"*. The mentee had been mentored by another male adult previously and it was evident throughout both interviews that he did not build a strong relationship with him. The mentee explained that he did not want to talk to his previous mentor and he reoffended shortly after it ended, which arguably reinforces the concept that a strong and positive mentoring relationship plays an important role in gaining a successful outcome.

These findings support those of DuBois et al (2002), Rhodes et al (2005), Philip and Spratt (2007) and Sale et al (2008), all of whom suggest that good quality mentoring relationships produce the most positive benefits to the youths involved. They also suggest that such relationships benefit more so when they involve regular contact over a long period of time. The mentor and mentee involved in this study have had regular weekly meetings for nine consecutive months, so it is fair to suggest that this supports the previous findings in regards to mentoring duration and quality of relationship.

Having someone else to talk to – 'a positive role model'

When asked what his favourite thing about mentoring was, the mentee replied:

"It's someone else to talk to rather than talking to like.. I don't like, tell my mum anything"

The mentee lives with his mother and younger brother, whilst his father has a criminal past and does not live with him; so it is reasonable to suggest that the mentee lacks a positive father figure in his life. As such, mentoring provides him with the opportunity to engage with a positive male role model, with whom he can look up to and work things out with, which were argued by the mentor to be key factors in the success of a mentoring relationship.

The mentor expanded on the significance of having an absent father who has engaged in criminal activity, suggesting that this was possibly one of the causes of the mentees offending behaviour:

“And although he’s got a role model in his father, who’s had criminal activity, I think that’s what he was trying to look up to in the first place, trying to emulate what his father was doing, and he’s realised over the last eight, nine months that that’s something he shouldn’t be doing”

The link between crime and a son lacking a positive father figure is recognised by many academics, including Grando and Ginsberg (1976), who argued that the father plays a significant role in his son’s social progression and adjustment throughout the transition from childhood to adolescence. This is further supported by Harper and McLanahan (2004), Muncie (2009) and Cobb-Clark and Tekin (2011), who all suggest that boys who lack a present father are more likely to engage in criminal activity.

Impact on offending behaviour

The participants involved in this study are from a Youth Offending Service, where mentoring is specifically aimed at reducing offending behaviour. When asked whether he felt that mentoring had helped to reduce his offending behaviour, the mentee replied:

“yeah cuz I haven’t, well, I’ve been like, moaned at by the police, but not anything serious. So yeah, it has helped”

The mentee was engaging in criminal behaviour on a regular basis prior to being mentored, but has not been in trouble since they began working together, apart from the occasional ‘talking to’ by the police. When asked if he felt that mentoring has helped to change the mentees perception on his offending behaviour, the mentor responded:

“Yeah without a doubt, because the first few meetings we had we would talk about his criminal activities, and he was quite happy to talk about them as if he would do them again, and be happy to do them again, and now we talk about criminal activity and he’s certainly not going to go down that line because he’s positively stating that he believes what he was doing before is not the way forward”

There is little evidence from previous research to suggest that mentoring is an effective tool in terms of reducing offending. The majority of the American studies fail to even mention the impact on offending behaviour, which perhaps suggests that mentoring in the US is not commonly used for that purpose. In addition, two recent, large-scale studies in the UK do not reflect positive findings in relation to offending specifically. St-James Roberts et al (2005) found that mentoring did little to reduce problematic behaviour, whilst Philip and Spratt

(2007) suggested that mentoring has very little impact on youth offending as a single form of intervention.

Thinking about the consequences

The mentor believed that teaching the mentee to think about the consequences of his actions has helped to prevent his offending behaviour. Towards the beginning of their mentoring relationship, the mentee expressed a care free attitude towards offending; explicitly stating that he would do it again and would just try to avoid getting caught next time. The mentor has focused a lot of his time on discussing the consequences of criminal activity with the mentee, which he believes has had a positive impact:

“He said that he doesn’t think about the benefits of offending because they become automatic, but he thinks about the consequences, so if he gets himself in a situation now, he always runs through his mind ‘what are the consequences of me doing this? What’s going to happen if?’ And because he runs that through his mind, it prevents him from reoffending, which is a really good thing you know, it’s nice to know that some of things we’ve talked about have actually stuck...”

This is supported by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), who suggest that criminal acts are committed by those who lack self-control and do not appreciate the consequences of their actions. The mentor has taught the mentee to consider the consequences of his criminal behaviour, which he believes has had an impact on his perception of crime. This is further supported by Farrington and Welsh (2007), who suggest that social skills and cognitive training that teach young people about the consequences of their actions is a successful method of crime prevention and Farrington (2000, cited in Farrington and Welsh, 2007) argues that the evidence to support this can be generalised globally.

Effect of courses

The mentee is involved with the Youth Offending Service as a result of setting fires, so his first mentor enrolled him in a fire safety course. The mentee said that the course teaches about the things that fire-fighters go through on a daily basis and tries to persuade participants to change their minds about lighting fires in future. When asked if he felt that it had benefited him, the mentee said no and admitted to lighting fires after taking part in the course. The mentor added that he had also done some fire awareness DVD’s with the mentee, which he did not engage well with either.

There are a number of possible explanations for the mentees lack of engagement with the fire safety course. Firstly, he took part in this around three years ago when he was being mentored by someone he did not really connect with. As suggested by Sale et al (2008) and Philip and Spratt (2007), the positive effects of mentoring are significantly enhanced when there is a good quality relationship between mentor and mentee. However, this does not account for the lack of engagement with the fire awareness DVD’s that he did with his current mentor, with whom he has a good relationship with. As discussed previously, the mentor has taught the mentee about the consequences of his criminal behaviour, which he believes has had an impact on his perception towards crime; so it is possible that the mentee has benefited more

from thinking about consequences in a wider context, rather than about his type of crime specifically.

Impact outside of offending

Family and friends

The mentee said that mentoring has helped to reduce his offending behaviour, but has also had an impact on other aspects of his life. When questioned further about this, the mentee explained that his relationship with his family has improved since his contact started with his current mentor. The mentor expanded further on this, explaining that the mentee had a troubled relationship with both his younger brother and his mother; but as the mentoring progressed, the mentee began to tolerate his brother more and as a result, his relationship with his mother also improved. This supports findings from Grossman and Tierney (1998) and Philip and Spratt (2007), two large-scale studies which both suggested that mentoring can help to improve family relationships and decrease feelings of alienation from their parents.

In addition, the mentor also suggested that the mentee is now more selective of his peer group than he was when their mentoring relationship started. He recognises which friends he tends to get into trouble with and now tries to avoid socialising with them as often, so it would appear that the mentoring process has also helped him to make better choices about his friendship group. The study by Grossman and Tierney (1998) found an improvement in relationships with friends, but none of the studies specifically mentioned that mentoring has helped the mentee to make more positive choices about their friendship groups. It may be that the mentee in this study is simply being more cautious of who he chooses to spend time with as he is actively trying to avoid situations that may lead to offending behaviour. This is supported by Allen and Eby (2010), who suggest that a positive mentoring relationship can help and guide a young person to make better choices about their peer groups in an attempt to distance themselves from criminal activity.

Anger

In addition to an improvement in family relationships and friendship choices, the mentee also said that his current mentor has helped him to control his anger, something that he felt he had struggled to deal with previously. The mentor explained that they have discussed the cognitive processes of the brain which result in feelings of anger, which he believes is the reason why the mentee now has more control over his emotions. Previous research by Spencer et al (2007) found that male youths with male mentors reported improvements in controlling their anger; something which was not identified as a benefit in a similar study into female youths with female mentors.

Although the findings support those from previous studies in relation to improvement in family relationships, it can be suggested that the mentees improved relationship with his mother and brother has occurred as a result of his improvement in controlling his anger. This is supported by a number of academics, including McKay and Maybell (2004); Luxmoore (2006) and Cavell and Malcolm (2007), all of whom suggest that learning to control anger is key in reducing conflict between youths and their parents and improving family relationships overall.

School

Both participants spoke of the mentees improvement in his school life in the time that he has been mentored. At the beginning of their mentoring relationship, the mentee was being suspended from school once a fortnight, but over the past nine months of being mentored he has only been suspended once. This arguably reflects a significant improvement in the mentees behaviour and competency at school. This supports findings from previous studies, including Grossman and Tierney (1998), who found that mentoring helped to improve grades and reduce truancy and Piper and Piper (2007), who suggest that mentoring can help to improve school ability overall. However, it was noted that the mentee started at a new school approximately four months ago, which is an academy and specifically focuses on working with young people who struggle with mainstream education. The new school that the mentee attends teaches mainly practical-based lessons instead of the standard academic subjects, has smaller class sizes and only uses suspension as a last resort. Therefore, it cannot be certain that the improvement in the mentees behaviour and competency at school is solely a result of mentoring, but it can be suggested that it may have helped along the way.

Maturity and looking to the future

According to the mentor, the mentee has matured greatly since their mentoring relationship began. This is evident through the many improvements he appears to have made in his life since they started meeting, as well as the positive change in his attitude towards his offending behaviour. The mentee has also started to make achievable goals for the future in relation to career choices and further education. Although maturing is arguably a natural part of growing up, it is reasonable to suggest that the mentor may have supported and guided the mentee throughout this process. This is supported by Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2007), who suggest that mentoring provides a positive role model who can help to ease the transition to adulthood, which is often a difficult one to make.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring as a criminal justice intervention, by assessing how efficient it is at reducing youth crime. Further aims were to analyse whether mentoring effects other aspects of a young person's life and assess the importance of a meaningful relationship between mentor and mentee. Due to the ever growing popularity and use of youth mentoring as a means of reducing youth crime, it was important to assess its effectiveness in such a remit; particularly as there was little evidence to support its continued use on such a significant scale (Colley, 2003).

In order to establish a greater understanding of the existing research on youth mentoring, a comprehensive literature review was carried out alongside the case study of a mentor and his mentee. The data was gathered from the two participants using individual semi-structured interviews, which was then analysed alongside the findings from the literature review. A number of key themes and findings were identified which specifically relate to the research aims above.

Although the central aim of the study was to establish how effective youth mentoring is at reducing offending, the main theme that emerged throughout the literature review and case

study interviews was in relation to the mentor-mentee relationship. It was suggested by a number of researchers that a good quality relationship between mentor and mentee appears to be vital in achieving a success outcome, which is further benefited by regular contact over a long period of time (DuBois et al, 2002; St-James Thomas et al, 2005; Sale et al, 2008; Rhodes, 2008 and Rhodes and Lowe, 2008). Poor quality relationships were argued by Rhodes et al (2005) to have damaging effects which outweigh any positives, whilst Grossman and Rhodes (2002) suggested that short-term mentoring is more harmful than good.

The case study supports these findings, as it was identified that the relationship between the mentor and his mentee was of good quality. They have also been meeting for approximately nine months on a regular weekly basis. Both participants recognised the importance of getting along well and having a mutual level of trust. This was further supported by the admission that the mentee did not get on well with his previous mentor and reoffended shortly after their mentoring relationship ended.

Conflicting evidence was identified into the most effective style of mentoring relationship. The large scale study by Grossman and Tierney (1998) suggested that mentors should be trained to be like friends as opposed to parents, whereas studies by Langhout et al (2004) and Rhodes and Lowe (2008) suggest that a more authoritative, parent-like approach provides the most benefits. It is interesting to note that the study by Langhout et al (2004) was based on the data gathered for Grossman and Tierney's (1998) study, which as stated, gives opposing views on the most effective style of relationship. It can be suggested that this reflects the significance of researcher interpretation, as the same data set was construed very differently by the two sets of researchers.

The mentor interviewed in the case study was of the opinion that mentors should be an adult friend as opposed to an authoritative parent figure. It was suggested that the conflict in findings may be a result of difference in needs of the participants involved. As suggested by Philip and Spratt (2007), mentoring programmes should be tailored to suit individual needs, to cater for the variety of backgrounds of the youths involved.

In relation to the impact that youth mentoring has outside of offending, the mentee in the case study revealed that he has recognised improvements with his personal relationships, school life and anger management. The mentor further added that the mentee has matured greatly during the time he has been mentoring him and has noticed an increased sense of ambition for the future.

Grossman and Tierney (1998) and Philip and Spratt (2007) both support the idea that mentoring can help to improve personal relationships, whilst Spencer et al (2007) recognise that male mentors can help male mentees to learn to control their anger. A number of researchers identified a link between mentoring and an improvement in school competency, including Grossman and Tierney (1998) and Piper and Piper (2007); however, St-James Roberts et al (2005) found that there was no impact on basic education skills. It was noted that the mentee had changed to a different school part way through, which is aimed at students who struggle with mainstream education. As a result, it cannot be certain that mentoring alone has helped to improve school behaviour and competency in this case, but it may have helped along the way. None of the existing research makes reference to the way that mentoring can help a young person to mature or think more about their ambitions for the future; however, it can be argued that maturing is a natural part of growing up and therefore mentoring may or may not have played a part in this process.

The main aim of this study was to establish how effective youth mentoring is as a criminal justice intervention, by assessing how efficient it is at reducing youth crime. The existing literature provides a sobering account of youth mentoring in this remit, as the findings suggest that it has little impact on problematic or offending behaviour (St-James Roberts et al, 2005; Philip and Spratt, 2007). The majority of the literature fails to even mention youth mentoring in a crime prevention context, which suggests that it is not commonly used for this purpose. However, it was identified through the case study that mentoring has played an important role in the reduction of offending behaviour by the mentee. This was identified by both the mentor and his mentee, who has not been in trouble with the police since their mentoring relationship started. It was suggested that this was a result of the work they have done on thinking about the consequences of criminal behaviour, which is supported by Farrington and Welsh (2007) as being an effective form of crime prevention. The mentee did not appear to benefit from the work they did that was directly in relation to his specific type of offending, so it was suggested that the reduction in criminal behaviour may be a result of thinking about the consequences in a wider context.

This case study reflects that youth mentoring can have a significant impact on a young person's life. The findings from both the literature review and the case study overwhelmingly suggest that a good quality, meaningful relationship is vital in ensuring a positive outcome, so it can be argued that this has a number of implications for practice. Firstly, it can be recommended that youth mentoring programmes ensure that they incorporate rapport building exercises into their foundation training for mentors. This would arguably help new mentors to break through any initial communication barriers they may face with their young mentee, as well as provide a good starting point for building a positive and meaningful relationship together. Secondly, it can be suggested that mentoring programmes should ensure that they incorporate a stringent criterion for matching a mentor with a young person, if they do not have one in place already. It is evident from the literature review and case study that getting on well is an important factor in ensuring a successful outcome, so mentoring programmes could attempt to match mentors with mentees based on their interests, hobbies and backgrounds. Further to this, the matching process should also take the skills of the mentor and the needs of the mentee into consideration, to ensure that their specific needs can be met during the course of their mentoring relationship. This is supported by a number of researchers, including Ganser (2002); Menchana (2003) and Records and Emerson (2003, all cited in Colaprete, 2009).

Although this research has provided a useful insight into how an effective, good quality relationship between a youth and their mentor can result in a positive mentoring outcome, there are a number of limitations to this study that need to be discussed. Firstly, this is only a small-scale case study which involved two male participants from a local Youth Offending Service, who are currently in a mentoring relationship. Due to the small-scale nature of this study, the findings may not be generalisable outside of this particular pairing or Youth Offending Service; however, as suggested, it does reflect the positive results that youth mentoring can result in when a meaningful relationship between mentor and mentee is present, so recommendations for best practice can still be identified through the findings of this study. In addition, this case study was based on a male mentoring pair only, so it can be suggested that a similar study on a female mentoring pair may result in different findings. Similar research on a larger scale which incorporates male pairs, female pairs and mixed pairs from a variety of Youth Offending Teams across the UK is recommended, as it will further expand the knowledge database on the effectiveness of youth mentoring, particularly

in a criminal justice context. This is important as the existing literature into the effectiveness of youth mentoring as a method of crime prevention reflects that it has very little impact on offending behaviour, yet the findings from this case study tell a very different story.

Due to the nature of this study, only one set of interviews was carried out at approximately nine months into the participants' mentoring relationship. Further studies of a similar nature that are carried out at different stages of the mentoring process may provide more insight into its effectiveness. This includes at an earlier stage, to examine whether the positive effects are recognisable early on and also once the mentoring relationship has ended, to see if the positive effects remain after the process has ended. It may also be beneficial to carry out further research specifically on unsuccessful mentoring pairs, as it may help to identify why such relationships sometimes go wrong and how the outcome may have been different if the youth and mentor were matched more appropriately.

To conclude, this case study reflects that youth mentoring can have a significantly positive outcome when a good quality, meaningful relationship is present.

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