

Mentor Family Guidelines

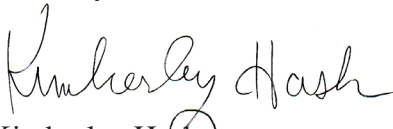
Developing a relationship with a young woman who needs to know she is loved and valued can be a very rewarding experience. However, there are some things to consider. Many of the residents at Hope House come from broken homes and difficult circumstances. Their lives may include abuse, neglect and dysfunction. When young women trust someone, which will hopefully happen in a Mentor Family relationship, she might open up and share some of her past or her present feelings. Your position is to listen, encourage her positive direction and let her know that God loves her very much. Some things you should keep in mind are:

- Do not attempt to counsel her. Chances are that she is in counseling, and you don't know if your advice is counter to the direction the counselor is taking. Be encouraging, supportive and understanding without giving her advice about life decisions or dealing with her past.
- Sometimes young women from difficult backgrounds have a problem with authority. It would be nice if we could say that every resident is so appreciative of the program that they wouldn't say anything negative. But human nature doesn't work like that. They may feel secure and happy living in Hope House in general, but will find something to complain about. This is especially true if they have been disciplined or had a difficult day. They may not like the rules or have a problem with the House Mother or Father or Executive Director. Regardless of the reason, it is extremely important that you do not allow a resident to "run down" the program, the House Parents, Executive Director or other residents. If this starts to happen, it is up to you to tell the resident that it is not your position to judge and that she should go to the person with whom she has a problem, not discuss it with you. If you are told something that causes you concern about the operations or people at Hope House, please come and ask.
- We have rules at Hope House that the residents agree to live by. Enclosed is a copy of those rules for you to read so you will be familiar with them. It is very important that you be an extension of our program when the young woman is at your home or out with you. For example, we do not allow our residents to view R rated movies. We would ask that you honor this both in your home and out when with her.
- Every time a resident goes somewhere, she has a time she must return by. If she can't make it by that time, she must call the House Parent and let him/her know. Please be aware of this and get her home on time or have her call.
- Some of our residents choose to place their babies for adoption, others choose to parent. People have strong feelings both ways. We ask that you respect the resident's choice and encourage her in her decision. If she is placing for adoption, under NO circumstances are you to connect her with someone who wants to adopt. All of this is handled through the clinic.
- Any personal information the resident tells you is confidential. Your friends will be interested in what you are doing and how it is going. It is fine to tell the generalities and how you feel about the program and your experience. However, do not pass on information that is personal in nature such as her past, her family situation, her feelings, etc.
- Avoid discussing private, intimate information about your family or marriage with the resident. Every family has problems. But our goal is to have the residents experience a healthy family. Healthy doesn't mean perfect, but it does mean having boundaries. If you had a fight with your husband or teenage child the day before, these are not appropriate to discuss with or in front of the resident.
- Remember that many of the residents who live at Hope House do not hold to the same values that we do. Honesty may not be something that they have adopted as a personal value yet. They may tell you things that are untrue or embellish on their stories. Don't take this personally. God is working with each one of our residents and has them at Hope House for a reason. While they are there, they are exposed to His values through Bible study and church. If something concerns you, discuss it with the Executive Director.

- When the resident comes to visit you, she is not to use your home as a way to do things she normally would not be allowed to do. For instance, some of the resident have boyfriends in the community. We may allow a very limited contact if we feel it is not detrimental to the resident. When she is with you, she is not to visit her boyfriend or other friends. The purpose is for her to experience YOUR family.
- Our program is CHRIST centered. Our residents are required to attend church and can choose a Christian church they wish to attend. Her religion may not be the same as yours. Her belief system may be a hodge-podge of ideas she has adopted over the years. She may be Charismatic and you may be traditional. You are encouraged to talk about God and Christ and the precepts of the bible. You should not try to convert her to your religion or criticize her beliefs.
- If you have a problem you feel is serious, or you are told something that alarms you, bring it to the Executive Director. She will decide what action is necessary.
- Many of our young women do not understand healthy boundaries. Once they feel comfortable, they may ask you for material things, or to take them places or do things for them that you are not obligated to do. They may ask to borrow money from you. We ask that you establish and maintain clear boundaries. Your commitment to them is to have them into your home or to do something with your family every other week. What they will take away is the relationships they experience. They are out of line if they ask for material things or to borrow money or they want you to do for them beyond your commitment. While each situation must be judged on its own merit, please say “no” when it is warranted. If you have any questions, discuss them with the Executive Director.
- Pray daily for the resident you mentor.

These guidelines are not to scare you away. Chances are, you may never encounter most of these problems. But, after years of experience, we know that people go into things with certain expectations and they may not match reality. We hope that these guidelines will help temper your expectations, but not your enthusiasm. God bless you as you take on this vital task of loving and accepting the young women of Hope House.

Sincerely,



Kimberley Hash
 Executive Director
 Living Hope Women's Center/
 Hope House Maternity Home

*What it means to be a
Mentor Family
to a
Hope House Resident*

Thank you for your interest in becoming a mentor family for one of our residents. This will explain what that involves. If, after you read this and commit it to prayer, fill in the bottom portion and return it to Living Hope Women's Center.

What is a mentor family? A mentor family extends their family's love and acceptance to a resident of Hope House, having her over regularly to experience family life.

Why are mentor families so important? This exposes a young woman to healthy, normal (we understand this does not mean perfect) family interaction while giving her a place to go where they feel special.

What do we have to do? You commit to open your heart and your home at least once every two weeks. This might be dinner, a family outing, a movie night, a church event, etc. You can do it more often, but the minimum is every two weeks.

Are there any guidelines? Yes. When you become a mentor family, there are some things you must be aware of. Enclosed is a packet that will give you some helpful guidelines. Additionally, after you submit the application below, we will ask you to come in for an orientation and to watch a video on interacting with our girls.

Yes, we want to be a Mentor Family to a Hope House resident. we have read and discussed the guidelines and believe God is calling us to this ministry.

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

Names and ages of children:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____