

Vescent builds an empowering online community for girls with the help of Mentoring Central's web-based training.



The content within Mentoring Central's courses directly addresses questions that our mentors commonly ask.



*Cindy Abel
CEO and Founder of Vescent*

The Challenge

The rapid growth of social media platforms over the past decade has transformed the ways in which teenagers experience relationships with their peers and adults. Popular social media sites such as Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, and Facebook allow teenagers to develop relationships, connect with others who share similar interests, and learn more about those different from them.

Though popular social media sites have the potential to help young people feel connected to an online community, they can also make teenagers feel isolated at times. In fact, a [2023 survey](#) showed that 55% of American middle and high school students had been cyberbullied at some point in their lives. As social media platforms are growing, teen girls are experiencing increased sadness and violence. A [2021 study](#) found that 3 in 5 teenage girls felt persistently sad or hopeless, and 30% had seriously contemplated attempting suicide. Social media platforms that provide options for anonymity and public posting to large audiences can increase teenagers' susceptibility to discrimination or negative body image.

The Context

Vescent is an online platform and community designed to challenge traditional social media norms and mitigate the exclusionary behavior, negative body image, and cyberbullying that have become commonplace in social media interactions.

Vescent offers opportunities for young women and teenagers to engage with aligned peers who support their unique voices, interests, and experiences through nurturing mentoring relationships and thoughtful community groups. Mentors, who are typically young women, meet regularly online in small groups with teenage girls to provide support for real-life issues and discuss mental health, relationships, and stress management. In addition, app users are able to post to a live feed about topics related to emotional wellness and mental health literacy.

Vescent is currently conducting a pilot study to examine the impacts of the platform on teenagers' mental health and confidence. **Cindy Abel, CEO and Founder of Vescent**, said that Vescent is listening and learning from its core audience through surveys and focus groups to ensure the platform is data driven and reflects youth voice -- leaving teenagers feeling more engaged, encouraged and supported.

The Solution

Vescent's mission is to empower its members, fostering confidence and growth through meaningful relationships. An integral part of achieving this mission was ensuring that their mentors were prepared with high-quality training rooted in mentoring best practices, which led them to implement Mentoring Central's **Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring** course. Vescent's mentors complete the web-based, research-informed, interactive **Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring** course to form realistic expectations for mentoring a mentee that they may never meet in person, understand the unique roles and boundary issues that can arise in e-mentoring relationships, prepare to meet and get to know their mentee, and more. In addition to Mentoring Central's online training, Vescent's mentors complete the Sharpen Mental Health Literacy training with their partner, Resiliency Technologies, to learn more about brain science, mental health literacy, trauma, suicide prevention, stress management, mindfulness, and disordered eating prevention. Then, mentors complete a Mandated Reporter Training.

As the mental health literacy and resiliency training partner for Vescent, I greatly appreciate the fact that Mentoring Central's Building Foundation for e-Mentoring course is used to assist young women in learning mentoring best practices. It is a wonderful complement to our peer-focused mental health literacy and resiliency training, providing a solid foundation for mentors to thrive.



*Robyn Hussa Farrell
President and CEO of Resiliency Technologies*

The Results

Mentoring Central's **Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring** topics are equipping Vescent's mentors with skills to build strong, long-lasting relationships with their mentees that are resilient in the face of challenges. The important, foundational mentoring relationship skills that Vescent's mentors learn through the course are helping mentors build an online environment where girls can feel supported and comfortable talking about mental health, relationships, and more.

Olivia Marks, Lead Coach/Mentor for Vescent said that she believes Mentoring Central's training not only helps mentors feel confident in mentoring their groups of mentees, but also teaches them how to handle

difficult situations that they may not otherwise expect or be prepared for when they begin their online mentoring relationships. Online mentoring relationships may face specific challenges that matches who meet in person do not experience, and **Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring** provides unique examples and practice opportunities to help mentors navigate common challenges, expectations, and boundaries specific to e-mentoring relationships.

Marks also appreciated that mentors could download tip sheets from the **Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring** course to remind themselves of key skills they learned in the course. These tip sheets help mentors apply skills they learned in Mentoring Central's course to their mentoring relationships, even if they had not taken the training in several months.

Completing Mentoring Central's training provides an additional benefit to some of Vescent's mentors, many of which are studying in the fields of psychology, counseling, and social work. These mentors plan to use their certifications from their completion of the training for future career development and opportunities.

Building the Foundation for e-Mentoring Overview



Mentoring Central does a great job of laying out real-life scenarios. The training details possible situations that can occur during the mentoring relationship and what to do in those scenarios. It provides examples of how to handle boundaries with the teen and third parties, such as their families.

*Olivia Marks
Lead Coach/Mentor for Vescent*

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