

# Strong Personal Relationships

Research suggests that effective mentoring relationships depend on the strength of the interpersonal bonds pairs develop; a strong emotional connection has been found to be a crucial precursor to achieving program objectives. Tools to measure the strength of mentoring relationships have been developed and tested, but none of these fit perfectly into the unique context of iMentor relationships. As such, iMentor set upon creating its own tool to measure the strength of the relationship between mentees and mentors by leveraging existing field research and knowledge gained from implementing the program.

## Strength of Personal Relationship Scale

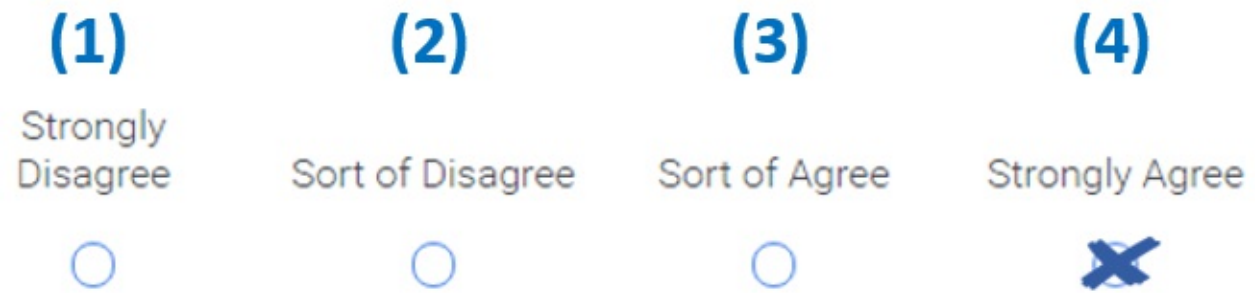
The Strength of Personal Relationship (SPR) scale was developed by choosing questions from two research validated mentoring relationship scales: The Youth Mentoring Survey (YMS), developed by lead researchers in the mentoring field and the Strength of Relationship (SoR) Survey developed by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. In addition to selecting questions that fit iMentor's model from these two scales, three questions were designed by iMentor in an attempt to fully capture the elements of a strong relationship.

All mentees are asked the SPR questions during each survey administration. Mentors are also asked SPR questions, designed to mirror those answered by the mentee.

Mentee Question	Source	Mentor Question
I trust my mentor.	iMentor	My mentee trusts me.
I am open and honest with my mentor.	iMentor	My mentee is open and honest with me.
I feel close to my mentor.	iMentor	
My mentor has lots of good ideas for solving problems.	SoR	
My relationship is important to me.	SoR	My relationship with my mentee is important to me.
I know a lot about my mentor's life.	YMS	I know a lot about my mentee's life.
My mentor knows a lot about my life.	YMS	My mentee knows what is going on in my life.
My Mentor is a good match for me.	YMS	My mentee is a good match for me.
I go to my mentor when I need support.	YMS	My mentee comes to me when s/he needs support.

## Strength of Personal Relationship Score

While mentors are asked SPR questions, the actual score is calculated off of mentees' responses only. Mentees indicate how much they agree with each statement selecting from the options below. Each option is associated with a numerical value.



The values associated with each response are averaged, resulting in an SPR score ranging from 1 – 4. The higher the SPR score, the stronger the relationship is considered to be. To date, analysis completed by the Research and Evaluation team has shown statistically significant relationships between high SPR scores and engagement ([partners.imentor.org/help/rationale-behind-setting-benchmarks-at-imentor](https://partners.imentor.org/help/rationale-behind-setting-benchmarks-at-imentor)) as well as mentor quality.

### Why is SPR Data Important?

Information gained from SPR questions gives the organization an opportunity to hear directly from mentees and mentors about different aspects of their relationship. While mentor responses aren't scored, they are used to look for attunement (i.e., whether pairs feel the same about their relationship). Since iMentor's model is designed around the belief that strong pair relationships are central to effective curricular engagement including nurturing and growing a college aspiration and the development of non-cognitive skills, it is important to pay close attention to this data.

### What kind of trends have been seen in SPR data?

- Mentees and mentors typically rate their relationships highly in most SPR categories.
  - Mentees report that they are open and honest with their mentors and that they trust them. However, they are less likely to report going to their mentor for support.
    - Mentees are more likely to report going to their mentor for support later in high school. This may be because there are more concrete tasks for the mentor to help with in 11th and 12th grade.
  - When a mentor meets our expectations for quality, mentees report stronger relationships with their mentor.
  - Mentees who have only been matched with one mentor (as opposed to having been re-matched one or more times) have stronger relationships with their mentors than mentees who have been rematched at least once.
  - Pairs that are attuned (share a positive conception of their relationship) tend to have stronger relationships than their peers.
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