

# Fact Sheet

## Boys to Men Texas, Inc



### Our Mission

The mission of Boys to Men Texas is to empower adolescent boys, through community mentoring circles, to grow in ways that promote self reflection, positive thinking, and self accountability.

BTMT's mentors create a safe space where boys feel supported and valued, and can speak freely of their wants, hopes, fears, and feelings.

BTMT mentors are role models who listen, encourage, and empower, and are a community of men who model integrity, accountability, compassion, and respect.



### Our Programs

Boys to Men Texas uses a community based mentoring model to serve middle and high school boys. Our primary service track is the in-school mentoring program which provides adult male mentoring services to adolescent boys through structured group participation and sharing. Mentoring groups meet weekly, and are led by at least two vetted and trained mentors, with group sizes limited to 4 to 12 boys.

The boys in the programs are selected by the school, using selection guidelines mutually agreed upon by the school and BTMT. Mentoring programs are designed to run for a school semester, and can be modified to accommodate testing periods, special meetings, or other schedule changes.

BTMT's in-school mentoring is part of a larger program of activities that include our "Rites of Passage Adventure Weekend" retreats, half day in-school presentations, and weekend meetings that alternate between activity weekends of laser tag or rock climbing, and mentoring meetings where topics discussed at school are explored more fully.

### Our Mentors

Potential mentors are interviewed and screened to ensure that each mentor meets BTMT's goals of sharing and building relationships with the boys. Mentors must pass a criminal background check, and must fulfill any school district requirements as well. We require that our mentors be vaccinated against Covid. Mentors come from all walks of life. Mentors must be at least 18 years old (most of our mentors are 35 or older), and we ask for a commitment of at least one school year. Our mentors and BTMT are insured.

All mentors are required to attend mentor training sessions, covering topics from the actual mentoring process itself, to legal and reporting matters, to working and interacting with school counsellors and teachers. The group mentoring model allows BTMT staff to monitor and evaluate the mentor's interactions with the boys. Mentors cannot lead a group until they have participated in mentoring circles with a senior mentor, and have been judged to be ready.

All mentors are trained to spot signs of predatory behavior. We discuss predatory behavior at group sessions and instruct boys and mentors to immediately report ANY concerns or inappropriate behaviors to staff. All mentors are mandated reporters and work directly with the school partner to address any safety concerns that may arise.

## Our Curriculum

BTMT's mentoring sessions are conducted in circles to promote a sense of equality and sharing. Each meeting begins with a check in round where a mentor models the check in by sharing his teenage experience of that week's topic. Boys are encouraged to check in with their own feelings, about the topic and about their life, right now.

One of the most important tenets of BTMT is that our mentors do not teach, lecture or tell boys what to do. Instead, the mentor tells his story and the feelings that arose for him, lessons he learned, and the consequences of his actions. This gives the boys permission to tell their truth about the challenges they face, and to begin to take responsibility for their choices and the consequences of their actions.

BTMT groups begin by setting their own rules and agreements for behavior within the group. The boys decide how to manage others who act out, make fun, bully, or talk over others in the group. Each week, in a structured process, new topics are introduced, starting with anger and stress management, and moving to topics of integrity, responsibility, accountability, and personal choice. Other topics include conflict resolution and dealing with authority.

## Our Boys Adventure Weekend

This weekend event, held at a BTMT partner facility two to four times a year, is the next important step for the boys to decide what type of men they want to become. This 3-day training is led by experienced facilitators and trained staff and provides a 2:1 ratio of men to boys. Boys come from several schools for the weekend.

During the weekend, boys are challenged and supported through a series of carefully facilitated activities and experiential exercises designed to help boys cope with the challenges they will face during adolescence. They learn about integrity. They bond as a team. They learn about mission and service. Our boys and mentors spend more time together on this weekend than a typical mentoring program provides in six months.

## Our History

Boys to Men was founded by Herb Sigurdson, Joe Sigurdson, and Craig McClain in San Diego, California in 1996. Herb Sigurdson was a former Executive Director of Father Flanagan's Boys Town, and saw the need and opportunity to begin a boys mentoring organization. The San Diego organization now mentors in more than 30 schools, and provides support for Boys to Men organizations throughout the USA.

Boys to Men Texas was incorporated as a 501 (c)(3) non profit in 2012 (EIN: 45-5396093), and has been actively mentoring in multiple Houston area school districts, including Houston ISD, CyFair ISD, YES Prep Schools, and the Houston CAN Academy. BTMT is an independent entity, governed by our own Board of Directors, although we work closely with other Boys to Men organizations.

## Our Process

The mentoring process begins with meetings between BTMT and school counsellors, teachers, and/or student service specialists. A memo of understanding (MOU) is executed with the school, outlining roles and responsibilities. Boys are selected for the program, schedules are developed, parental releases are obtained, and mentors are assigned. Mentors are trained in any school specific requirements. The school and BTMT determine data sharing and collection requirements, and our mentors then begin the semester of mentoring.

## More Information

To learn more about BTMT's programs, curriculum, and mentor availability, please visit our website at: [www.BoysToMenTexas.org](http://www.BoysToMenTexas.org) or contact one of our volunteers, below.

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