



Side by Side Mentoring Program Prescreen Guide for Participants

Updated August 2018

The mission of Side by Side is to move Participants from survival to sustainability by increasing their informal assets through long-term mentoring relationships.

This program is for **highly motivated women** (“Participants”) who have the mental and physical ability to seek out and maintain employment or volunteerism, who are not in immediate crisis, and who can demonstrate at least 6 months of sobriety. Side by Side is a “hand up” for **women who are ready and able to make lasting changes in their lives.** **New for fall 2018: independent 16- & 17-year-old women are now also eligible for Side by Side!**

With the help of a Bridges of Hope Case Manager, **each program Participant sets personal goals** in the areas of:

- Income & Stability;
- Skills & Education; and
- Relationships & Meaning.

Participants work toward these goals with the **support of volunteer Mentors** from the community. These intentional relationships provide an encouraging and accountable framework for **individuals who are working to leave poverty.** Participants who are accepted into the program are expected to work hard, maintain honest communication, and attend monthly and weekly meetings.

PLEASE READ THROUGH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE SIDE BY SIDE MENTORING PROGRAM:

Can you answer yes to all of these questions? (If not, you do not qualify for Side by Side at this time.)

1. Are you a woman who is at least 18 years of age? If 16 or 17 years old: are you living independently from your parents or planning to do so?
2. Are you willing to work at getting out of poverty through a plan that you create?
3. Are you mentally and physically able to work or volunteer at least part-time (~20 hours per week), and are you willing to seek & maintain a position at this level (or more)?
4. Are you interested in exploring post-high-school education and/or in learning new skills?
5. Are you motivated to socialize and develop friendships with both Mentors and other program Participants?
6. Are you willing to be honest with your Mentors and Case Manager about your situation and the choices you make?
7. Are you ready to set personal goals and take responsibility for their outcome?
8. Are you willing to attend weekly support meetings with other Participants (or one-on-one with a Case Manager)?
9. Are you committed to attending monthly Monday Night Meetings with the full Side by Side group (Mentors, staff, Volunteers, and Participants)?
10. Are you willing to meet one-on-one with a Mentor (outside of group meetings) at least once a month?

If you answered yes to these first 10 questions, congratulations! You may be a good candidate for Side by Side! Please continue reading on the next page:

Materials adapted from the Circles of Support program in Grand Rapids, MN.

Do any of these situations apply to you? (If yes, please be ready to discuss the specific situation with a Bridges of Hope staff. It may or may not be a disqualifier.)

11. Do you still need to earn your high school diploma or G.E.D.?
12. Are you on SSI or “Disability?”
13. Is your spouse/significant other currently incarcerated?
14. Are you currently homeless or being evicted?
15. Have you been clean/sober for less than 6 months?
16. Are you experiencing domestic violence or in an unsafe relationship?

There are five steps to join Side by Side as a program Participant:

1. Read through this PreScreen Guide.
2. Meet with a Bridges of Hope Case Manager to discuss PreScreen questions.
3. Submit the 2-page Participant Application (a Case Manager will give you a copy).
4. Complete an in-person Informational Interview with a small group of Side by Side staff and Mentors. Upon acceptance into the program, you can then...
5. Attend your first weekly Participant Support Group Meeting or one-on-one with a Case Manager, and attend your first Monday Night Meeting with our full Side by Side group!

If you have read through all 16 questions and are ready to take the next step in joining Side by Side, call Janelle (a Bridges of Hope Side by Side Case Manager) at 218.297.4502 to schedule a meeting to discuss your answers to this PreScreen guide. If you answered yes to any of the questions on this page (11-16), please be prepared to discuss your specific situation or situations openly and honestly with our Case Managers.

Joining Side by Side means you are willing to do whatever it takes to move from living paycheck to paycheck to a place where you have the resources (both money and relationships) to be stable and secure—and we want to support you in this journey!

A note about why we ask these questions:

Side by Side is not right for everyone, and that is 100%, completely okay! Side by Side is a program for people who are in a specific stage of “readiness” to leave poverty; in other words, they are tired of living life as-is and are ready to “do whatever it takes” to change their life trajectory—which is a HUGE, commendable undertaking. The research of Ruby Payne and Aha! Process tells us that the biggest keys to leaving poverty are education and relationships. Specifically, Payne et al note that “in order to move from poverty to middle class..., one must trade off some relationships for achievement at least for a period of time. To do this, one needs emotional resources and stamina.” Poverty is not about one’s income level only; it is more akin to an entire “culture” that comes with its own set of beliefs, assumptions, hidden rules, and norms.

With this in mind, Side by Side is a way to help individuals set and reach their own goals while learning about the beliefs, assumptions, hidden rules, and norms of the Middle Class; all within a supportive framework of new relationships that help bridge the gap during the journey from poverty to the middle class. Bridges of Hope also provides a range of programming for those who are at a different place in their own life journey; call our office at 218.825.7682 to learn more about our additional services for those in need in our community. And thank you!

—Kassie Heisserer, Executive Director