



# STUDENT WOW

## Big Brother/Sister Program

### Overview

The Big Brother/Sister Program is an integral part of our program, and has been in practice in one form or another since its inception. When a resident comes into the program, they almost always experience some culture shock. It doesn't matter whether they are coming from a drug-den, prison, detox, or even a Christian home, it is a huge adjustment. To help keep and guide them through the beginning phases of the program, we assign each new resident a big brother or sister, who is a trustworthy, higher-phase resident. Big brothers and sisters can devote time and energy to helping new students acclimate to the program and mentoring the younger residents, who will benefit from their insight and experience. This also tends to have an amazing impact on the Big Brother or Sister, who will develop transferable ministry skills.

### Preparing for the Moment

Develop program guidelines and policies that outline the eligibility criteria for both mentors and mentees. Consider factors like age, gender, interests, and the length of time in recovery when assigning a new resident's big brother or sister. Before assigning an individual as a big brother or sister, provide mentorship training that covers topics such as active listening, effective communication, boundaries, and understanding addiction and recovery. Maintain detailed records of each mentor-mentee pairing, including meeting dates, progress, and any challenges faced. Continuously evaluate the program and be open to making adjustments based on feedback and evolving needs.

### Staff Needed

Once the program is off the ground, no additional staff is needed to maintain this program.

### Execution

Develop clear policies for the Big Brother or Big Sister program. This will include which phases are eligible to become mentors, as well as other prerequisites such as experience in recovery, training in mentorship, and a commitment to the program. When feasible, develop an agreement for potential mentors. Track and frequently monitor those enrolled in the program.