

MCS 306 – Roles of a Mentor Activity

Objectives:

- To identify qualities of effective mentors
- To explore roles that mentors can play in the lives of others

Length: 12 minutes

You will need to supply:

- 3x5 index cards
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers

Steps:

1. Give each participant an index card. Ask them to think and then silently:
 - Identify one person, preferably someone who is not a relative, who was a kind of mentor for them.
 - Think about why that person was important to them and the result for them of that person's interest.
 - Recall the qualities of that person that made her or him so valued, and write two or three of those qualities on the index card.
2. Have participants talk briefly about the mentor they identified and the qualities they valued. As they speak, list those qualities on the flipchart/whiteboard. When a quality is repeated, put a check mark next to it each time it is mentioned. (For example, the first time someone says "good listener," write that phrase. Each time someone else identifies this quality in his or her mentor, put a check mark by the phrase.)
3. Review the items on the list. Note which were mentioned most often. Then have the participants identify which of the qualities might be categorized as "communication skills", such as listening, talking, asking questions, and being nonjudgmental.
4. Ask participants to identify the roles a mentor can play in a person's life. List their responses on the flipchart/whiteboard. (These might include: friend, big brother/sister, positive role model, resource, guide.) Lead a brief discussion about what each of these roles might involve. Be sure participants see that a mentor is NOT a parent, teacher or counselor.
5. Allow time for participants to talk about their hopes and concerns as a mentor. For example, which of the qualities that they admired in their "mentors" do they feel fairly confident they possess? Which qualities do they need to work on developing? What other concerns do they have about their mentor role?