



Exploring Leadership

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: MENTORING

Mentorship is an essential part of any youth program. By encouraging students to recognize and exemplify the qualities of good mentors in their own lives, they can grow into better mentors for others. Merriam-Webster defines a mentor as “a trusted counselor or guide.” This definition highlights trust and guidance, rather than giving strict orders or limiting someone’s independence.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

Being a good mentor means leading by example and helping others navigate their own decisions rather than making choices for them.

A great mentor helps others build their skills and confidence. This lesson will help participants explore why mentorship matters—for both mentors and mentees. Imagine having a conversation with your younger self. What advice, guidance, or encouragement would you share? That’s the role of a mentor: to use your experiences to inspire and support someone else.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Determine the qualities that make a great mentor.
- Identify essential skills for effective mentoring relationships.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Blindfolds for each participant.
- A rope tied into a circle (length adjusted for group size, typically 6–20 meters).

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Mentorship Square: Ideal for groups of 8 or more, this activity encourages participants to build mentorship and teamwork skills through a fun and engaging challenge.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Use the terms “mentor” and “mentee” during the activity to help students start thinking about these roles.
- Encourage a fun and supportive atmosphere for discussions.
- Minimize debates to keep the activity focused and positive.
- Split participants into two teams: mentors and mentees.
- Ask the mentees to leave the room for a moment.
- Ask mentors to gather around the rope circle and put on blindfolds.
- Instruct mentors to form a square with the rope in two minutes.
- When finished, mentors place the rope down, remove their blindfolds, and briefly discuss what worked well and what challenges they faced.
- Bring mentees back and pair them with mentors.
- Mentors coach mentees by sharing tips and tricks.
- Blindfold mentees and have them form a rope square while mentors guide with verbal advice only. Give them two minutes to complete the activity.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Invite both teams to share their experiences by discussing the following questions:

- Did you use the full two minutes?
- Was the task easier or harder than you expected?
- If you could try the activity again, what would you do differently?
- What tips or advice from the mentors did you find most helpful?

Next, encourage the group to compare the two teams' experiences and perspectives:

- How does this activity relate to real-life mentoring?
- Did the mentoring impact how the task was completed, either physically or mentally?
- In what ways did the mentors' advice support or challenge the mentees?
- What similarities do you notice between this activity and the role of mentors in real life?



APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

After discussing the questions above, guide the conversation toward how this activity mirrors real-life mentoring.

- Ask students to reflect on times when they've been part of a successful mentoring relationship, either as a mentor or a mentee.
- What made those experiences successful, and how can you apply those lessons to future relationships?
- How can a great mentor guide and inspire someone to discover their own solutions without simply giving them the answers?

CONCLUSION:

By sharing your experiences and encouraging others to take action, you're not just helping one person; you're planting the seeds for a network of mentors. Each person you inspire has the potential to mentor someone else, creating a ripple effect that spreads positivity. Remember, being a mentor doesn't mean having all the answers: it's about guiding, supporting, and helping others discover their potential.

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