

# Exploring Leadership

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: MENTORING

Mentorship is a key piece of any youth program. By encouraging students to exemplify good mentors in their life, they will become better mentors to others. The definition of a mentor from Merriam-Webster is “a trusted counselor or guide.” Note that this definition does not involve strict orders or the loss of agency.

### CONVERSATION STARTER:

- The key to being a good mentor is being an example and guiding others through their own decisions, not making their decisions for them.

A good mentor uses their skills to enhance the skills of others. This lesson will help participants understand why mentorship is important for both the mentors and mentees. Imagine having a conversation with your younger self. You would probably have a lot to say: guidance, advice, and experiences that you wish you had. This should be the goal of a mentor: use your life experiences to benefit someone else.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Determine the qualities a good mentor possesses.
- Identify situations where mentorship is important.
- Distinguish different skills that are valuable in mentoring relationships.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Blindfolds for every participant.
- A rope tied into a circle (6-20 meters, depending on group size)

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

This activity is called the Mentorship Square and requires at least 8 participants. Split your group into two smaller teams: mentors and mentees. Have the mentees leave the room, while the mentors gather around a large rope circle and put blindfolds on.

### FACILITATION TIPS:

- Try and use the words **mentor** and **mentee** during the activity to get the students thinking about those roles.
- Encourage fun and positive discussion during the activity.
- Try to keep the debating to a minimum.

- Tell the team they have two minutes to form a square with the rope without removing their blindfolds. After two minutes, have them set the rope down as they are holding it. Have them remove their blindfolds, and give them a minute or two to reflect on how it went.
- Bring the second group in. Have each member of the second team partner up with a member of the first team. Explain that the mentors of the first group are going to share tips and tricks from their experience creating the rope square.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Have both teams share their perspective and experiences from the activity by asking the following questions:

- Did you use the full two minutes?
- What would you have changed?
- Was it easier or harder than you expected?
- What tips from group one were most effective?

Now have them compare and contrast the two teams' experiences:

- How can we relate this scenario to mentoring?
- Did you see any similarities between the activity and real-life mentors?
- Did the mentoring make a difference in physical or mental output?



## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

After asking some of the specific questions above, gently guide the conversation to why this activity can be applicable in real life.

- Have the students identify times in their life when they have had a successful mentoring relationship, whether as the mentor or the mentee. Encourage them to think about why it was successful, and how they can apply that to future relationships.
- A good teacher will never give the student the answers right away, but instead guide them and encourage them to use their own knowledge to figure it out.

## CONCLUSION:

By using your experience to spur proactivity in others, you ultimately are building more good mentors, which will in turn mentor others. It is a constant cycle that can start anywhere, with anyone.

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