

MODULE #10: Mentoring

Objectives

- Participants will learn about mentors and the process of mentoring.
- Participants will interact with mentors from the community.
- Participants will be involved in significant relationships with mentors, positive role models, or other nurturing adults.

Context



Mentoring is defined as a supportive relationship between a youth or young adult, or an individual who offers support, guidance and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, enters a new area of experience, takes on important tasks, or corrects earlier challenges (Flexman, Ascher & Harrington, 1988).

Handouts & Resources Needed:

Handout 10.1: How Can Mentors Make a Difference

Handout 10.1A: What Do Mentors Do?

Handout 10.1B: The Mentoring Process

Pens/pencils

Sheet of paper – one for each participant

Journals – one per students

Activity #1: Learning about mentoring (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Explain to participants that there are two major reasons why Hispanic youth need mentors. First, an overwhelming number of Hispanic youth in the country do not have professional role models within their own family; thus, mentors are important in ensuring success. Secondly, Hispanic youth from families with limited resources and educational experiences often lack the professional guidance, support and access to resources that a mentor can provide.
- Ask participants to brainstorm on the varied ways mentors can make a difference in the life of a young person. Provide examples if necessary (Handout 10.1). Make sure to take notes on the flit chart or blackboard. For more information visit www.aspira.org Mentoring Curriculum.
- Discuss with participants what mentors do (Handout 10.1A).
- Ask participants if they have mentors? Who are they? Why do they consider them mentors?

- Explain the mentoring process, including one-on-one and group mentor activities to participants so that they have an understanding of how mentoring programs work (Handout 10.1B).

Activity #2: Group mentoring group activity

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Seek leaders from the community to come and speak to participants on different topics (ex: self-esteem, gang violence, community resources, etc.).
- Debriefing

What Do Mentors Do?

According to Flaxman, Ascher, and Harrington (1988), a mentor is a coach, sponsor, guide, advocate and role model. In these roles, the mentor may aid the mentee in making life decisions or assist in troubleshooting personal, social, or institutional barriers. The mentor often introduces the youth to new opportunities and relationships that provide extended support for the mentee. In addition, the mentor provides guidance by guarding the mentee from damaging experiences, and intervening in situations that the mentee may have difficulty handling.

Mentors can also provide advice and wisdom to the mentee in a continual relationship that can last a lifetime. As coaches, mentors may enhance the mentee's knowledge and understanding of the opportunities made available to them through the community in and how to handle specific situations, problems, or settings. As advisors, mentors can offer suggestions for problem solving, decision-making and reaching short- and long-term goals.

A mentor often provides counseling and explains how personal concerns can hinder education, self-esteem and postpone a promising future. Due to the trust and emotional attachment that often develops between mentor and mentee, anxieties, fears and conflicts can be openly discussed and ultimately overcome with the mentor's guidance.

Another important function of mentors is to support and to inspire mentees to realize the infinite possibilities life holds, and to know their own potential in fulfilling such aspirations (Flaxman, Ascher, and Harrington, 1988).

The Mentoring Process

Designing a mentoring program is an extensive process that can involve one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring or a combination of both. Programs are created in a way that allows youth and mentors to learn about a wide variety of experiences and strategies.

A mentoring program may run into some challenges if there is too much structure, resulting in mentees not getting a chance to receive a quality mentoring experience, whereas too little structure may leave participants at a loss for words. A good mentoring program reflects the needs of the entire audience-mentors, parents, youth and schools, as well as the community at large. Other challenges that need to be addressed in the development of a mentoring program include: transportation of mentees, resources, scheduling and access to workplace facilities.

One-to-One Mentoring

One-to-one mentoring involves the matching of mentor-student pairs. This arrangement can be highly effective; however, one-to-one mentoring requires a substantial commitment of time and effort on the part of both mentors and students. This form of mentoring can occur in a number of ways:

- ✓ *Shadowing* provides youth with the opportunity to follow a mentor through a typical workday, research experience, or conference.
- ✓ *Internships* provide hands-on work experience with a mentor allowing realistic assessment of their interest in a career.
- ✓ *Electronic communications* through telephone or e-mail provide students with private and individualized interaction with a mentor.

Group Mentoring Activities

Mentoring in small groups has a number of advantages. First, it takes pressure off the mentor in arranging meetings, as this responsibility is shared by others. Secondly, at group mentoring events, youth feel free to ask questions that they might not normally ask in a one-to-one mentoring relationship. Examples of group mentoring activities include:

- ✓ *Student Counseling Sessions* geared toward assisting students with course selection, the college application process and graduation options.

- ✓ *Informal Luncheon Sessions* are always an effective way to bring a group together. Lunches or dinners encourage both mentors and mentees to relax and interact in a more casual setting.

Handout 10.3

- ✓ *Monthly Meetings* offer youth the opportunity to address questions about various field and career opportunities. Meetings can also focus on creating a network of friends and professional contacts.
- ✓ *Panels* are one of the most ideal formats in presenting multiple perspectives on various themes through short presentations designed for the target audience, as well as for introducing a variety of role models at one event.
- ✓ *Workshops* involve everyone's participation, and allow for constructive mentoring and feedback on specific topic areas.
- ✓ *Conferences* can bring youth together for mentoring and exposure to new ideas and role models. Such events can showcase Hispanic health professionals who are at the forefront of significant issues and enhance their visibility in substance abuse and mental health.

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