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**MODULE ONE**

**An introduction to mentoring**

**Contents**

* Introduction
* Aim and objectives of mentor training
* Aim and objectives of **[this program]**
* Young people: where are they at?
* Role of the mentor
* Qualities and skills of mentors

**Overview**

The module will give participants a broad understanding of mentoring and what being a mentor entails.

Participants are encouraged to reflect on mentors they have had during their lives, the roles those mentors played and their positive attributes.

**Duration**

This module is designed to be completed in 75 to 85 minutes.

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of this session participants will have a greater understanding of what a mentor is and what they might hope to achieve, as well as the qualities and skills of an effective mentor.

**Resources**

* Handout 1.1 – Aim and objectives of **[this program]**
* Handout 1.2 – Young people: where are they at?
* Handout 1.3 – Impact of youth mentoring
* Handout 1.4 – Role of the mentor
* Handout 1.5 – Qualities and skills of an effective mentor
* ‘A mentor is…’ Activity cards
* Objects for ‘Qualities of a mentor’ activity

**Running sheet**

Reading the running sheet:

* Instructions for the facilitator in standard font
* Wording to deliver during the session *in blue italics*
* Activities for participants = in boxed text

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Activity** | **Duration (approx)** |
| **Introduction** | * Presenter/s introduce themselves * Depending on group size and time allocated, have participants either: * introduce themselves to their neighbour and have their neighbour tell the group why their neighbour wants to become a mentor and what they think some of the challenges will be; or * introduce themselves to their neighbour and describe how they have helped another person achieve a goal in the past. Participants then tell the whole group which skill or characteristic their neighbour brings to mentoring. | 10 mins  [20 mins] |
| **Overview** | *The module will give participants a broad understanding of mentoring, and what being a mentor entails.*  *Participants are encouraged to reflect on mentors they have had during their lives, the role those mentors played and their positive attributes.* | 2 mins |
| **Aim and objectives of mentor training** | * Present aim and objectives of mentor training   *The aim of mentor training is to enable participants to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively mentor young people.*  *Our objectives are for participants to:*   * *understand the roles and responsibilities of a mentor* * *acquire the knowledge and skills to build and maintain effective mentoring relationships* * *be aware of the resources, services and pathways available to young people to help them achieve their goals* * *be aware of the supports and processes that will help them in their role as mentors.* | 3 mins |
| **Aim and objectives of** **[this program]** | * Discuss the background and rationale for the program * Present aim and objectives of the mentoring program (Handout 1.1), and provide any other relevant organisational resources (e.g. annual report, brochure, etc.) | 10 mins |
| **Young people: where are they at?** | * Present summary data from Mission Australia’s ‘National Survey of Young Australians’ (Handout 1.2) | 10 mins |
| **Role of the mentor** | * Present ‘The impact of youth mentoring’ (Handout 1.3) * Introduce definition of youth mentoring:   *Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship between a young person and a caring individual who offers guidance, support and encouragement (National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks, 2012).*  **Activity: A Mentor is….’**  This activity aims to assist participants in understanding what the role of the mentor is and is not, and is designed to encourage discussion.  Twenty-two cards featuring roles a mentor might play (see table p.10) are spread randomly on a table or the floor. Participants decide in which of two columns – ***A mentor is*** and ***A mentor is not*** – to place them.  (*Activity continued next page*)  (*Activity continued*)  Participants can be left to their own devices as a group, or can each in turn choose one card and place it in either column, offering their reasons for doing so. Discussion is encouraged.  The table below suggests a likely outcome. A presenter might like to gently challenge placements that differ from the table.  The most debated role is likely to be *counsellor*. Facilitators should be clear that while mentors might provide ‘counsel’ to young people, they are not in the role to provide ‘counselling’.   * Discuss the role of the mentor (Handout 1.4) | 15 mins |
| **Qualities and skills of mentors** | Activity: Qualities of a mentor  This activity aims to encourage participants to consider the characteristics and qualities of a mentor.  Participants sit in a circle around an assortment of random objects (e.g. scissors, sticky tape, a book, a brick, a soft toy, a glass, a hat … whatever can be found around the office).  Participants are asked to select an object that reflects a characteristic of a good mentor. For example, a participant may choose scissors, as you can always rely on scissors and mentors need to be reliable.  Participants then share their ideas about the objects they have selected, and the facilitator encourages group discussion.   * Highlight the qualities and skills of effective mentors (Handout 1.5) | 15 mins |

HANDOUT 1.1

Aim and objectives of   
[this program]

***[Program co-ordinators should insert program aims here.]***

HANDOUT 1.2

Young people:  
where are they at?

A recent survey of young Australians identified both their values and issues of concern.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**What young people value:**

* family relationships
* friendships
* school or study satisfaction

**Who young people admire:**

* family members
* friends

**Who young people go to for advice and support:**

* friends
* parents
* relative/family friend
* 20% of respondents stated that they did not have anywhere to go for advice and support.

**Most popular community participation activities:**

* sports (as a participant)
* sports (as a spectator)
* arts/cultural activities
* other popular responses included: arts/cultural activities, volunteering and youth groups

**Issues of concern:**

* School or study problems
* Coping with stress
* Body image
* Respondents aged 20 to 24 were more likely to be concerned about coping with stress, body image and depression than the younger respondents.
* Female participants were more likely than males to be concerned about coping with stress

HANDOUT 1.3

Impact of  
youth mentoring

**On mentors**

* satisfaction through ‘making a difference’ in the life of a young person
* an opportunity to reflect on their own lives
* the chance to learn from young people.

**On the community**

* increased community connectedness through real relationships
* countering negative youth stereotypes
* developing intergenerational trust between young people and adults
* strengthening through building collaborative partnerships across organisations and groups
* building young people’s confidence, encouraging them to get more involved in their communities.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**On young people**

‘A well-planned and organised formal mentoring program can provide strong individual support, advice and guidance for the young person and help in practical ways at important transition points in their life.’[[3]](#footnote-3)

Research shows that mentoring improves young people’s learning, social and emotional outcomes. Young people involved in mentoring are likely to experience:

* improved relationships with family and peers
* better communication skills
* reduced feelings of isolation
* a reduction in risky behaviour
* enhanced social and emotional development
* increased opportunities for community participation
* increased resilience.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**First-person experiences**

*‘One of the best things about the program was seeing the transition of scared, uninformed and neglected young people into more confident, informed and enthusiastic individuals.’*

*(Beverley, mentor, 47 yo)*

*‘The best things were meeting new people, getting new ideas and being able to work towards my goals.’*

*(Jasmine, 17 yo)*



*‘I have a real sense of achievement. My young person is following the path we worked out. I met with him over the holidays and he is looking forward to next year with hope and confidence. It feels very rewarding to help a young man on his journey.’*

*(Kevin, mentor, 36 yo)*

*‘My mentor listened to me and helped me decide what I wanted to do.’*

*(James, 14 yo)*

HANDOUT 1.4

Role of the mentor

*‘Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship between a young person   
and a caring individual who offers guidance, support and encouragement.’*

*(National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks 2007)*

Mentors are kind, concerned people – young and old and from all walks of life – who offer young people support, guidance and encouragement.

Mentors provide the sustained presence of a positive, caring role-model, and while they are neither surrogate parents nor responsible for solving a young person’s problems, they are more than simply an older friend.

A mentor wants to help a young person navigate the everyday challenges of school, society and the community by drawing on his or her greater knowledge and experience, and their genuine concern for young people.

The role of the mentor is to:

* offer support, encouragement, optimism and hope 
* offer guidance, support and realistic advice as requested
* help with goal-setting, suggest possible courses of action, and support the young person in making choices
* help young people identify their strengths and promote their self-esteem
* be a sounding-board for ideas and problems
* help young people develop skills
* offer a consistent, non-judgmental relationship and encourage the young person into a range of other relationships
* engage in social and recreational activities with the young person
* help the young person deal with any sense of alienation[[5]](#footnote-5)

HANDOUT 1.5

Qualities and skills of an  
effective mentor

**An effective mentor:**

* is a good listener
* is non-judgmental
* is patient, tolerant and flexible
* is reliable and consistent
* respects others’ values, cultures and viewpoints
* likes young people and cares about their futures
* shares their own knowledge and life skills
* can develop and work towards shared goals with a young person
* respects a young person’s right to make choices
* seeks to understand a young person’s struggles
* empathises rather than sympathises
* sees solutions rather than barriers
* is committed and available for the duration of the program.
* ensures group cohesion and safety (for Group Based Mentoring)[[6]](#footnote-6)

**‘A mentor is…’ Activity cards**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A MENTOR IS A | | |
| Friend | supporter | negotiator |
| Motivator | coach | guide |
| companion | resource | advisor |
| confidant | role model |  |
|  | | |
| A MENTOR IS NOT A | | |
| rescuer | parent | foster parent |
| ATM | cool peer | taxi driver |
| babysitter | nag | psychologist |
| social worker | counsellor |  |

**MOTIVATOR**

**FRIEND**

**SUPPORTER**

**CONFIDANT**

**COMPANION**

**ROLE MODEL**

**RESOURCE**

**COACH**

**ADVISOR**

**GUIDE**

**NEGOTIATOR**

**BABYSITTER**

**ATM**

**RESCUER**

**NAG**

**COOL PEER**

**PARENT**

**FOSTER PARENT**

**SOCIAL WORKER**

**COUNSELLOR**

**PSYCHOLOGIST**

**TAXI DRIVER**

1. Mission Australia, 2011. *National Survey of Young Australians*, Sydney: Mission Australia. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *A Guide to Supporting Effective Programs for Mentoring Young People*, 2006. Office for Youth, Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hartley, R., 2004. *Young People and Mentoring: Towards a National Strategy*, Sydney: The Smith Family. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *A Guide to Supporting Effective Programs for Mentoring Young People*, 2006. Office for Youth, Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development, p.16. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Role descriptors taken from various Victorian mentor position descriptions* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *DuBois, D. and Neville, H. (1997) 'Youth mentoring: Investigation of relationship characteristics and perceived benefits' Journal of Community Psychology, 25 (3): 227-234* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)