Title: What are desirable mentor features for establishing fruitful mentor-mentee relationships?

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Number of participants: 15

Starting question:
Which features of mentors are suitable or desirable in order to establish fruitful relationships between mentor and mentee?

Sequence of content:
First the facilitators introduced themselves and then asked the participants to present their profile: are they researchers, practitioners etc.?

Then they presented the results of a qualitative study with 22 young-adults about their perspective on mentoring: some stated that they didn't like mentoring, while others supported it.

Afterwards the facilitators initiated a group work on similarities that mentor and mentees should have regarding: personality, demographic variables, life experience. A direct poll was used from participants on experiences/believes about matching.

Following that, the facilitators talked about bonding and bridging social capital and its importance when matching mentor and mentee (e.g. a mentor can be someone who inspires the mentee to look for a certain job). Then they did a brief research with the audience about experiences in their mentoring programmes on using social capital in matching.

Main findings by the facilitator:
Findings of recent qualitative studies carried out by the facilitators on at-risk youths' experiences with expectations about receiving support underlined the importance of two mentor characteristics: **1) perceived similarities and 2) additional resources of support providers.**

1) The potential role of shared life experience and perceived similarities between mentor and mentee.

2) The social capital of mentors and in what way mentors can function as bridging contacts between different networks. The facilitator stated that knowing someone from a different network increases your social capital. Also when you look for matching you need to assure that there is emotional support for the mentee.

Main points of discussion:
Should mentors and mentees be matched according to the similarities they share? E.g. mentor and mentee should both be introverted or extroverted? What type of features should be used for matching? The coordinator should reflect on the ties between mentors and mentees and the social capital. Different mentors can support mentees in different times or with different needs.

Results of the session:
We can use different features for matching but there is no single rule, many times it depends on the situation and needs of the mentee.

We need to provide some criteria for matching, but ultimately it will always depend on the goal of the mentoring programme and on the needs of the mentee.

One thing that was laughed about/ one fun fact that occurred:

No researcher was present in the session, which was highlighted by the facilitators who are researchers and want to collect practical data.