

# **Title: The Symmetry of Mentoring – Maximizing Mentee, Mentor and Guardian Engagement through Training and Special Events**

Facilitator and room number: Julie Gehring (Mother Caroline Academy and Education Centre, Boston USA); 1.103

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Number of participants: 22

## **Sequence of content and methods:**

It was designed as an interactive “train the trainer”-workshop focusing on how to prepare all parties for meaningful one-to-one mentoring relationships through collaborative discussions, role playing and group exercises. Julie prepared a manual with exercises, forms, illustrations etc.

The Workshop started with several activities to get to know each other as a group: an identification activity to answer the question where I am from?, an ice-breaker to facilitate the participant’s introduction and a warm-up to start the discussion.

In the following, Julie presented different elements of training and special events she uses in her organisation to equally prepare mentors, mentees and guardians for the mentoring relationship. Participants of the workshop could test some of the activities that are used for the training of the mentors/mentees/guardians, such as activities on identity and cultural responsiveness, on the family history and the expectations of the mentee.

Julie’s intervention is based on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.

## **Three main steps presented by the facilitator:**

### **1. Step 1: Preparation of the training – Building your cohort**

Participants of the training for mentors/mentees/guardians need to be informed about group agreements (talk slow/parking, toilets etc. /phones on silent/ safe space) at the beginning of the training.

Julie gives some general advice on how to design and facilitate the training:

- make it mandatory,
- prepare food and provide child care,
- make it low tech,
- structure the training well with equal information for mentors, mentees, and guardians.

### **2. Step 2: Identify and learn about the role of a Mentor/Mentee**

Cultural and personal identification plays a major part in where to meet and understand each other. Mentor and Mentees should be aware of each other’s expectations and roles. A set of exercises with a focus on identification and introducing the role-model approach can be used. The following activities have been presented during the workshop as an example:

- Activity on Cultural Responsiveness-Circle used by mentor/mentees before matching: List as many of the roles you identify with that make up your personal culture, set it into proportion into the circle, pass the sheet to someone else who has to cross out one of your roles, do it again and pass it to someone else and finally return, reflect your feelings (how do you feel, if someone looks at your identity etc. ).
- Imagine and illustrate what the mentee carries along in his/her backpack: recent problems, responsibilities, losses, family history e.g.
- Mentees have to be motivated and decide on their own to join, invite them for an information programme (design the programme attractive and “buy” them). Ask mentees to think and decide on their expectations, build the perfect activity for a mentor.

### **3. Step 3: How to involve parents and guardians**

Make the Role of the mentor clear. What is a mentor and what not? Not a therapist or a Parent, but: a role model, inspiration etc. The parents/guardians should encourage their kids to take part in the programme. They should communicate regularly with the mentor and also say what they (the parents/guardians) want the child to be supported in.

During the training the parents/guardians should be convinced about the added value of mentoring through storytelling: share a personal experience from/by a former guardian/parent/mentee. The story should focus on the questions: what is the mentoring about? What does the mentoring/the mentor mean to them? What are the challenges? You should talk about about jealousy, finding your role, motivation and commitment etc.

### **Results of the Workshop:**

Mentoring is a triangle relationship in order to keep it running you have to:

1. Prepare, train and maintain mentors, mentees and guardians equally.
2. Make all of them aware about each other's position, role boundaries; make the mentors aware that they are not only working with a child but also with the parents. Let all agree and sign an agreement contract.
3. Establish a framework for good and effective communication in the triangle relationship.

Furthermore, the coordinator should facilitate an individual goal setting process by mentee and mentor during the first month of the relationship. It is substantial for the result and the quality of the mentoring programme to identify common goals and aims to be reached during the mentoring. These goals and aims should be evaluated by midterm and at the end of the programme.

### **References, links and further remarks:**

Julie encouraged participants to contact her in order to discuss the development their organisations:

- [www.worldwidementoring.com](http://www.worldwidementoring.com)
- [Juliegehring@hotmail.com](mailto:Juliegehring@hotmail.com)

The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring: <http://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>