**Speed Mentoring**

One modern approach to matchmaking is the concept of “speed-dating.” Because the activity is designed as a group endeavor, it lessens the pressure upon the individuals to perform and reduces some of the competition inherent in the dating scene. The basic concept is two concentric circles, with one party remaining static and the other party moving from person to person in a scheduled amount of time; they move on to the next person by some predetermined sign (a bell, buzzer, handclap, etc.). This method ensures that each person has an equitable amount of time for substantive conversation with every participant without the embarrassment or awkwardness of having to introduce oneself (there are name tags), make an approach, interrupt a conversation, etc.

At the American Inns of Court, we have adapted this construct to facilitate mentoring with a large group of people. The same ideas would apply: those in the “mentee” role would rotate through a set group of “mentors” with a set amount of time engaged with each party. By ensuring that each mentee has equal access to each mentor, you eliminate trouble spots such as intimidation or monopolized conversations and multiply the benefit of talking to a diverse group of individuals.

*This program is designed to be the second part of a two-part endeavor, with mentor training happening first. However, if you have well-established mentors in your Inn who can consistently offer a high-level of advice and guidance, you could comfortably skip to this program. We’ve provided a suggested program format, along with ideas on how to customize the training.*

**Logistics:**

* Two-hour program
* Participating mentors should have had some kind of training or orientation
* Can do as a one-on-one pairing or as a group activity – if using groups:
  + Make sure there’s a mixture of mentors at each table:
    - Experience levels
    - Career stages
    - Firm size
    - Defense and prosecution
* Customize the program to your main audience
  + Professors can help with mentoring law students
  + Enlist newer associates in your Inn
  + Bring in specific information regarding your state’s rules and codes
  + Have themes for each table to help the participants know where they want to spend their time
* Make sure there are enough tables and mentors to go around
* Take ~15 minutes at the start of the program to talk about roles and responsibilities of both parties, how to accept feedback, what they can expect in terms of support from your Inn, etc. Orient your mentees just as you’ve oriented your mentors. [Check out some of our resources in the Library.]
* Use a bell to indicate when it’s time to change tables
* Keep the “daters” in smaller groups, 4 or 5, and have enough tables accordingly (you may not need 10 as indicated below)
* Incorporate elements of socializing, providing complimentary hors d’oeuvres and a glass of wine as they make their way around the room

**Marketing description:**

*Finally…chances to ask all those questions that have been swimming around in your head! This valuable opportunity enables you to meet and spend time with attorneys practicing in areas that may interest you – you can ask questions, make connections, explore career paths you might not have considered before, and have some food and fun at the same time!*

*Using a format similar to speed dating events, attorneys will be assigned tables by certain mentoring topics and groups of law students and newer attorneys will rotate between the tables at the sound of a bell.  Participating attorneys will field questions on mentoring topics ranging from specific practice areas, ethical dilemmas, effective networking, and negotiating work/life obligations & opportunities. This program is the perfect opportunity to promote professionalism, ethical conduct, and excellence in the practice of law.*

**Schedule/Timing:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Registration and networking | 30 minutes |
| * Greetings and introductions | 5 minutes |
| * Mentoring moment | 5 minutes |
| * Table stop 1 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 2 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 3 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 4 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 5 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 6 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 7 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 8 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 9 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Table stop 10 | 10 minutes (8 minutes of talk, 2 minutes of moving) |
| * Mentoring moment | 5 minutes |
| * Thank you and housekeeping | 5 minutes |

**Program Follow-Up:**

* Send or provide a program evaluation form [template]

*If you have questions about how to make this program work for your Inn, please contact us at* [*mentoring@innsofcourt.org*](mailto:mentoring@innsofcourt.org)*.*