Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0149-7189(17)30021-6
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.05.009
Reference: EPP 1448

To appear in:

Received date: 27-1-2017
Revised date: 23-3-2017
Accepted date: 6-5-2017

Please cite this article as: Jay Miller, J., Benner, Kalea., Thrasher, Shawndaya., Pope, Natalie., Dumas, Tamikia., Damron, Larry J., Segress, Melissa., & Niu, Chunling., Planning A Mentorship Initiative for Foster Parents: Does Gender Matter?.*Evaluation and Program Planning* http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.05.009

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Planning A Mentorship Initiative for Foster Parents: Does Gender Matter?

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Planning A Mentorship Initiative for Foster Parents: Does Gender Matter?

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Article Highlights

- Planning models for mentorship programs are few, particularly in the area of foster parenting.
- Existing literature suggest gender differences in the way individuals conceptualize and experience mentor programs.
- This study utilized multi-dimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis with fpster parents to conceptualize planning an effective mentor program.
- Results yielded s seven-cluster planning framework; no significant gender differences were detected in priority ratings for the conceptualization.

Abstract

Despite the use of mentoring programs in fields such as business, career training, and youth development, little is known about how mentoring can be used to train and support new foster parents. This paper describes how Concept Mapping was used with current foster parents to develop a conceptual framework suitable to plan a foster parent mentor program. A secondary aim of this study was to explore priority differences in the conceptualization by self-reported gender (foster mothers vs. foster fathers). Participant data was collected via three qualitative brainstorming sessions, and analyzed using non-metric multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis. Findings indicate that foster parents participating in this study conceptualized effective mentor programs via a seven cluster solution. Study results also showed no significant differences in cluster ratings by gender. Implications for practice and program planning are identified, as well as areas for future research.

KeyWords: *Child Welfare; ; ; ; , Foster Parents, Mentor Programs, Gender, Planning*

Introduction

Foster parents are tasked with caring for society's most vulnerable children. In order to support foster parents in this endeavor, public (e.g., local and state governments) and private (e.g., private child welfare service providers) entities are looking for ways to support foster parents charged with caring for maltreated young people. One way this support has manifested

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