TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 8-12 ▲ ROLE MODELS

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Definition of a role model
* Identifying positive role models
* Articulate the importance of role models, especially those that exemplify positive characteristics

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Chart paper and markers**

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Give students a few minutes to talk with a partner or a small group about who are their role models.** Encourage students to think about and talk about the characteristics that make someone a positive role model. Talk with students about who were your role models. Share how they influenced your life and your desire for education beyond high school.
2. **As a whole group, make a list of the people students identified as role models using two columns to group the examples,** one column for positive role models and one for negative role models.
3. **Ask students in their groups to discuss the two lists** and decide what the people have in common that makes them a positive or negative role model.
4. **As a whole group, chart the common characteristics in each category.** Lead a whole class discussion and be prepared to use their information as you make sure that students understand that:

* Role models are powerful tools for finding our own success in life.
* Role models can be defined differently for each person.
* Role models can be defined as a person that has survived situations you are struggling with.
* They can also be chosen because of their overall view of life and its significance.
* Sometimes role models are identified because of a shared interest.
* Finding someone with a strong character and positive values to share can create a bond that can truly impact your life. Discovering someone with these types of qualities can have a huge effect on your outlook and your actions.

1. **Share that you want students to begin to think about those role models from their own culture, their own community, and their own family.** Ask them to reflect on or identify one person and if there is time to share what makes this person a role model.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **None**

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

* **SUPPLEMENTAL FACILIATATOR NOTES**

This lesson is one of three lessons across multiple grade levels that deal with role models. It helps teens define what makes someone a role model and to identify the characteristics of a positive role model. The lesson in grade 9 (9-13 Role Models from My Culture) shifts to a focus on first generation students that have made it to college and can be role models. The final lesson in grade 12 (12-11 Seeking Out Role Models and Mentors) encourages students to look for role models in their community, identifying people that can act as mentors as they make the transition to higher education.

As you prepare for this lesson consider that a role model helps the teen establish a sense of identity and purpose. Role models provide examples of qualities students hope to emulate and demonstrate the steps required to reach those qualities. For instance, a fictitious role model may show courage in the face of danger, while a successful businesswoman may demonstrate how to thrive in a competitive environment. Teens can incorporate those qualities into their own sense of self, providing them with improved confidence and viable goals to reach for.

With a positive role model, a teenager learns ways of behaving that allow him or her to make productive choices more easily. For example, she can practice hard to make the varsity squad in order to emulate a famous athlete or stand firmly by his political beliefs the way role models like Gandhi or Martin Luther King did. Poor role models emphasize selfish or negative qualities--a rock star with an inflated sense of entitlement, for instance--which can hurt the teen’s ability to function in the world.