



Creating a Quality Community-Based Mentoring Program

Key Steps to
Develop a Program
and Related Tools

Alberta 

Introduction



Table of Contents

| | | | |
|---|----|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 | Step 8 Recruitment Strategies..... | 23 |
| Step 1 Identifying Program Population: | | Step 9 Screening Mentors and Mentees..... | 25 |
| Who Do You Want To Serve?..... | 2 | Application/Screening Process Overview..... | 26 |
| One-to-One Mentoring..... | 3 | School Referral Form..... | 27 |
| Online Mentoring..... | 6 | Consent Form..... | 28 |
| Cross Age Peer Mentoring..... | 8 | Step 10 Training Mentors & Mentees..... | 30 |
| Team or Group Mentoring..... | 10 | Step 11 Screening Mentors and Mentees..... | 31 |
| Step 2 Strengths and Needs Assessment: | | Goal Setting Guidelines..... | 32 |
| Does Your Community Need This Program?..... | 13 | Ideas for Mentoring Relationship Goals..... | 33 |
| Step 3 Identifying Program Partners..... | 14 | Step 12 Match Supervision & Monitoring..... | 34 |
| Step 4 Defining your Program..... | 15 | Program Supervision Guidelines..... | 34 |
| Mentoring Program Outline..... | 20 | Types of Supervision..... | 36 |
| Step 5 Creating a Budget..... | 20 | Effective Termination of a Match..... | 37 |
| Step 6 Insurance..... | 21 | Step 13 Evaluation..... | 38 |
| Step 7 Staffing..... | 22 | Create Logic Model..... | 39 |
| | | Build a Data Collection Framework..... | 41 |

Quality mentoring is mentoring that produces significant, lasting, positive outcomes for mentees. It is responsible, ethical, effective mentoring. Mentoring programs come in all shapes and sizes, but some key components help to ensure excellence and that the needs of the mentee, volunteer mentor, organization and community are fulfilled.

This document contains steps to support the development and implementation of a community-based mentoring program. These steps are primarily generic and are intended to support a range of different kinds of programs. Each of the steps has specific resources attached to help you move forward in your program design and implementation.

If you are working with a unique or diverse community, please supplement these steps with the tools and resources included under the Customized Tools tab on the AMP Website. These additional tools have been developed to support mentoring programs with youth who are in care, and immigrant, refugee, Indigenous communities.

This document and associated tools have been developed with the kind and generous support of BBBS-Calgary, BBBS-Edmonton, BBBS-Innisfail, the AMP Mentor Resource Centre, Full Circle Mentoring Program in Wood Buffalo, and Resiliency Initiatives. The tools reflect the combined expertise of mentoring programs across Alberta, Canada and the United States. Where appropriate, a primary citation is contained within the tool. In other cases, the tool is an adaptation/combination of resources currently used in mentoring programs in Alberta and across North America.

Much of the information presented in is taken from *Building Blocks of Quality Mentoring Programs*, prepared by Mentoring Canada. A complete version of this guide can be found on the AMP website at mentoringcanada.ca. Additional information, tools and resources have been adapted from mentoring.org

STEP 1

IDENTIFYING PROGRAM POPULATION: Who Do You Want To Serve?



Quality
Mentoring Can
Take Many Forms

Traditional Mentoring

One adult to one
young person

Group Mentoring

Several adults working
with small groups of
young people

Peer Mentoring

Caring youth mentoring
other youth

Combination

A combination of each

Deciding what type of mentoring program is best for your children and youth depends on the kinds of young people you intend to serve.

Research has shown that Indigenous youth and their families are often more comfortable in a group setting. In some cases, kids from immigrant communities may also benefit from a group setting that eventually leads to one-to-one matches. It is essential to spend some time thinking about who you are trying to serve, considering what resources you have available and then exploring some of the different types of mentoring that might work best to meet your needs. Use the included resources to begin to think about what mentoring model or combination of models might work best for you.

Expert Tips

Many aspects of the design and planning process of various mentoring programs are similar. Other aspects are unique to a certain type of mentoring. Refer to these tips as you plan and design your program to help you think through the unique aspects of your program and decide what type of mentoring is best for your program.

TYPES OF Mentoring Programs

One-to-One Mentoring

One adult matched to one young person.

Where Mentoring Takes Place

Site-based

At a community agency, typically an after-school program, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA, etc.

Community-based

The mentor and mentee can meet anywhere, including attending events, going to museums, etc. This is typical of the Big Brothers Big Sisters model.

Faith-based

Mentoring pairs usually meet in a house of worship or adjoining building.

Online

E-mentoring—also known as online mentoring, telementoring, or teletutoring—is a mentoring relationship that is conducted via the Internet.

School-based

At the mentee's elementary, middle or high school on school grounds. Mentors and mentees should have a designated meeting place within the building and if available, use of school facilities (open classroom, computer lab, gym, art room, library).

Workplace-based

At the mentor's workplace. Students are typically bussed to the site. Either the school district or the company may pay the transit fee. Mentors and mentees should have a designated workplace meeting area.

Selection of Mentees

Mentoring program, school or agency personnel determine criteria for selecting youth to participate in the program.

Criteria should be aligned with the goals of the program. For example, if a goal is to improve academics, selected young people would have difficulties in reading or other academic areas. If it is to address issues of marginalization, participants should be selected based on the benefits they would receive from program supports. Such as young people living in poverty or belonging to a visible minority group.

Referrals for youth participation should be solicited from educators, youth workers, social workers, parents or guardians, etc.

Recruitment of Mentors

Promote the program through networks in the community or via a marketing campaign, posters, community presentations, online networks, etc. A recruitment session can be held to provide more information. Application forms and a training schedule are available at this session.

If working with a specific population of youth, ensure representatives from the community are involved in the process. Efforts should be made to recruit mentors from within the community.

Parent/Guardian permission is required for participation in the program.

Mentor Screening

All mentors must undergo a comprehensive screening process. The screening should include completion of an application, personal interview, personal and professional reference checks and criminal background checks. Other checks, such as child abuse and sexual offender registries and motor vehicle records, may also be used.

Mentor Training and Support

All mentors must complete training to prepare them to work with their mentees. Ongoing training of mentors should be provided throughout the year to assist mentors with issues and concerns that may come up throughout their relationship.

Supervision should occur at least monthly, and support sessions should be offered every 8–10 weeks.

Overview of Program Processes

Program processes include screening, training & ongoing support.

The application, screening and matching are extensive and comprehensive.

Training is essential.

Matching, support and supervision are essential.

Mentor Commitment

At a minimum, mentors and mentees should meet regularly at least four hours per month for at least a year. There are exceptions, such as school-based mentoring, which coincide with the school year and other types of special mentoring initiatives. In such special circumstances, mentees need to know from the outset how long they can expect the relationship to last so they can adjust their expectations accordingly.

The program should include an intentional closure ritual or process. See **Guidelines for Terminating A Relationship**.

In school programs, the mentor commits to one school year (ideally October through May). Mentors should be asked at the end of the school year if they would like to continue mentoring during the next school year. Continuity from year to year is desirable wherever possible.

Nature Of Relationship

Focus can be social, career, employability skills, culture or academic. A relationship should be purposeful with goals and activities mutually established.

Meeting Times

School-based, Site-based: Mentors meet with mentees for one hour per week throughout the school year. Time may be set by the school, organization or could be variable.

Workplace-based: Because of bussing and other logistics, mentees will usually come all at once at a specific day and time each week. The actual mentoring period is 45 minutes to an hour.

Activities

Activities vary. Pairs do everyday things and spend time together. Choosing appropriate activities will depend mainly on the goal of your program.

It is important to support matches to jointly set goals for the relationship regardless of the type of mentoring program. See **Goal Setting Guidelines**.

Elementary Age Children: Mentoring typically focuses on activities that promote character development, self-esteem, social skills, and life skills. Academics or reading and math ability may also be included.

Middle/Junior School-Aged: Mentoring activities continue to promote character development, social skills, life skills, self-esteem, leadership, and academics. Activities now introduce career development.

High School: Mentoring activities continue to focus on character development, social skills, life skills, self-esteem, leadership, and academics. Emphasis is now on school-to-career preparation.

Activity books for mentors at all age/grade levels are available on the [AMP website](#).

Staffing

Each program should have an assigned coordinator who conducts mentor recruitment, screening and training. They provided ongoing support and supervision to mentors and mentees.

For workplace mentoring, each participating school or business should have a coordinator to serve as the liaison between the school or agency and the mentor from the business. They also conducts the program evaluation and supports and recognizes mentors.

One-to-One Mentoring is **site and community based**



Expert Tips

ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING

One-to-one mentoring is when a young person - *the mentee* - is matched with an adult - *the mentor*. This pair is provided with support that allows them to form a relationship of trust and shared goals. Research has shown that purposeful, long term one-to-one relationships contribute to positive outcomes for the child or youth involved.

Consider the young person's needs and screen mentees, as well as mentors. Sometimes, the tendency is to put the most challenging youngsters into a traditional one-to-one mentoring program. However, some of those young people can't handle an intense relationship with an adult and simply are not ready for traditional mentoring. In these cases, you will want to consider a group or peer mentoring model.

Arrange for mandatory mentor training six to eight weeks into the mentoring relationship. Plan to hold regular meetings with mentors; offer additional, more in-depth training about youth development issues; and guide mentors to other resources, such as [Mentoring.org](https://www.mentoring.org).

Provide ongoing supervision of the match. Supplementing existing screening of mentors serves as an additional mechanism to mitigate risk in your program. Processes for ongoing monitoring and supervision enhance oversight of mentors and mentees. Tools to support this monitoring are available on the [AMP website](#).

Ensure that your mentor screening is complete, rigorous, intense and documented. Make sure all potential mentors understand, at the outset, that they will undergo intensive screening.

Clearly define and reinforce ground rules. Because one-to-one relationships are intense, you need to ensure that all participants, including mentors, mentees, and parents, understand boundaries in terms of what is allowed and what is not. Things such as spending extra time together or giving gifts are both examples of areas which should be discussed.

Set aside a certain amount of your budget for unexpected materials and activities. As your program gets under way, you can observe the types of activities your mentoring pairs enjoy most (painting, for example) and use the set-aside funds to buy appropriate materials.

Adapted from mentoring program interviews conducted by MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership and discussions with AMP partners and staff.



TYPES OF Mentoring Programs

Online Mentoring

Mentoring is conducted through the Internet when transportation is an issue or when online contact is the preferred means of communication.

Where Mentoring Takes Place

The mentoring relationship is conducted via the Internet, as an independent program or added component of existing programs.

E-mail or Web-based programs need to have technology in place that provides a safe and secure environment for communication exchanges, archives all messages, and enables the tracking of communications between mentoring pairs.

Parent/Guardian permission is required for participation in the program.

Selection of Mentees

The selection process is the same as that for **One-to-One** mentees.

In addition, young people will need access to a computer that has access to the Internet.

The age and literacy level of the young people will need to be considered, as their mentoring relationship will develop through written communication. It is recommended that students take part in an interview to determine their suitability for e-mentoring.

Recruitment of Mentors

The recruitment process is the same as the **One-to-One** program.

In addition, e-mentoring programs can develop an e-mail or intranet-based recruitment package for prospective mentors. Such a package should include a brief overview of the program, a mentor job description, an application, and a statement of confidentiality. If working with a specific population of children and youth, ensure representatives from the community are involved in the process. Efforts should be made to recruit mentors from the community.

Mentor Screening

All mentors must undergo a comprehensive screening process. The screening should include completion of an application, personal interview, personal and professional reference checks, and criminal background checks. Other checks, such as child abuse and sexual offender registries, and motor vehicle records may also be used.

Mentor Training and Support

The training and support processes are the same as the **One-to-One** program

Online training can be used in conjunction with the face-to-face training. The training should also focus on the program goals and the activities or projects mentors will complete online with mentees.

Overview of Program Processes

The application, screening, and matching process are extensive and comprehensive.

Training is essential. Programs need to assess their technical readiness to implement e-mentoring.

Program processes include screening, training & ongoing support.

Mentor Commitment

A commitment of at least six months to a year with regular communication at least once a week.

Nature of Relationship

The relationship varies. Mentors offer support and advice with school or career-related issues and develop a supportive nurturing relationship with the young person.

Meeting Times

Many programs set a minimum of at least once a week for communication. Mentoring pairs can communicate more if they wish.

Activities

Activities are specified by the program content. Programs may be structured around a project or curriculum. The mentor and young person can also determine the topics they want to discuss.

This is based online and an adjunct to existing face-to-face program

Some programs incorporate a face-to-face component to include two to three meetings, including a kick-off event.

It is important to set joint goals for the relationship, regardless of the type of mentoring program. See **Goal Setting Guidelines**.

Staffing

Staffing is the same as the **One-to-One** program. This person is responsible for monitoring the e-mail activity, providing ongoing support, and coordinating the mentor-mentee get-togethers if applicable.

Expert Tips ONLINE MENTORING

Be realistic about what you can achieve. Since there is no face-to-face component to e-mentoring, many relationships are not as intense as those formed from one-to-one mentoring. Consequently, set goals that seem achievable, such as making sure e-mentoring pairs connect on a regular basis to share ideas, talk about topics of importance to the mentees, and seek guidance.

Make sure your e-mentoring program is all technology based. Automate everything from the application to the matching process. Develop a database that works with your e-mentoring software.

Make sure you have resources, initially and later on, for Web and technology development. You will need a lot of program oversight, human resources and time to make your e-mentoring program work.

Establish a policy for how often mentors and mentees connect with each other via e-mail. To build a strong bond, mentor pairs should e-mail each other once a week.

Consider serving middle or high school students. E-mentoring works better with older kids because they can concentrate better and are more apt to keep a relationship going.

Be sure to do all of the same screening of e-mentors that you would do with face-to-face mentors.

Recruit mentors who are technologically savvy and like to work with computers. Such people will be more likely to go the distance.

Offer structured activities that encourage mentees to open up and write more. Because most e-mentors and e-mentees meet through e-mail, they may find it hard to open up, especially when writing is not a young person's strong suit.

TYPES OF Mentoring Programs

Cross Age Peer Mentoring

Peer or youth who are older (typically 3 years or school grade higher), more knowledgeable or have advanced skills, serve as mentors to younger peers.



Where Mentoring Takes Place

School-based

Takes place with the mentee on school grounds in full view of school officials. Mentors and mentees should have a designated meeting place within the building, and if available within the school's facilities (open classroom, computer lab, gym, art room, library).

Site-based

At a community agency, typically an after-school program, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA, etc.

Selection of Mentees

Mentoring program, school or agency personnel determine criteria for selecting youth to participate in the program.

Criteria should be aligned with goals of the program (e.g., if a goal is to improve academics, selected young people would have reading or other academic difficulties; if it is to address issues of marginalization, participants who would benefit from the program supports should be selected. Young people living in poverty or belonging to a visible minority group are both instances of this.

Referrals for youth participation should be solicited from educators, youth workers, social workers, parents/guardians, etc.

Parent/Guardian permission is required for participation in the program.

Recruitment of Mentors

Promote the program through networks in the community or via a marketing campaign, posters, community presentations, or online. A recruitment session can be held to provide more information. Application forms and a training schedule can be made available at this session. If working with a specific population of children and youth, ensure representatives from the community are involved in the process. Efforts should be made to recruit mentors from the community.

Mentor Screening

Screening for youth mentors includes an interview, character reference checks, and permission from the parent or guardian and a teacher or school administrator.

Mentor Training and Support

Same as One-to-One, but adapted to meet the needs of young mentors. Training should include emphasis on leadership, strength-based engagement, and communication. Peer/Teen Mentors may also receive specialized training to assist them in meeting program goals (e.g., training on teaching literacy or managing issues of self-esteem or racism).

Overview of Program Processes

Program processes include screening, training & ongoing support.

The application, screening, and matching are extensive and comprehensive.

Training is essential.

Matching, support, and supervision are essential.

Mentor Commitment

Varies. Mentor commitment can be short term or long term (e.g., semester or year-long program).

Mentees need to know from the outset how long they can expect the relationship to last.

Programs should include an intentional closure ritual or process. See Guidelines for Terminating A Relationship. See **Guidelines for Terminating A Relationship**.

Nature of Relationship

Mentors often work on skill-building activities with you on-site. Youth mentors are viewed as positive peer role models.

Meeting Times

Mentors and mentees meet at a set time each week.

Activities

Activities are specified by the program content and are sometimes curriculum-based.

Group activities work well under this format to build a sense of community and supervision for mentoring relationships.

It is important to set joint goals for the relationship, regardless of the type of mentoring program. See **Goal Setting Guidelines**.

Staffing

Each program should have an assigned coordinator who conducts mentor recruitment, screening, and training. They provide ongoing support and supervision to mentors and mentees.

Each participating school should have a coordinator to liaise with the program, and both support and recognize mentors.

One-to-One Mentoring is **site and community** based

Expert Tips PEER MENTORING

Work with partners to develop or adapt training for peer/teen mentors. The way you train young people to be mentors—as well as what topics you cover—will differ from the way you train adults. Leadership and communication skills are most important in peer/teen mentoring relationships.

Get parents' consent to take part in the program. Make sure the mentee's parents' consent to let their child be mentored by a peer. Also, ensure the parents of the peer mentor to consent to let their son or daughter mentor another young person.

Provide structure and support so that mentoring pairs do not lose focus. Adolescents are more compliant than adults in attending trainings and in taking part and cooperating, so take advantage of every opportunity to provide supervision and training.

Try to recruit younger high school students (grade 10) as mentors. While you don't want to turn down a good mentor of any high school grade, concentrating on recruiting younger high school students helps to encourage longer-term relationships.

TYPES OF Mentoring Programs



Team or Group Mentoring

A small group of adults mentoring a slightly larger group of youth. For example, 3 adults mentoring 10 children or youths.

Where Mentoring Takes Place

Site-based

At a community agency, typically an after-school program, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA, etc.

School-based

At the mentees' school (elementary, middle, high school), on school grounds. Mentor and mentees should have a designated meeting place within the building and/or use of school facilities.

Community-based

The mentor and mentees can meet anywhere, attend events, go to museums, etc.

Faith-based

Mentoring groups usually meet in a house of worship or adjoining building.

Online

E-mentoring—also known as online mentoring, telementoring, or teletutoring—is a mentoring relationship that is conducted via the Internet.

Workplace-based

At the mentors' workplace. Students are typically bussed to the site. Either the school district or the company may pay for the bus. Mentors and mentees should have a designated meeting place at the workplace.

Selection of Mentees

Mentoring program, school or agency personnel determine criteria for selecting youth to participate in the program.

Criteria should be aligned with goals of the program (e.g., if a goal is to improve academics, selected young people would have reading or other academic difficulties; if it is to address issues of marginalization participants should be selected who would benefit from the program supports. For example, young people living in poverty or belonging to a visible minority group).

Referrals for youth participation should be solicited from educators, youth workers, social workers, parents/guardians, etc.

Parent/Guardian permission is required for participation in the program.

Recruitment of Mentors

Promote the program through networks in the community or via a marketing campaign, posters, community presentations, intranet, etc. A recruitment session can be held to provide more information. Application forms and a training schedule are available at this session.

If working with a specific population of children and youth ensure representatives from the community are involved in the process. Efforts should be made to recruit mentors from the community.



Mentor Screening

All mentors must undergo a comprehensive screening process. The screening should include completion of an application, personal interview, personal and professional reference checks, and criminal background checks. Other checks, such as of child abuse and sexual offender registries and motor vehicle records may also be used.

Mentor Training and Support

The training and support process is the same as the One-to-One program.

Group mentors may receive additional training related to working with young people in a group and specific program related content (culture, academics, career, self esteem, etc.).

Overview of Program Processes

Program processes include screening, training & ongoing support.

The application, screening, and matching are extensive and comprehensive.

Training is essential.

Depending on the goal of the program, a skilled coordinator who provides support to the group may be important.

Mentor Commitment

Mentor makes a long-term commitment to meet regularly with the group as a leader or co-leader.

If this is a school-based program, the relationship may follow the school year with renewal each September. The program should include an intentional closure ritual or process. See **Guidelines for Terminating A Relationship** and consider a closing ceremony or celebration at the end of the group program or school year.

Nature of Relationship

Most of the interaction is guided by the session structure, which includes time for personal sharing and group activities. Program content may be very specific to the needs of the group (ie., Aboriginal or immigrant youth)

Meeting Times

Mentor and mentees meet at a set time each week.

Activities

Specific activities may or may not be outlined by the program.

Group activities work well under this format to build a sense of community and to supervise mentoring relationships.

Group mentoring tends to be more formal and often involves predetermined activities in which the group participates.

These activities often have a specific focus such as community service, career development, or cultural awareness.

It is important to jointly set goals for the relationship, regardless of the type of mentoring program. See **Goal Setting Guidelines**.

Staffing

Each program should have an assigned coordinator who conducts mentor recruitment, screening, and training. He or she provides ongoing support and supervision to the mentors and mentees. Resource people from the community may be a valuable addition to group mentoring programs, particularly when working with marginalized or underserved populations.

One-to-One Mentoring is **site and community based**



Expert Tips

GROUP MENTORING

With group mentoring, the adult(s) act as a guide or role model for an entire group of mentees. For example, Coyote Kids, is a group mentoring program for elementary school aged children in Edmonton. In this program, there is a program coordinator who is a mentor and who works with 1 or 2 other mentors to provide support to children in a weekly group session that is

held at the participating schools. Group mentoring is a good choice when a program does not have extensive recruitment, screening, and monitoring capacity. It may also be a good choice when working with Indigenous or immigrant children and youth where parents may not be comfortable with one-to-one mentoring.

Work with the school, youth-serving agency or community organization where the mentoring takes place to establish your program goals.

With group mentoring, the goals may be socialization, academic support, cultural teachings, building self-esteem, goal setting, and bonding with peers.

Take special care in designing a termination policy.

In group mentoring, if a mentor or young person decides to leave the relationship, that decision will affect everyone else in the group.

Offer additional mentor training to help adults understand group dynamics.

Examples of training topics include team building and leadership skills.

Develop program content that meets the needs of the particular group.

For Indigenous youth, this may mean including cultural elements as part of the group activities. For immigrant youth, this may mean talking about assimilation, racism, and pluralism in the group. There are often many “teachable moments” in these settings, and you will need a skilled coordinator to capitalize on these learning opportunities.

Involve only participants who can benefit from this type of mentoring.

Recruit mentors who can handle the dynamics of working with groups of young people and young people who can benefit from a group setting. In AMP’s experience, group mentoring has been an effective way to work with Indigenous and immigrant communities. The group setting is not as intimidating. It enables children, youth, and parents to grow their understanding of mentoring in a collective environment.

Have patience in achieving goals.

In group mentoring, it takes time for all members of the group to get to know one another and gain a level of trust. A group will move slower, so goals are likely to take more time to achieve.

Consider creating peer mentoring relationships within a group setting.

You may want to establish internal groups or peer mentoring relationships within a group mentoring program. Meaning, grouping youth together or creating pairs who work within the larger group. It can be an effective model if a group cuts across a wide age range, allowing you to pair older participants with younger ones providing leadership opportunities for the older youth, and socialization and bonding opportunities for the younger participants. See the guidelines about peer/teen mentoring set out below if you are considering this model in your group program.

STEP 2

STRENGTHS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

Does Your Community Need This Program?

Connecting with the Community

Connect with the community and other agencies to assess strengths and the need for a mentoring program.

Many communities would benefit from a mentoring program, but it is important to be clear about the nature and extent of the need. In larger communities, a full-blown strengths and needs assessment may be required. Otherwise, consider bringing community partners together to explore the following assessment questions. The answers to these questions will help you begin to design your program.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| What formal and informal mentoring resources does the community currently have? | How would the community benefit from a mentoring program? | Is there really a need for this program? To what extent? How do we know? |
| Who are the targeted mentees? How many are there? How old are they? | Who do we need to work with to recruit and maintain these potential mentees? | Who else is working with these youth? How can we work with them? <i>(More on this important point in Step 3)</i> |

STEP 3

Identifying Program Partners

Community Collaboration

Collaboration is important in any setting, but is essential for program success in a small community.

One of the main challenges for groups and organizations trying to establish mentoring programs in smaller and rural communities is limited access to human and financial resources.

If you find that no one is actively implementing a mentoring project, work to bring people from the following organizations together to talk about the possibilities.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Ask questions among friends and colleagues about who is providing and supporting formal and informal mentoring in the community | | Check with AMP about known resources in or near the community, and any additional materials that may be useful to your program. | |
| Check with your local schools | Check with the local Child and Family Services office | Check with the YMCA or YWCA | Check with churches, mosques, and synagogues in your community |

STEP 4

Defining Your Program

What does your program look like?

You will need to create a working or an advisory group comprised of interested parties who come together to design the program collaboratively. It is through this exercise that you come to an agreement about what it is you are trying to achieve and the principles that will guide your program. Right click the link to the left for some guidelines to develop a high level outline of your program.

Mentoring Program Outline: Key Components

Purpose and Objectives of the Program

This section should be written by a working group and should explain the purpose of the mentoring program. What is the program trying to accomplish? Academic, cultural, social or emotional growth, life skills, or career planning with the participants?

Overview of the program

This is the area where you give an overview of the program. Ideas include:

- Description of the children and youth you want to serve.
- Description of the type of program (one-to-one, group, peer, community-based or in-school mentoring. Revisit the tips from experts document reviewed in Step 1)
- Site for the program – where will it take place?
- Community involvement
 - is the community involved in the program? If yes, how?
- A list of partners

Benefits

Describe the benefits that you hope participants will experience as a result of their participation in the program (improved self-esteem, greater cultural awareness, increased capacity to be successful in the community, better attendance at school, higher grades, etc.)

Program Description

Provide more specific information about the program. This section will help your agency or the partners to clearly articulate what the program actually looks like. Ideas include:

- Number and composition of matches
- Referral process. How will mentors and mentees sign up for the program? Who is responsible for this?
- How often will the matches/group meet?
- What will they do when they meet?
 - Describe program activities
- Who oversees the program?
- How long will the program last?
- How long will the matches last?
- How are families involved in the program?
- What outside resources will be required to deliver the program?

Contact Information

- Who is the program's key contact person

Use the following template to work with your partners to define your program. This high level outline will help you with all of the remaining steps – preparing a program budget, deciding on staff and developing job descriptions, recruitment of mentors and mentees, and engaging the community.

Mentoring Program Outline

Purpose

Describe what the program is intended to accomplish (academic, cultural, social/emotional growth among participants):

Youth

What is the youth population that the program will serve? (How old are they, what are their unique strengths and needs):

Type

Is this a one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring program or a combination? Does the program have any special features?

Site

Where will the program take place?

Partners

What other groups or agencies will be involved in the program?

List all active and supporting partners:

Mentors

Do program mentors need any special skills or characteristics?

What are potential sources of mentors for the program?

Program

How often will the matches/group meet? _____

Are there special activities they will engage in? Describe these: _____

Staff

Does the program have a coordinator? _____

Describe his/her role and responsibilities?
(Recruitment, screening, training, monitoring, support, coordination of activities, etc.) _____

Timeframe

Is there a set timeframe for the matches/group? _____

When does the program begin and end? _____

Community Involvement

Are families involved in the program? How? _____

Are other community members involved in the program? Who? How? _____

Benefits

How will mentees benefit from the program? _____

How will mentees benefit from the program? _____

How will mentors benefit from the program? _____

How will the community benefit from the program? _____

Contact Person

Name the key contact person for the program. Include name, email and telephone number.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Creating a Budget

What will it cost to run your program?

Developing a program budget with your partners is the next step in the process. It is important to create a “real” budget – that is, a budget that reflects the real costs of your program rather than one that fits with a particular amount of funding that is available. It is also important to estimate the cost of in-kind contributions from partners as reflecting these may be important to some funding agencies.

As you continue to refine your program design you will need to amend this document. If you are planning on creating some sort of steering or advisory committee for your program (see Tools for Collaboration) it will be important to try to include a committee member who has some financial management/accounting capacity to support budgeting and accountability.

Overview of Budget Items for a Mentoring Program

There is a list of typical items that a community-based mentoring program will need to budget. All programs are different and you will need to add, and perhaps take away from, this list to create your program budget.

Staff Salaries and Benefits

- **Mentoring program coordinator:** May be a part time position depending on the size of your program.
- **Supervision support to the coordinator:** Even if this is an in-kind contribution for a new program, this can be significant in the first year.
- **Administration:** Managing files, organizing committee meetings, liaising with community (again, this may be in-kind support but it is important to put a financial value to it)
- **Staff mileage**

Operating Expenses


- **Marketing and recruitment materials**
- **Screening fees:** Criminal background check, child welfare check.
- **Training materials:** Food, books, possibly a space to rent.
- **Office supplies**
- **Liability insurance:** More on this in Step 6. In some cases, a mentoring program is an adjunct program within an organization that holds appropriate liability insurance to cover the mentoring program.
- **Volunteer travel:** Program will need to decide if they are going to compensate volunteers for their travel or if this is part of the volunteer commitment.

Program Activities

- **Food (snacks and drinks):** Particularly important for group or peer mentoring programs
- **Activity supplies:** Important for group or peer mentoring (may include such things as games, craft supplies, sporting equipment and, in some cases, cultural materials)
- **Transportation for mentees:** If you are trying to serve children and youth who are not well-served by conventional programs, this is essential. Children who live on reserves or in rural and remote communities may also face this challenge. Be innovative and persistent in trying to address transportation needs. It may become your most expensive budget item, but if it enables you to reach your target population it is worth it.
- **Honorariums or gifts for community resource people:** Elders, cultural leaders, community presenters who support the program.
- **Transportation for resource people**
- **Awards or recognition events, kick-off celebrations, and engagement events that bring families and the program together**
- **Thank-you gifts for mentors and volunteers.**

Program Site/Office Space

- Potentially telephone/internet service
- Rent/utilities



[Download an excel spreadsheet](#) that can be used to create a budget. It includes the list of potential expenses. You can fill in the columns with your estimated costs to create a preliminary budget.

Insurance



All mentoring programs undertake substantial risk simply due to the nature of the services being provided. A program has a duty of care to its participants and could be held liable if harm comes to a child, youth or volunteer as a result of accident, injury or abuse.

As such, every mentoring program requires some sort of liability insurance. In many cases, one of the partners working to deliver the program will have a comprehensive policy that covers the risks associated with that program.

Things to consider in your insurance coverage

| Transporting mentees | What activities are covered? | Are volunteers covered? | How are employees insured? |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| How is fundraising covered? Does it require separate coverage | Is the board or advisory group covered? Consider Directors and Officers liability coverage | Consider coverage for crime, property damage, wrongful dismissal, tenants' liability coverage | |

Depending on your partners and the scope and nature of your program, you may want to carry a comprehensive insurance policy that minimizes liability for the organization as a whole, board members, staff, volunteers, and clients. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to minimize risks through screening, training and on-going supervision and to seek legal or professional advice about sufficient coverage before you begin to implement your program. Call a reputable insurance agency to explore your insurance needs.



Who do you need to run your program?

The size of your staff will depend on the size and scope of your program. At the very least, you will need a program coordinator. Larger programs may need more than one coordinator. Some programs have one paid staff person and designate other program responsibilities to a team of committed volunteers, advisory committee members or, in the case of school-based or supported programs, a teacher, guidance counselor or liaison worker

You will want to choose a coordinator who has strong leadership and organizational skills as well as experience working with young people from a strengths-based perspective. If your program is targeted for a unique group of young people, you may want to try to find a coordinator with specific skills to serve that group (ie., Diversity training, experience working with Aboriginal or immigrant children, experience working with kids in care).

Sample Mentor Program Coordinator Position Description

This is a generic description of a program coordinator's role and responsibilities. This can be used as the basis for a job posting and a job description. Amend the content to reflect the specific needs of your program.

Title: Mentoring Coordinator

Employer: Community-Based Organization or a Community Collaborative

Responsibilities:

Coordinator's duties include but are not limited to the following:

- Forms a strong collaboration with the partner organizations, which includes signing written agreements that outline the program parameters and expectations among the partners and appropriate officials representing each of them;
- Acts as liaison between organizations providing the mentors, the mentees and/or resource people;
- Oversees and assists with participant recruitment, screening, training, matching, support, supervision, recognition and closure activities for mentors and children;
- Secures all parent consent forms and mentee applications (may work with partners such as teachers or school liaison workers to secure consent);
- Prepares and provides training materials for mentor training events;
- Organizes initial and ongoing support and training sessions for mentors and mentees;
- Oversees and manages program on-site;
- Provides guidance to mentors and children to ensure that both have an enriching mentoring experience;
- Monitors the matches to make sure they are meeting everyone's needs
- Organizes orientation sessions and/or connects with families and children to outline
 - the program, goals, procedures and events;
- Plans and promotes the kickoff event and ensures that mentors, parents and children are aware of event particulars;
- Maintains records of attendance and outcomes for mentors and mentees. Notifies mentors when mentees will not be present during sessions or vice versa;
- Creates and oversees implementation of ongoing marketing and mentor recruitment plans;
- Communicates with supervisor on a weekly basis concerning site or individual issues or new projects;
- In collaborations reports to the steering or advisory committee in a regular basis
- Contributes to program evaluation efforts.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree with emphasis in social work, education or early child development;
- Two or more years of experience in youth development in community organizations;
- Exceptionally strong organizational, interpersonal and communication skills;
- Demonstrated creativity, flexibility and comfort in working with diverse populations; and,
- An understanding of and commitment to a strength-based approach.

Recruitment Strategies

For Mentors and Mentees



How will you attract appropriate and dedicated adults and suitable young people to take part in your program?

Recruiting the right mentors and mentees is key to program success.

As such it is worth spending some time on the development of a recruitment plan with specific strategies. Although this plan does not need to be elaborate, it should clearly set out who will do what in terms of recruitment.

If you are working to serve diverse or harder to reach young people, it will be important to connect with members of their community and to work through partners who have an established relationship of trust. If this is the case, please refer to Tools to Support Programming for Diverse Populations on the AMP website.

Recruitment Guidelines and Tips

The recruitment strategies you choose will depend on the type, location, and purpose of your mentoring program. They will be different if you are in a big city or a small rural community. They will be different if you are working with families who

have recently arrived in Canada or who are of First Nations, Metis or Inuit descent. Consider these points as you develop recruitment strategies that are appropriate for your program and your community.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Use your strengths and needs assessment (Step 2) to inform your recruiting efforts. Develop materials and strategies specific to the populations you are trying to reach. | Assign one person to coordinate and oversee the recruitment efforts. | Change your materials regularly so that people in your community continue to notice and pay attention to them. |
| Get support from your advisory committee or Board. Often members of these committees have strong networks of adults that they can tap into. Ask for their support in developing appropriate messages for particular target groups and then working through their contacts to help with recruitment. | Support existing volunteers to recruit their friends. Word of mouth is often the best strategy. | Use common, accessible and strength-based language in all of your recruitment materials. |
| In smaller communities try to connect personally with potential mentors. Set up booths at community events, fairs, farmers markets, etc. | Work with local businesses who are interested in supporting their staff to mentor. Deliver presentations at staff meetings or brown bag lunches. | Identify specific strategies to recruit your mentors and your mentees. These strategies will be quite different. |

EXPERT TIPS Recruiting Mentors

Create appropriate materials to raise awareness about your program and encourage people to become a mentor. Consider simple flyers, brochures, press releases, and/or short bulletins that could be included in other newsletters or websites.

Use strength-based language in all of your marketing and recruitment materials. Labeling your mentees "at-risk" or "vulnerable" may be necessary for funding proposals, but at local level and in the community, it may be very damaging to the youth and the program. Focus on their strengths. A bit of support could make all of the difference.

Create recruitment materials that emphasize what the mentor will get from the relationship. For example, "I became a mentor because I wanted to give. The thing I didn't realize is how much I'd get" (Iowa Mentoring Partnership slogan).

If you are trying to recruit mentors with particular characteristics, develop specific strategies to support this decision. For example, if you want mentors of immigrant or Aboriginal heritage to connect with a specific organization or network. If you are looking for particular expertise, tap into professional networks - teachers, engineers, other professional associations.

EXPERT TIPS Recruiting Mentees

Develop different materials for children and youth. For children, materials could be focused on fun, social connections, and support. For youth, they can pitch leadership, career development or opportunities for personal growth.

Know the children and youth you are trying to attract. Develop materials that reflect their interests.

Create opportunities for youth to self-refer.

Liaise with schools, community agencies, and child or youth professionals in your community. Let these organizations know about your program and the opportunities for the youth they work with. Provide them with referral forms.

Remember that even though the adults in his or her life may want a child or youth to take part in a program, not all youth will be interested. Their consent and cooperation are essential for the program to be successful.

STEP 9

Screening Mentors and Mentees



Effective screening of mentors is perhaps the most important factor in determining the success and safety of your program. Comprehensive screening of all potential volunteers is an essential part of any responsible mentoring program, whether that program is a traditional community-based program with one-to-one matches or a supervised site-based, group program.

The screening process is onerous and time-consuming on the front end but will help to mitigate risks and issues as the program unfolds.

Setting criteria and screening your mentees is also important. Your program should be intentional about the children and youth it wants to serve and should do what it can to ensure the right kids are taking part. With a school or club-based program, you may be able to rely on referrals from teachers, counsellors or agency staff. These partners need a clear set of criteria for the selection of mentees to aid in the screening process. The referral form should be created to include basic information but protect the child and family's right to privacy.

The following resources are meant to support mentoring programs to coordinate and complete the application and assist in the screening processes for all of its participants. Samples of referral and consent forms are included but will need to be adapted for the specifics of your program. Your final consent form should be reviewed by a lawyer to ensure it releases the program of any liability. These tools are meant to help you protect your participants and create successful matches.

Additional tools to support the application and screening process can be found at mentoring.org

Mentor Application/Screening Process Overview

Once a prospective mentor is recruited, the formal application process begins. Prior to acceptance in the program, it is critical that applicants be properly screened. While volunteers have the best of intentions, it is the responsibility of the mentoring program to ensure maximum protection for the mentoring experience. Steps in the application and screening process include the following:

- 1 Applicants complete an application**, which includes their choices of days and times for their meetings, preferred grade level, age, and gender of young person with whom they wish to work. Some programs match mentors only with individuals of the same gender and ethnic group. Others do not. You will decide this early in your program design. The application should include:
 - Statement of the applicant's expectations.
 - Strengths and special interests, which are helpful in matching mentors with youth.
 - A complete list of personal references.
 - Employment history. Applicants are asked to sign a release statement, agreeing to a background check and to abide by the rules and regulations of the program which fully discharges the program from liability and claims.
- 2 Applicants sign an agreement to:**
 - Make a one-year (or school year) commitment.
 - Attend training sessions.
 - Engage in the relationship with an open mind.
 - Be on time for scheduled meetings.
 - Keep discussions with youth confidential (except where youth's safety or well-being is at risk).
 - Ask for help when needed.
 - Accept guidance from program staff or their mentee's teacher
 - Notify staff if they are having difficulty in their mentoring relationship.
 - Notify the program coordinator if they are unable to keep their weekly mentoring session.
 - Notify the program coordinator of any changes in their employment, address and telephone number.
 - Notify the program coordinator of a significant change in their mentee.
 - Refrain from contacting or seeing the mentee outside of the established parameters and supervised sites where the program takes place.
- 3 Applicants are invited for a personal interview with the mentoring program staff.** This interview is an opportunity to get to know the applicant better. Discussion includes questions that will provide information about: The applicant's family relationships and history
 - Interests and leisure time activities.
 - Attitudes and belief system.
 - Experiences working with children and adults.
 - Reactions to stressful situations.
 - Use of alcohol and drugs.
 - Level of flexibility, time commitments and ability to sustain relationship.
 - Education.
 - Transportation requirements.
 - Strengths and weaknesses.
- 4 Mentoring program staff conducts a check on all employment and personal references.**
- 5 Criminal record and child welfare checks, through city police or the RCMP and Alberta Children Services, must be performed on all prospective mentors.** Applicants must sign a release agreeing to have these checks done. Results of these checks are reviewed by the mentoring program coordinator, who keeps them confidential.
- 6 Applicants who pass all the screening processes are notified, congratulated and invited to become mentors in the program.**

Mentoring Program School Referral Form

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Male Female

Teacher/Liaison: _____ Name: _____

School Liaison: _____ Grade: _____

Why do you think this child would benefit from ABC Mentoring Program? _____

Pertinent Family History: _____

Describe the student (personality, strengths): _____

Useful strategies for working with this student: _____

Medical concerns that the mentoring program should be aware of (Allergies, medications, etc): _____

Additional Comments: _____

Sample

Parent/Guardian Consent Form Group Mentoring Program – Site Based

I (please print) _____ (Name of parent/guardian)

the parent/guardian of _____ (Name of child)

I hereby consent to my child participating in the _____
(Mentoring Program)

I also hereby:

1. Understand that at any time I have questions or concerns about my child's Mentor, I am able to talk to the Mentoring coordinator or School Liaison.
2. Acknowledge that this consent form will be filed at the (Coordinating Agency).
3. Understand that my child will be contacted by the Mentoring Coordinator to supervise and monitor the relationship with their Mentor.
4. Understand that I may be asked to complete an evaluation form pertaining to the mentoring program.
5. Understand that my child cannot have contact outside of the program with their Mentor.
6. Agree to inform the mentor coordinator if I choose to withdraw my child from the program.
7. Release the _____ (Mentoring Program) (including all partners) and their employees, directors, and volunteers from any cause or action or claim for damages arising from my child's association with the Mentoring Program.
8. I agree to allow the school (teacher/Family Wellness Worker/Aboriginal Liaison worker) to share with the _____ (Mentoring Program) information necessary to evaluate my child's progress in relation to the program. This may include indications of behavior and attitude changes, social skill development, levels of self-esteem, academic performance and peer interaction. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file.
9. If transportation is provided by the program you will need to include a clause that the parent consents to their child using this transportation.

Sample

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Does parent/ guardian reside with child? Yes No

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Does parent/ guardian reside with child? Yes No

Child's Name: _____

Child's Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Home Phone: _____

Child's Date of Birth: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Male Female

Doctor's Name: _____

Doctor's Phone: _____

AB Healthcare Number: _____

Allergies: _____

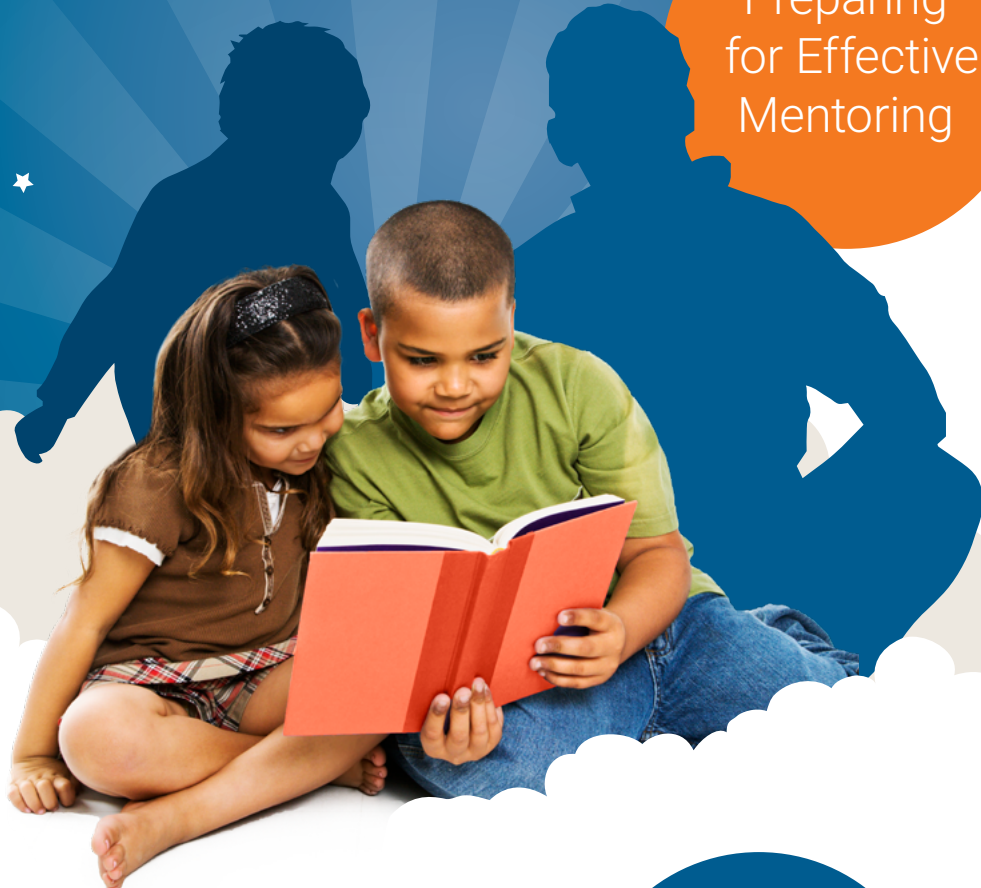
Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent 2/Guardian 2 Signature _____ Date _____

DISCLAIMER: This is a sample consent form only. A consent form specific to your program must be developed and reviewed by a legal professional.

Training Mentors and Mentees

Preparing for Effective Mentoring



Supporting our volunteers to effectively mentor the young people in your program begins with initial and on-going training.

To support organizations and community collaboratives to provide quality, standardized training, AMP has developed an online training program for mentors and an online guide to child safety. It is essential that your mentors and mentees participate in this training before they are matched or your program begins. Additional in-person and program-specific training may be required. In-depth, well-structured training provides a foundation of knowledge that can be built upon by your program staff.



Training Resources

Goal Setting



Goal setting is an essential part of any type of mentoring program.

It is the responsibility of the partners or the coordinator of the program to support matches or groups, ensuring they develop appropriate and meaningful goals. Mentors should be provided with training and tools to support both short and long-term goal setting with their mentees. Goal setting is included as part of AMP's Online Mentor Training and the following resources below will help coordinators to support their matches to engage in this process.

Goal Setting Guidelines for Coordinators & Mentors

The activities you engage in with your mentee should be related to goals established for the mentoring experience. Goal-setting helps the mentee strive for achievement. Although goal-setting may be challenging, it is generally worthwhile. Its intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying the mentee's desired outcomes.

Research suggests the following to be important reasons for joint goal setting among mentors and mentees:

- Goals guide and direct behaviour.
- Goals provide clarity.
- Goals reflect what the goal setters consider important.
- Goals help improve performance.
- Goals increase the motivation to achieve.
- Goals help increase mentees' pride and satisfaction in his/her achievements.
- Goals improve mentees' self-confidence.

Model for Goal-Setting: SMART

Using the **SMART** guidelines set out below can help matches or groups to set effective goals and work towards their achievement.

- S Specific** A goal of graduating from high school is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished. For example, studying more to receive better grades.
- M Measurable** Establish criteria for how a goal is to be achieved. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to know when the mentee has achieved a particular goal.
- A Action-oriented** Be proactive in identifying and taking the actions required to reach the goal.
- R Realistic** Strive for attainable goals, considering the resources and constraints relative to the situation.
- T Timely** Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time the mentee loses focus or motivation.

Examples of Goals for a Mentoring Relationship

Primary goal:
Establish a positive personal relationship with your mentee

This may mean:

- Establishing mutual trust and respect
- Maintaining regular interaction and consistent support
- Having fun together

Possible goal:

Help your mentee to strengthen their ability to interact with people from diverse backgrounds

This may mean:

- Talking about respecting people with different ethnic, cultural or economic situations. Explore the value of these differences.
- Introduce mentee to different environments where they can experience different people, customs, and values.

Possible goal:

Help your mentee develop life skills

This may mean:

- Work on accomplishing specific goals, such as improved grades.
- Work on such skills as decision-making, goal setting, conflict resolution, money management.
- Work on communication, something specific such as being able to communicate feelings.
- Work on following through with commitments

Possible goal:

Help mentee learn how to access resources

This may mean:

- Increase your mentees awareness of community, education, and economic resources
- Help mentee to identify the steps required to access these resources

Ideas for Mentoring Relationship Goals

The list of possible goals below is taken from a tool developed by Big Brothers Big Sisters Calgary to support their community-based, one-to-one matches set goals. Many of these goals can be adapted to support peer, online, academic, and group/team mentoring programs.

Academics/Employment

- Improve existing grades
- Improve reading and writing skills
- Improve math skills
- Improve homework habits/skills
- Improve attitude towards school
- Explore requirements and processes for post-secondary education
- Learn what educational resources are available
- Learn how to apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries
- Learn how to write a resume
- Learn job interview skills
- Learn how to keep a job

Communication

- Learn about different methods of communication
- Learn about how to use eye contact
- Learn appropriate telephone skills
- Learn how to journal
- Learn how to solve conflict
- Learn how to show appreciation
- Learn how to communicate feelings
- Learn what is age appropriate, good communication
- Learn about how other cultures communicate
- Learn about boundaries and why saying no is okay

Recreation/Fitness

- Improve physical fitness
- Learn about different ways to become physically fit
- Become involved in a new recreational activity (swimming, badminton, soccer, hockey, rollerblading, running, etc)
- Utilize a recreational facility on a regular basis
- Make a workout video
- Learn to ride a bike
- Learn to ski/snowboard
- Learn to skate/rollerskate/rollerblade
- Learn to swim

Health/Nutrition

- Create a healthy eating plan
- Learn how to grocery shop
- Explore new foods you have never tried
- Learn how to read labels
- Learn how to bake/cook
- Learn about healthy living skills
- Learn how to stay healthy
- Find out what really is in fast food
- Learn about effects of drugs/alcohol
- Learn cooking safety skills

Social Skills

- Establish a positive, personal relationship with your mentee/mentor
- Learn how to establish mutual trust and respect
- Learn good friendship skills
- Learn about different manners from around the world
- Learn how to deal with difficult peers and bullying
- Learn how to follow through on commitments and appointments
- Have fun together

Community awareness

- Visit the Calgary Zoo
- Visit the Calgary Science Centre
- Ride the LRT or city transit across the city and back
- Visit a resource centre
- Learn about 211
- Visit an event in your community
- Visit City hall
- Visit the Courthouse
- Explore parks and bike paths
- Visit an outdoor swimming pool.
- Visit Heritage Park

Cultural

- Discuss respecting people from various cultural, ethnic and economic backgrounds and explore the value in their differences
- Learn about cultural events in the city
- Learn about a new culture
- Learn about each other's' cultures
- Try an ethnic food you have never tried before

Hobbies

- Learn how to scrapbook
- Learn about photography
- Learn about what people collect
- Learn how to make a new craft
- Attend a class at Michael's or Home Depot
- Attend a ceramics class

Geography

- Learn about the country you each came from
- Learn about a new country
- Mental/Emotional health
- Learn how to meditate
- Learn how to deal with difficult situations
- Learn how to deal with grief/loss
- Girls attend the Dove Self-Esteem workshop

Volunteerism

- Volunteer together at the Food Bank
- Volunteer at the Mustard Seed
- Volunteer at the Calgary Human Society
- Volunteer at a run/walk held in the city
- Take a bag and go clean up an area
- Organize a community clean-up

Match Supervision and Monitoring

A quality mentoring program involves measured oversight.

Enormous time and effort are invested in recruiting, screening, training, and matching new program participants. However, the work is not done once a match is made. Match supervision or monitoring is essential to the success of your program. It is the program's responsibility to encourage its matches to evolve into healthy and productive relationships that support the child or youth achieve their potential. Further, one match gone bad is not only damaging to the child involved but can create a negative impression of the entire program, making it harder to recruit new participants and garner community support.

Guidelines to support your monitoring efforts

Program Supervision Guidelines

How often should we check in with our clients mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians/teachers?

These guidelines are structured around traditional one-to-one matches that meet in the community. They will need to be amended for group, peer and in-school mentoring.

- 1 Determine for your program the specific frequency and type of supervision that will take place.
- 2 Establish a consistent supervision schedule for each match and for your program. Ensure that all parties are aware of this schedule and that it is a foundational part of the program.
- 3 Create supervisions templates for mentors, mentees, and guardians selecting from the questions below. The templates should include the date, the mentee's name, the mentor's name and the supervisor's name
- 4 Every time program supervision takes place, it must be documented. The forms must be kept by the program coordinator. They are confidential.
- 5 Contact the mentor within the first two weeks of the match. Use this contact to make sure the pair is meeting, to find out what activities they have done together, and to assess how the mentor feels about the match thus far.
- 6 During the next few months, continue to check in with the mentor every two weeks. These ongoing contacts will help ensure that the mentor and child/youth meet regularly and are also important for uncovering any start-up problems that require program staff's immediate assistance.
- 7 For at least a year, continue monthly check-ins with the mentor. The check-in discussion during this period should be focused on monitoring the quality of the mentoring relationship; assessing whether it has established goals and is making progress, determining the level of engagement between the mentor and mentee, and helping to address problems that may be arising between the pair. Your program should also make sure that mentors know how to contact staff, whenever necessary, for advice and support.

Supervision Questions

These are basic guidelines for the kinds of questions that should be asked during supervision. These should be adapted depending on the nature of your program

Possible Questions for the Mentor

- How is your match going?
- How do you feel about being a mentor?
- Do you and your mentee enjoy spending time together? What kinds of activities do you do when you are together? How do you decide what activities to do together?
- What strengths and common interests do you draw upon or could you draw upon with your mentee?
- Do you and your mentee have trouble thinking up things to do together? Do you spend much time talking?
- How often do you see your mentee? How much time do you spend together at each meeting?
- Does your mentee keep appointments with you? Does he or she show up on time? When was your last meeting? What did you do together?
- Do you talk to your mentee on the telephone? How often? (for community-based programs)
- Do you need help with anything? Is there anything interfering with your match?
- How would you describe your mentee's behavior? Does your mentee exhibit any behavior that you do not understand?
- How are things going with the parents and other family members? Is the parent of your mentee cooperative? (or, for school-based programs: How are things going with the teacher?)
- Are you satisfied with how things are going?
- Is there any training you think would be helpful for you? Is there anything else we should be aware of?
- Is there anything we can do to help?
- What goals have you and your mentee been working towards?

Possible Questions for the Mentee

- Do you enjoy spending time with your mentor?
- What do you enjoy most about having a mentor? What do you enjoy least? When was the last time you met with your mentor? What did you do together? How often do you see your mentor? How long do your meetings last?
- Does your mentor keep appointments? Does he or she show up on time? Who decides what activities you are going to do together?
- Do you like talking to your mentor?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the visits?
- Is there anything you would like me to talk to your mentor about?

Possible Questions for Parents, Guardians and Teachers:

- Is your child/student happy with his or her mentor?
- Does your child/student look forward to seeing his or her mentor? Do they seem to enjoy being together?
- Is there anything you would like me to discuss with either your child/student or the mentor?
- How often does your child/student see his or her mentor? How long do the meetings last?
- Does the mentor usually keep appointments and show up on time? Is there anything that concerns you about the relationship?
- How do you think they feel about the mentor?
- What do you think of their weekly activities with the mentor? Would you like to see the activities change? How?
- How are they doing in school?
- Have you observed any positive or negative changes? Is there anything else we should be aware of?

Types of Supervision

Supervision as Support

The program coordinator should provide on-going and comprehensive support to the matches throughout the program's cycle. This means offering professional assistance and advice in the following areas:

- Problem solving
- Feedback and encouragement Ideas for appropriate activities Advice on positive mentoring
- Positive reinforcement to both the mentor and the mentee
- Supports to connect with family or community if this is appropriate within your program

Supervision as Monitoring

Your program coordinator must regularly monitor matches to determine the participants' continued suitability for the program. Match supervision can be thought of as part of an ongoing screening process. Regular monitoring of your program demonstrates the commitment to fulfill the obligation of care towards the mentees. This monitoring supervision should focus on ensuring:

- The participants are safe
- The participants are following the program's ground rules
- The mentoring relationship is developing positively and problems are solved as they arise
- The mentor and mentee meet regularly as per the program guidelines
- The mentor is demonstrating effective mentoring practices and is using a strength-based approach in his/her interactions with the mentee
- The match participants are satisfied with their relationship
- The mentor and mentee meet regularly as per the program guidelines
- The mentor is demonstrating effective mentoring practices and is using a strength-based approach in his/her interactions with the mentee
- The match participants are satisfied with their relationship

Overview of Supervision Processes

Your program coordinator or another designated, trained professional should conduct regular supervision with all parties in a match, including the mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian. Supervision contacts can be made by phone or in person, and should follow a regular, agreed-upon schedule. For example, traditional one-to-one or peer matches require supervision contacts:

- Weekly in the first month of a match, Monthly for the first six months,
- Bi-monthly from the seventh to twelfth months,
- Quarterly after that.

Group mentoring programs require less frequent monitoring but should include regular contact to provide support and formal supervisions at least quarterly.

If problems are occurring in the match, more frequent contacts are needed. In-person interviews with match participants should take place within the first four months of the match, and around every anniversary of the match if program involvement is ongoing.

The match supervisor should also be available by phone or in person as needed. Additional supervision could also be offered through group support meetings for mentors or parents. Staff should always lead these sessions to intervene should inappropriate or detrimental strategies and advice be offered.

Every attempted and completed supervision contact must be thoroughly documented.

Guidelines for Effective Termination of a Match

Termination may be the result of a variety of situations.

Sometimes it may become necessary to terminate a match due to conflicts between the mentee and mentor.

Sometimes termination may occur because either the mentee or the mentor drops out of the program. The dropouts may occur as a result of relationship conflicts or other factors (e.g., mentor's time limitations, other commitments, personal issues).

Sometimes it may become apparent that the mentee and/or mentor may work more effectively with another person. In these cases, reassignment may be best.

Although difficult, termination should provide closure and opportunities for learning. In order for termination to accomplish this, the program coordinator should consider the following guidelines:

- 1 Identify and verbally clarify the reasons for termination with both the mentee and mentor. If the reasons involve the behavior of either party, this should be presented in a constructive manner.
- 2 Give the mentee and mentor the opportunity to discuss together what worked and didn't work in their relationship and to identify ways to handle future situations more effectively. The program coordinator should facilitate a conversation between the mentee and mentor to make sure that both parties express themselves positively and constructively. This information may be critical to successfully rematching the mentee or mentor.
- 3 Both parties should be encouraged to share their feelings about ending their relationship. Mentors who are terminating because of time limitations or other reasons not related to the mentee need to make it particularly clear to the mentee that they did not do anything to make the mentor leave. The mentor should share with the mentee the things about the mentee they liked. Without this—and often even with it to a lesser degree—the mentee will feel they are unlovable or flawed in some way. The mentor should do all that he or she can to convince the child this is not so.
- 4 Plan the next step. If the mentee is to be reassigned, discuss the new relationship with the mentee alone first. Help identify issues that occurred with the previous mentor and discuss ways to avoid future reassignment. If the match ended due to factors other than relationship conflict (e.g., mentor's part-time job schedule changed), reassure the mentee that they are not to blame. Help him or her process any feelings about the termination of that relationship.

Tips

When mentors and coordinators decide to end the formal mentoring relationship:

- 1 Set a specific date for your last meeting and inform your mentee of this ahead of time.
- 2 Be honest, candid, and supportive; regardless of the reason for the termination.
- 3 Talk about the reasons for ending the relationship
- 4 Talk about your thoughts and feelings for the mentee and your feelings about the termination
- 5 Encourage your mentee to do the same.
- 6 Be positive and supportive, especially about what the future may hold for your mentee
- 7 If it seems appropriate, talk to the liaison about a replacement mentor for your mentee
- 8 Don't make promises you may not keep (e.g., that you will keep in touch).

Evaluation



Measuring the Difference You Make

Evaluation is an essential part of program success and sustainability.

A good evaluation process will help you and your partners to:

- Effectively plan program activities to support success
- Identify, document, and help to replicate strengths and effective strategies
- Identify challenges, problems or weaknesses early enough to address them
- Provide objective feedback to staff, the board and/or an advisory group about whether the program is meeting its objectives
- Gather evidence to demonstrate that your program is having a positive effect on its participants
- Be accountable and effectively report to funders
- Build your credibility in the community

The evaluation process should start at the beginning of the program, not at the end. To effectively demonstrate that your program has a positive impact, you must identify the desired outcome early on and build program activities to contribute to, and monitoring processes to track those changes. The following resources meant to help you begin to articulate appropriate outcomes for your program and build a plan to monitor program activities and key indicators so that you can measure progress towards these outcomes. Ultimately, this process will help you to create a better program and communicate the difference you are making in your community.



Evaluation Process Guidelines

The way that you evaluate your mentoring program will depend on a wide range of factors: funding available for evaluation purposes; reporting requirements of funders; nature and length of the program; type of programming. Regardless, including evaluative thinking and processes from the outset will strengthen your activities and your capacity to communicate the difference your program is making credibly. Following are a set of high-level guidelines to help you begin to create an evaluation plan. The Sample Logic Model and Data Collection Framework will help you to put this plan into action.

Create a Logic Model

Bring your partners together to discuss what it is you are trying to achieve in your program (short-term **outputs** and medium to long-term **outcomes**); how you hope to achieve these (**activities**); what resources are required (**inputs**); and the **need** you are trying to address.

Need – the community need should have been identified as part of your needs assessment. Summarize this need on the left-hand side of the logic model.

Inputs – list all of the human, financial, in-kind, and infrastructure resources that are being put into the program. These would be the resources that are actually available. This list can be amended as additional resources come into the program. For example, when you are awarded a funding grant, or provided with additional space or staff to run the program.

Activities – list all of the things that go on in the program – both supports and activities. This includes recruitment, screening, training and program activities, and events.

Outputs – these are the things that happen as a direct result of program activities. The changes take place during the program timeframe and consist of items like completion of a training program, regular meetings between the mentor and mentee, and evidence the mentor is providing appropriate support to mentee(s). Output level indicators (see below) would be attendance levels at training, number of times mentor and mentee meet, level of satisfaction with matches, and level of satisfaction with activities.

Outcomes – these are the longer term benefits for participants and the community as a result of being part of the mentoring relationship. These changes may be experienced within the life of the program or the match but may also take longer to occur and are expected to be sustained beyond the program or match. Outcomes include such things as youth succeeds academically; youth makes healthier choices; and, youth has an improved sense of self. Outcome level indicators could include grades and attendance levels at school, change in drug or alcohol use, change in family and/or peer relationships.

These are the basic elements of a program logic model. Use the Sample Logic Model attached to step 13 to help you and your partners work through this process. You may also want to consider bringing in a consultant with evaluation experience to help facilitate the development of the logic model. Depending on the size and complexity of your program, a good evaluator should be able to help you build a logic model in a half day session with your partners.



Sample Mentoring Program Logic Model





Creating a Quality,
Community-Based
Mentoring Program