



Mentoring in Canada: Experiences & Perspectives of Mentors and Mentees

Sharing findings back with research participants

Introductions



SRDC is a mission-driven, Canadian non-profit research organization with 30 years of experience providing high quality research and evaluation support for evidence-informed decision making. We have an interdisciplinary team of over 40 researchers across Canada.

SRDC's mission is to :

- help decision-makers identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of people living in Canada, with a focus on populations facing systemic and structural barriers and disadvantage; and
- raise the standards of evidence used in selecting these programs and policies.



MENTOR Canada is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring.

It was launched by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership, and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition.

Working together, we will build sector capacity to empower every young person to fulfil their potential.

1 Map the Gap

Understanding young people's access to and experiences of mentoring

Establish national estimates of young Canadians' experiences of mentorship or of not having a mentor

2 Capture the Landscape

Understand the prevalence, scope, structure, services, strengths & challenges of mentoring programs & services across Canada

3 Raise the Profile of Mentoring

Understand Canadians' opinions about youth mentoring as well as their experiences or willingness to mentor youth outside of their immediate family

The State of Mentoring in Canada

We asked **young people aged 18-30** to reflect back on childhood and adolescence and experiences being mentored

We asked **service providers** about the landscape of the programs and services they provide.

And we asked **adults in Canada** to tell us what place they believe youth mentoring should have in Canadian society and to tell us about their own experiences as mentors.



Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data

The qualitative component of the MENTOR Canada research study involved in-depth interviews with youth mentors and mentees.

What did we set out to investigate?

Mentees

Mentors

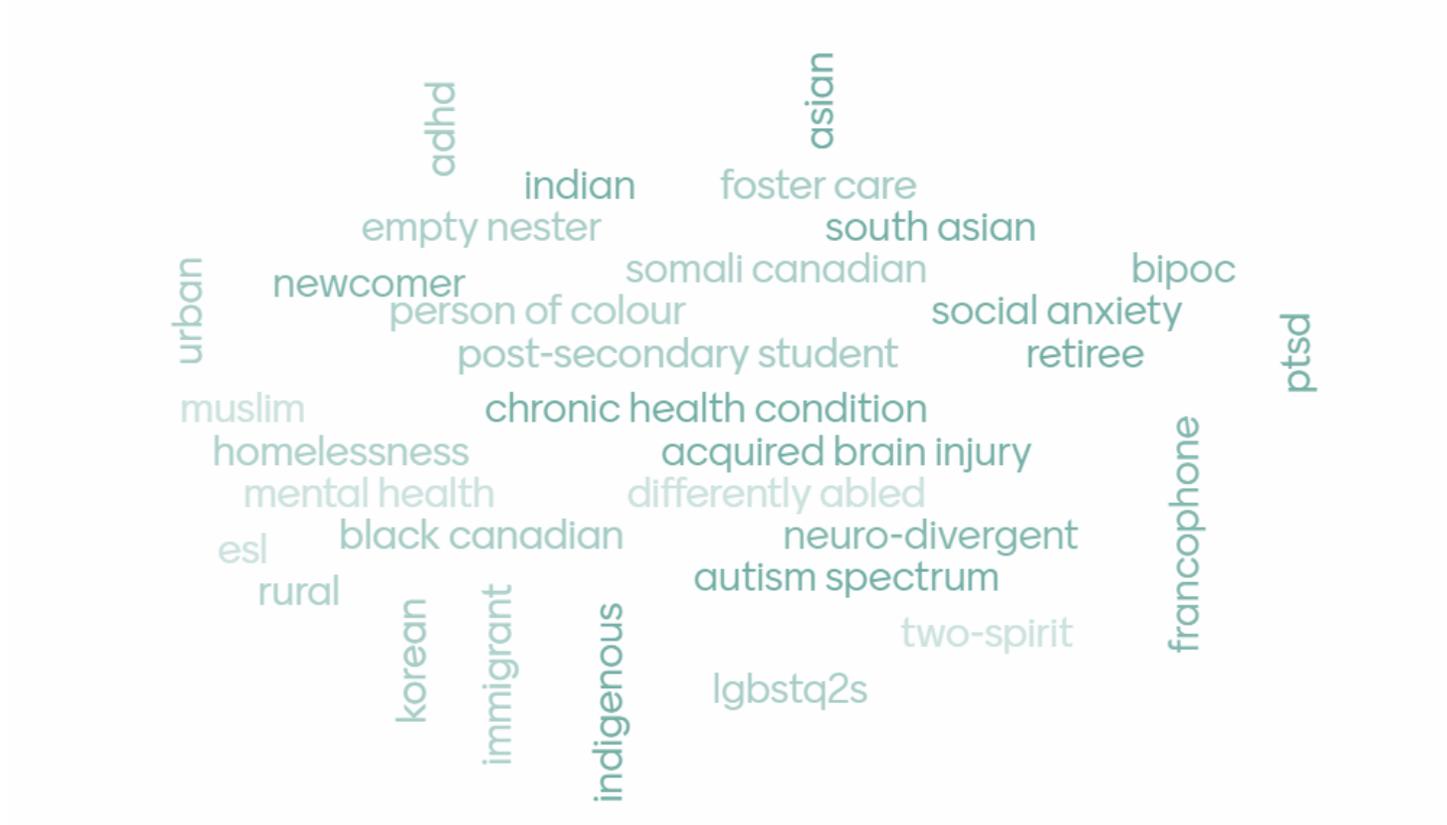
- The meaning of mentoring
- Dynamics of mentoring relationships, first-hand experiences
- Outcomes of mentoring

- Barriers and facilitators to accessing a mentor
- What youth want mentorship to focus on

- Motivations, willingness to mentor
- Barriers and facilitators to becoming or being a mentor
- Perceptions and opinions about mentoring

Who did we talk to?

 19 Mentees, 18 Mentors



Who did we talk to?

Formal mentoring experiences

- faith-based mentoring
- in-school mentoring
- community-based mentoring
- online e-mentoring
- mentoring for newcomers
- career-focused mentoring
- mentoring through Indigenous-specific organizations and programs

Informal mentoring experiences

No mentoring experiences

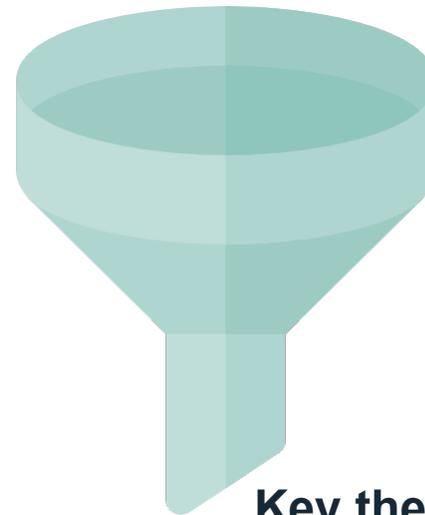
How did we summarize what we heard?

Referred to our original research questions

Considered our audience

Looked for common themes

Noted unique comments



Key themes and salient quotes



Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data we collected were rich and detailed. We synthesized what we heard and created tables and written summaries to share with our partners.

Defining mentorship across cultures and context, ages and stages of life

- Intentional
- Constant and repeated connection
- No judgement
- No ulterior motive
- Let the mentee lead
- Reciprocal and bi-directional
- Trust, genuine, fun, personal

“A mentor is someone who's part of your journey. They don't care as much about what your destination is, but more so how you get there.”

“It's about just showing up for the journey.”

Cultural and contextual considerations

- Cultural competence
- Mentoring from family and parents
- Allow youth to self-select
- Offer cross-cultural mentoring
- Mentoring is consistent with Indigenous ways of knowing
- Faith-based mentoring
- Mentoring for newcomers
- Make mentoring inclusive for people who are differently abled

“Sometimes when you talk to people who come from a different background, it can feel like they're invalidating your experience. So, I like having people who are aware of that diversity and embrace that diversity.”

Motivations to mentor, becoming a mentor

- Anyone can be a mentor – but mentor well-being, and integrity, is critical
- Fulfilling a space in one's life
- Striving to make a difference
- Giving back

“If we want to improve society, we need to look closely at the development and nurturing of our youth, and mentoring is a big part of that.”

“Personal character, moral character, values. That’s the essence of leadership, mentorship. The person you are mentoring has to be able to look up to you somehow. This is the currency of the mentorship.”

Barriers and facilitators to accessing a mentor

- Lack of awareness
- Misconceptions about mentoring
- Some youth – and parents – skeptical about mentoring
- Normalize mentoring through a universal approach
- Offer a ‘light touch’ introduction – don’t force things
- Create safe spaces for mentors and mentees

“I probably would have never reached out because I still thought it was taboo. Like, if you're reaching out to that kind of stuff, it's because you need it in the sense that there's something wrong.”

Dynamics of an ideal mentoring relationship

- Mentor/mentee match – might be similar, or celebrated differences
- Choices, flexibility, a loose structure
- It doesn't matter what you do, just do it together
- Healthy boundaries
- Mentors are well-supported, part of a community

“Just getting together, just having that time together. It's just a break from like everything else. You get to learn something. You learn something new and then just take it with you. And it's just a restful time.”

Challenging parts of mentoring

- Mismatches
- Initiating the relationship
- Trust-building
- Communication and confidentiality
- Mental health
- Time commitments
- The pandemic

“When you’ve been through it, and see you the youth go off course and it’s about how to bring them back in a way that doesn’t push them away from you. That has to be done through wisdom, kindness, warmth, sometimes humour. I enjoy that aspect.”

The impact of mentoring

- Mentees: confidence, personal growth, inspiration, motivation, better decisions, social skills, positive mindset
- Mentors: rewarding, a chance to make an impact, youthful energy, inspiration, transferrable skills

“I still play the songs she taught me on the piano, like when I’m sad, they cheer me up. And I was 12 then. So that has lasted 18 years.”

“Seeing his face light up.”

“It nurtures my spirit and enriches my life.”



Discussion

As interview participants, this is an opportunity to share your thoughts and reactions to the findings. We want to hear from you to make sure we got it right. We also want to hear from you about new ideas and next steps.

Discussion Questions

- What resonated with you the most?
- What was missing?
- What surprised you?
- Where do we go next with our research?





Next Steps and Calls to Action

Ideas for how you can continue to be involved and support the mentoring movement in Canada.

Go to becomeamentor.ca
Enter your postal code
Let us know what programs in your area are missing!
Email us: Michael.janz@mentoringcanada.ca

MENTOR Canada

Mentor Connector

Power of Mentoring

Unleash the Power of Mentoring

MENTOR Canada is teaming up with our corporate and sector partners to connect young adults with mentors.



Thank you!

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