

Mentoring Matters: Part I - An Introduction to Mentoring



Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Program of Studies Outcomes

The student will...

L-8.7 relate personal knowledge and skills to potential opportunities for volunteering and providing service to others in the community

L-8.8 investigate the characteristics of a mentor, and practice mentorship in a group setting

Teacher Background

Mentoring is the presence of a caring individual who provides a young person, or mentee, with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role-modelling over time.

Mentoring is a two-for-one initiative. That is, the match between a mentor and a mentee promotes the healthy development and mental health of both the youth mentor and the younger student mentee. Mentoring teaches young people skills and provides them with an opportunity to articulate their thoughts and feelings while improving academic performance and school completion, peer and family relationships and overall life success. Programs that engage youth as mentors in schools and communities promote positive mental health and well-being in youth mentors. Mentors experience enhanced self-esteem, develop competence in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy, and increase their sense of social responsibility. Youth mentors experience a heightened sense of belonging in their school and community by being a part of a social network and actively engaging in meaningful activities. Mentoring participants are encouraged to develop a friendship based on support, encouragement, motivation and a caring relationship – all important elements of positive mental health!

The activities in this three-part lesson plan will prepare students with an understanding of the positive impact of mentoring while preparing them to be mentors now and in the future

Part I introduces students to the concepts of mentoring. Students will be able to identify the characteristics and roles of a mentor; explore their own strengths and qualities that will make them effective mentors for others; and understand the overall positive impact of mentoring.

Part II is full of activities that will train students to be mentors in their school and community. Training is an essential part of youth mentoring programs.

Part III provides students with an opportunity to practice mentoring in their school environment; to reflect on the experience; and to identify how it has impacted their mental health.

Objectives

Through the use of group activities and discussions, students will:

- Understand the term mentoring and examples of mentoring occurring in the community
- Use examples of people in their life or the media who are positive mentors to explore and identify the characteristics and roles of a mentor
- Identify the positive impact mentoring has on mental health and well-being
- Identify their own personal strengths, skills and knowledge related to mentoring for potential volunteering opportunities in the classroom or community

Materials

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Handout: Mentoring Matters

Activity 1: What is Mentoring?

1. Write down the word 'mentoring' and brainstorm a definition of the term. Once the class has developed its own definition, compare it to the definition below:

Mentoring is defined by the Alberta Mentoring Partnership as, *"the presence of a caring adult or teenager who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time."*

2. Brainstorm examples of mentoring with the students.

Mentoring happens in formal programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters, but it can also take many other forms like coaching, youth groups, reading buddies, classroom helpers, scout leaders and more. Mentors also exist in informal ways such as friends of the family, neighbours or babysitters who have acted as an older, supportive friend to a younger person. There are many different types of mentoring including one-on-one mentoring, group or team mentoring, peer mentoring, online mentoring and more.

Activity 2: Characteristics and Roles of a Positive Mentor

1. By raise of hand, ask if anyone has had a mentor.

2. Ask the students to choose one person who has acted as a mentor to them. Students may use a famous person if they are unable to identify a person from their life (examples may include Professor Dumbledore, Oprah, Ellen Degeneres, Martin Luther King Jr., etc.).
3. Ask students to think about why that person was/ is so important to them and to recall the characteristics of that person that made the mentor so valued. You can use some of the characteristics from the definition in Activity 1 if students are having difficulty (ex. caring, friendly, and supportive).
4. Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics of positive mentors (think-pair-share, as small groups, as a class, etc.).
5. Create a visual list of the 'Characteristics of a Mentor' on chart paper or a whiteboard. When a characteristic is repeated, put a checkmark next to it. If a student identifies a 'role' instead of a 'characteristic', write it on another piece of chart paper and let students know that you will come back to it.
6. Review the items on the characteristics list. Note which were mentioned most often. Ask students why these characteristics are important in a mentoring relationship. Make sure that the characteristics discussed in Activity 1 are included in the list (caring, supportive, friendly, committed over time). Other characteristics may include: positive, encouraging, loving, motivated, accepting, helpful, funny, respectful, trusting, and fun.
7. Repeat this activity asking students to brainstorm a list of the *roles* a mentor can play in a child or youth's life. Examples might include friend, big brother, big sister, positive role model, resource, reinforcement, guide, or coach.
8. Refer to or pass out copies of the handout 'Mentoring Matters' for a list of common characteristics and roles of a mentor.

Activity 3: Positive Impact of Mentoring

1. Read a sample from 'Mentoring Stories' to students, addressing the positive impact felt by mentors and mentees engaged in mentoring relationships. You can also incorporate videos from the Alberta Mentoring Partnership YouTube Channel, specifically 'High School Completion Strategic Framework' which highlights teen mentoring programs and interviews teen mentors, student mentees, parents and teachers about the impact of mentoring.
2. Ask the students why they might take on a mentoring role. What would be the benefits for the child? What would be the benefits for you as the mentor? How does mentoring have a positive impact on your mental health and well-being?

3. This is an opportunity to begin a discussion that focuses on not only the positive impact mentoring can have on a mentee, but the positive impact that giving back and helping others by mentoring can have on teen mentors. Some examples are highlighted below:

Positive Impact on Mentees

- Builds self-esteem and confidence
- Increased high school completion rates
- Better attendance at school
- Improved attitudes about staying in school
- Feel supported and heard
- Receive one-on-one attention
- Enhanced academic motivation and achievement
- Improved social skills and behaviour
- Strengthened peer, school and family relationships
- Increased sense of belonging in school and in the community

Positive Impact on Mentors

- Enhanced self-esteem
- Develop skills in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy
- Increased sense of social responsibility
- Heightened sense of belonging in school and in the community
- Feel good about giving back and helping others
- Overall improvement in mental health and well-being

Discussion

1. *A person will bring their own strengths and skills into a mentoring relationship. The characteristics that were listed earlier are all examples of the strengths that your mentors had, whether it be that they are caring, thoughtful, friendly or funny. Our strengths are one tool that we can use when we mentor others. For example, a person who has a good sense of humour and likes to make people laugh will help a child feel comfortable and at ease in a mentoring relationship.* What characteristics, strengths and skills do you have that would make you a good mentor? How would these strengths help in a mentoring relationship?
2. What are some examples of opportunities for youth to become mentors that you are aware of?

Video Streaming

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership Youtube Channel can be accessed to explore various informational materials on getting involved as a mentor in the community
<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1jzKjk12116JjmvwOpPQow?feature=watch>

Conclusion

In this lesson, students use their collective knowledge and experience to develop an understanding of the term 'mentoring' and the characteristics and roles of a positive mentor. Students are encouraged to identify the positive impact that mentoring has not only on mentees, but on those who take on the supportive and helpful role of a mentor. Students will begin exploring the impact mentoring has on mental health and personal well-being. They are encouraged to reflect on their own strengths and skills and how they might serve as positive mentors for younger children. Opportunities are provided for students to explore potential volunteer opportunities to apply this new knowledge in a mentoring role.

Take Home Activity

Have students do a web-based search for youth mentoring opportunities in their community. A great resource is www.albertamentors.ca where students can search by region.

Have students find a mentoring agency in their community and explore the various mentoring opportunities with that agency. An example is the National Website for Big Brothers Big Sisters (www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca) where various examples of mentoring opportunities are listed under the heading 'Mentoring Programs.'

Ask students to reflect on their findings of volunteer opportunities in the community including the types of mentoring programs, steps and requirements for becoming involved.

Assessment Strategy

Students will be able to identify the characteristics of a mentor.

Students will connect their knowledge of mentoring to potential volunteer opportunities in their school or community.

References

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. A longitudinal study of the impact of Big Brothers Big Sisters community match relationships on the health and well-being of Canadian children. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.mentoringcanada.ca/DocLibrary/docdisplay.asp?doc=2295>

Government of Alberta. *High School Teen Mentoring Handbook*. 2010. PDF version retrieved from alis.alberta.ca/publications

Mental Health Foundation. Doing good does you good: A pocket guide to helping others. http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/doing_good_pocket_guide.pdf?view=Standard

National Mentoring Center. Training new mentors: Effective strategies for providing quality youth mentoring in schools and communities. 2007. Retrieved from <http://gwired.gwu.edu/hamfish/merlin-cgi/p/downloadFile/d/20697/n/off/other/1/name/trainingpdf/>

Resources

Alberta Mentoring Partnership www.albertamentors.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada National Website www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

Mentoring Canada www.mentoringcanada.ca

Mentor National Mentoring Partnership www.mentoring.org

Mentoring Matters

Mentoring is the presence of a caring adult or teenager who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time.



Examples of mentoring:

Characteristics of a Mentor

Accepting	Encouraging	Non-judgemental
Approachable	Experienced	Open
Assertive	Fair	Patient
Caring	Friendly	Positive
Competent	Funny	Respected by their peers
Confident	Good listener	Responsible
Consistent	Honest	Supportive
Creative	Kind	Trustworthy
Empathetic	Knowledgeable	

Other Characteristics:

Roles of a Mentor

- **Good listener** who listens with understanding and empathy
- **Fun person** who is a pleasure to hang out with
- **Friend** who will help inspire mentees about their future
- **Teacher** who will encourage learning
- **Coach** who will help build skills and confidence
- **Guide** who helps with setting and achieving goals
- **Motivator** who encourages others
- **Role model** who is admired and looked up to

Mentoring Stories

Megan and Allie

Megan is a fun, energetic 14 year old who loves reading, writing short stories and spending time with her friends. At school, she has a hard time with teachers as she often gets into disagreements when told what to do. Physical education is her least favourite class, and she especially tries to miss school on Tuesdays when the class is expected to practice their long distance running. Before Megan knew it, with all of her difficulties at school, her report card soon showed over 30 absent days.

After the winter break, Megan's class learned about mentoring and partnered with a grade 2 class from the neighbouring school. Megan was matched with a young girl named Allie, who loved it when Megan would show up to help her practice reading, talk about troubles on the playground with friends and colour pictures of dragons and wizards. Megan knew how important it was to show up every week. Whenever Megan helped Allie with a problem, she was able to practice her own problem-solving skills. Sometimes, the problems were so similar to things Megan was dealing with in her own life that she was able to bring these ideas back to her own friendships.

One day, Megan's homeroom teacher pulled her aside after class to talk. Her teacher mentioned that she was really impressed with Megan's improvement in her attendance, and was especially happy to see her showing up for physical education on Tuesdays. Megan told her teacher that Tuesdays were her days with Allie and while she still disliked running, she knew how important this time was for Allie and that she wouldn't miss it for anything.

Sean and Doug

Sean's family contacted a mentoring agency when Sean was 8 years old. He and his younger sister were living with his mom.

Sean lacked a positive male role model in his life when he signed up as a mentee. He was acting out at home and had difficulty relating to his classmates. He was diagnosed with dyslexia and was struggling with school where he often got angry at other kids. For most of Sean's life, he took on the role of parent with his little sister, and was also very protective of and took care of his mom. He didn't have the chance to be a child.

Sean was matched to his mentor Doug, and they had almost instant rapport. His mentor is a university professor and has been the most stable influence in Sean's life since the beginning of their match. Doug was able to secure a library card for Sean so he could visit the library. He also introduced Sean to various sports and activities that Sean had never experienced before, such as skiing. Sean is now an accomplished snowboarder.

During the first year of their match, Doug and Sean did a variety of activities. Sean was always very polite and well behaved and responded well to Doug. Doug remained a stable influence throughout Sean's good times and tough times and visited Sean regularly.

Doug was a "rock" for Sean throughout many difficult situations. Sean and Doug have been matched for many years now, and their relationship is solid. Sean now believes that there are people who care about him and believe in him. He has a stable role model to look up to and consult when he is making life decisions. Sean has been able to retain his curiosity and zest for life and Doug has been the most encouraging and nurturing force in his life.

Sean's excelling at school and has made some good friends. Doug continues to be a driving force in Sean's life. Throughout much adversity, Sean has retained his ability to persevere and grow. He continues to apply himself at school and has built caring relationships with his family.

Mentoring Matters: Part II – Preparing to Mentor



Alberta Education Health and Life Skills Program of Studies Outcomes

The student will...

L-8.7 relate personal knowledge and skills to potential opportunities for volunteering and providing service to others in the community

L-8.8 investigate the characteristics of a mentor, and practice mentorship in a group setting

Teacher Background

Now that students have a general understanding of mentoring from Part 1, students will benefit from the opportunity to practise mentorship in a structured, supportive group setting. Before this happens, student mentors should receive training to prepare for the role they are about to take on. Training is an essential part of mentoring programs as it helps mentors develop the needed skills and knowledge to ensure successful matches with their mentees. Training allows mentors to enhance communication and problem-solving skills, understand the program's goals and expectations and provides an opportunity to ask questions and address concerns.

Objectives

Through the use of group activities and discussion, students will:

- Understand their roles and responsibilities as mentors
- Identify and discuss common issues related to the mentoring relationship
- Prepare to take on the role of a mentor

Materials

- Teacher/ principal partnership letter
- Elementary Mental Health Poster 'Help'
- 'Mentoring: The Basics' handout
- Cut up copies of 'Mentoring Scenarios' handout
- 'Mentoring Scenarios: Teacher Tips' for reference

Get Ready

Before training students to mentor others, arrange a mentoring opportunity with a class or group of elementary students. A letter template for teachers or principals is included to help you approach potential partners for your group mentoring activity. This letter can be adapted as an information letter for parents as well. Support elementary school staff in understanding the positive impact mentoring can have on participating students' mental health by providing them with the included Mental Health Matters poster on *Help* designed for elementary students.

The duration of the activity should be determined at the outset and mentors and mentees should be made aware of how long the mentoring sessions will last (e.g. 3 sessions or one semester). Positive mentoring experiences have a defined beginning and end and participants should be given an opportunity to celebrate the match closure using activities outlined in Part III of the lesson plan. Other logistics that should be further discussed with the partnering teacher/ school liaison include:

- One-on-one or small group format
- Frequency (e.g. once a week)
- Date(s) and time
- Location for mentoring activities (ex. school library, gymnasium, or cafeteria; public community center; public library)
- Mode of transportation to the location
- Rule and policies for students
- Roles of each teacher (ex. providing materials, determining activities, supervising, assessing students, arranging physical space, etc.)

Activity 1: Online Training

1. The Alberta Mentoring Partnership offers free online training for mentors and mentees at <http://moodle.albertamentors.ca>. For support, teachers can contact mentor.support@albertamentors.ca.
2. Students will require two or more class periods with access to a computer with an Internet connection.
3. Students can log in to the module in one of two ways:
 - I. Teachers can set up accounts for each student
 - i. Teachers can send a list of students' first and last names and the name of their school or organization to mentor.support@albertamentors.ca
 - ii. Teachers will be provided with a list of usernames and passwords for each student.
 - iii. Direct students to the moodle website where they can input their Username and Password and click 'Login.'

- iv. Teachers will be given an account that allows them to track their students' progress.
 - II. Students can create a personal user account using their individual e-mail account
 - i. Direct students to the moodle website.
 - ii. Click on 'Create New Account' and fill in the required information. It is recommended that all students' usernames are lastnamefirstname (e.g. SmithJohn) with a password that they can easily remember.
 - iii. For 'Organization' choose 'Other Authorized Users'. Teachers can also e-mail the name of their school to mentor.support@albertamentors.ca to have it added to the list of organizations. Teachers will be given an account that allows them to track their students' progress.
 - iv. After students click 'create my new account' at the bottom of the form, a link to the online training will be sent to their e-mail address. Students will need to visit their e-mail accounts to confirm their new online training account and gain access to the training.
4. Students will have an option to allow the website to read the content aloud or they can turn off the sound and move through the content at their own pace. Students will explore five lessons: 1) Introduction and Learning Objectives; 2) History of Mentoring; 3) How to be a Mentor; 4) The Mentoring Relationship – Dynamics and Guidelines; and 5) Mentoring Programs.
5. At the end of the final module, students will be prompted to complete the Online Mentor Training Quiz. Upon completion, students will receive a certificate from the Alberta Mentoring Partnership.
6. Mentees are also encouraged to prepare for the mentoring process by completing the interactive Online Mentee Training where they can create a story about themselves to share with their mentor found at <http://moodle.albertamentors.ca>.

Activity 2: Role Plays

1. Review the handouts 'Mentoring: The Basics' with students.
2. Ask each student to find a partner. One person will be the 'mentee' (younger child) and the other will be the 'mentor' (teen). Each person will have an opportunity to practice being the mentor. If there is a group of three, ask the extra person to observe for the first round.
3. Using the cut up 'Mentoring Scenarios' handout, provide the mentees with a scenario.

4. Tell the mentors that they are at the mentees' school for a mentoring session. The mentees will act out a common issue and the mentors should respond using their best judgement and their new knowledge about mentoring.
5. After 5 minutes, stop the role play and ask the partners to discuss:
 - What was the issue?
 - What strategies did the mentor use to respond to the problem?
 - What else could the mentor have tried to manage the issue?
6. Ask the partners to switch roles. Provide the new mentee with a different scenario to role play with their partner. After 5 minutes, stop the role play and ask the partners to discuss the questions from step 5.

Class Discussion

1. Did anyone have a scenario that they found to be particularly difficult? Share the scenario with the class and tell us how the mentor handled it.
2. Did anyone have a scenario that they felt they managed very well? Share the scenario with the class and tell us how the mentor handled it.
3. Who could you go to if you had any issues or concerns?
4. What else do you feel you need to know before taking on the role of a mentor?

Conclusion

Students have been learning about the powerful impact mentoring can have on positive mental health for both mentors and mentees. In order for students to fully understand this impact, an opportunity to practise mentoring in a one-on-one or group setting should be arranged.

This lesson provides an introductory letter for potential partnering school liaisons as well as an overview of important logistics to be determined prior to getting started. In order for youth mentors to be successful, they should participate in training to fully understand the role of a mentor, child safety issues, common challenges and the supportive role of teachers and staff. Junior high students can be powerful and effective mentors to young children, especially when provided with adequate support and opportunities to fully prepare prior to engaging in the mentoring process.

Part III – 'Putting it into Practice' will provide students with an opportunity to plan their mentoring sessions in advance, to practise their new mentoring skills and to reflect on the overall impact mentoring has on mental health and well-being.

Assessment Strategy

Students will complete the online quiz from the Online Mentor Training Course.

References

Big Brothers Big Sisters (2012). Pre-Match Training: Strong From The Start Manual.

Government of Alberta. *High School Teen Mentoring Activity Book*. 2010. PDF version retrieved from alis.alberta.ca/publications

Pizzato, Nicole. Mentoring Resources (2008). <http://www.youthfriends.org/resourcecenter/yflibrary.html>

Resources

Alberta Mentoring Partnership <http://www.albertamentors.ca>

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Online Training for Mentors and Mentees
<http://moodle.albertamentors.ca>

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Mentor Training Event Toolkit housed on
www.albertamentors.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters. Learning Centre.
<http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/en/home/learningmodules/default.aspx>

Mentoring Canada www.mentoringcanada.ca

Mentor www.mentoring.org

Training New Mentors: Effective strategies for providing quality youth mentoring in schools and communities (2007). The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & The National Mentoring Center <http://www.albertamentors.ca/public/data/documents/trainingnewmentors.pdf>

Teacher/ Principal Partnership Letter

Date: _____

Dear _____,

My class of grade 8 students at _____ School is currently learning about the positive impact of mentoring on mental health through the Mental Health Matters poster series (www.education.alberta.ca/mentalhealthmatters). My students would like to partner with an elementary class of 'mentees' to practise what they are learning and share some time with a younger child providing friendship and support.

Teen mentoring is a widely used school mentoring program across Alberta. Individual or groups of students are matched with younger students and meet in a supervised setting engaging in reading, homework, and game-related activities. Students are provided with basic training and come equipped with planned activities. Research has shown that teenagers can be powerful and effective mentors to children.

Mentoring activities promote positive mental health and well-being in both mentors and mentees. Mentors experience enhanced self-esteem, develop competence in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy, and increase their sense of social responsibility. For mentees, there is an increase in self-esteem, better attendance at school, improved social skills and behaviour and the opportunity to build a friendship based on support, encouragement, motivation and laughter – all important elements of positive mental health!

Please let me know if your class is interested in partnering with my group of teen mentors and we can begin discussing the details.

Regards,



Mental Health *matters*



Help... others!

Show respect and concern for others.

The best way to become comfortable about mental health is to talk about it. Start the conversation today!
Need help? Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
www.education.alberta.ca/mentalhealthmatters



Mentoring: The Basics



Responsibilities of a Mentor

1. Be a friend
2. Have realistic goals and expectations
3. Have fun together
4. Give your mentee voice and choice in deciding on activities
5. Put the mentee and their interests first
6. Be positive
7. Be consistent and reliable
8. Let your mentee have much of the control over what the two of you talk about—and how you talk about it
9. Listen
10. Respect the trust your mentee places in you

Building Positive Relationships

The overall goal is to develop a positive, friendly relationship with your mentee.

Here are some suggestions for developing a positive relationship:

- Create a comfortable atmosphere for your mentee by doing activities that promote the sharing of information and ideas, or identifying similar likes and dislikes
- Read books together that focus on strengths
- Let your mentee have some control over the choice of activities you do together
- Help your mentee feel positive about school
- Encourage your mentee to solve problems and make decisions
- Listen
- Laugh with them (a lot!)
- Be caring and supportive

Child Safety - No Secrets Ever

There should be no conversations or actions between you and your mentee that cannot be shared with guardians and teachers. This is to protect you, not to frighten or discourage you from developing a relationship with your student. Relax, have fun and be comfortable knowing you are building a positive friendship!

If a child tells you that they are being harmed or are likely to be harmed by a person in their life, you cannot keep this a secret. You must report this directly to the teacher in charge of the program. Do not leave the school without talking to someone first.

Mentoring Scenarios

Scenario 1:

You do not want to do the activity your mentor brought today. You cross your arms and tell your mentor that this activity is not fun and you would prefer to be outside playing with your friends.

Scenario 2:

You are having a bad day.

Scenario 3:

You are on your worst behaviour. You take something from your mentor that does not belong to you and knock some things off the desk when they take it back.

Scenario 4:

You are very distracted today. Your mentor asks you to pay attention to the activity but you can't help but wonder what the other mentees are doing with their mentors, what your dad packed for lunch and whether Jimmy will play soccer with you during recess.

Scenario 5:

You ask your mentor if you can do a different activity next time, but have no ideas to share and are not very clear whether you like their ideas or not.

Mentoring Scenarios: Teacher Tips

Scenario 1:

The mentee does not want to do the activities. The mentee crosses their arms and says that this activity is not fun and they would prefer to be outside playing with their classmates.

This is a common situation, especially when the mentee is missing lunch or recess to participate in the session. At first, some mentees will feel unmotivated to participate and would rather be playing with their friends. By preplanning you can avoid these problems and engage your mentee early.

To start, you could go for a power walk around the school and talk for about five minutes. Ask about their week or the time since you last met. You might want to compromise, working on one or two activities and then playing a game or doing some physical activity.

Get your mentee involved in the planning, when possible, to allow them to have some control over the sessions. This is a good way to engage them in the decision making.

It may be that your mentee is not in the mood, may be having a bad day or is not feeling well. We all have our moods where we do not want to do things, and that's okay. This likely will not happen very often. Try your best to incorporate some other types of learning activities.

Scenario 2:

The mentee is having a bad day.

Everyone is entitled to having a bad day, including children. We don't know what may have happened at home, during recess or in the classroom. You may notice your mentee is quieter than usual or somewhat distracted. If your student is feeling this way, this may be one of those days that you keep your reading to a minimum and enjoy another activity instead. You may want to find a joke book and read it together, or tell each other your favourite kid's jokes or go around the school for a power walk and talk. You could also ask what is wrong and talk to your mentee a bit about how to improve moods.

Scenario 3:

The mentee is on their worst behaviour.

It is rare that a child will misbehave during a mentoring session, but it does happen sometimes. If mentees misbehaviour during a visit, consider the following:

- Give a warning
- End the particular activity
- Try something new
- Ask a teacher for support

Physical discipline is not permitted. If you are not able to de-escalate the situation, ensure that you ask school personnel for assistance immediately. Remember that most children do some amount of testing to see what is appropriate with you and what they can get away with. In this situation be firm but friendly as most testing will disappear when they clearly understand their limits.

Scenario 4:

The mentee is very distracted.

Most children are easily distracted or they have a tendency to want to jump from one thing to another. This is normal. The key to handling this situation is to ensure that you are able to change activities at least a couple of times during your visit. Most children have a very hard time sitting and reading a book for an entire hour. They need variety. You may also want to avoid high traffic areas of the school or have students sit facing away from hallway traffic or activity.

Scenario 5:

The mentee asks to do a different activity next time but has no ideas and is unclear of what they like or dislike.

Start by referring to the activities supplied in this lesson plan. Many other activities related to education and career pathways for children in grades 3-6 can be found in the *High School Mentoring Activity Handbook*. Try to choose activities together and look for those that are more physical (build a model, move around the room) or plan a group activity. Another valuable resource is your mentoring teacher who has excellent ideas and solutions and also hears from other mentors what works well in their matches. Your mentee's teacher may be someone you would like to approach and ask if there is anything you can help your mentee with. You can also approach your fellow mentors and ask them what they find is helpful to do with their mentee.

Four Things for Mentors to Keep in Mind when Tackling Challenges:

1. **Be flexible.** Be willing to change activities and realizing your mentee may be having a bad day.
2. **Set limits and boundaries.** Remember it is okay to say, "No." Feel free to set limits by giving your student a choice, yet you control the parameters of the choices you offer.
3. **Ask for assistance.** If in doubt in any situation, do not hesitate to speak with school personnel or mentoring teacher.
4. **Have fun.** You want your mentee's experience with you to be enjoyable and fun. Your visit is something we want them to look forward to.

Mentoring Matters: Part III – Putting it into Practice



Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Program of Studies Outcomes

The student will...

L-8.7 relate personal knowledge and skills to potential opportunities for volunteering and providing service to others in the community

L-8.8 investigate the characteristics of a mentor, and practice mentorship in a group setting

Teacher Background

Mentoring is widely recognized as contributing to strong and healthy school communities by promoting positive mental health in mentors and mentees. Research shows that programs engaging youth as mentors results in enhanced self-esteem, competence in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy and the development of friendships based on support, encouragement, motivation and a caring relationship.

Many Alberta schools are involved in some form of school-based mentoring activities such as social skills programs, student leadership programs, athletic teams, and after-school clubs. Youth mentoring programs are a growing trend within school-based programming. A variety of models can be developed to meet the needs of an individual school or class and the options are endless.

The strength of mentoring is in the relationship and the relationships are at the heart of school connectedness. A growing body of research in the fields of education, health and resiliency indicates that students who feel connected to their school are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours and succeed academically. Students engaged in school demonstrate enhanced mental well-being related to an increase in resilience factors.

The sequence of activities in the Mentoring Matters Lesson Plan provides students with an opportunity to understand the role of mentoring as well as its intended impact and purpose. Students are given an opportunity to train as mentors in order to prepare for the challenges and opportunities which exist in mentoring relationships. This final section will provide students with an opportunity to practise mentoring in their school community and to develop a Mentoring Journal highlighting their experiences and allowing them the opportunity to reflect on the process and its impact on their mental well-being.

Objectives

Through the use of group activities and discussion, students will:

- Plan, prepare for, and practice mentorship in a group setting
- Reflect on the mentoring experience and its impact on positive mental health

Materials

- Mentoring Journal title page
- Duotangs (one for each student)
- A Planning and Reflection Worksheet for each mentoring session
- Mental Health Matters Collage Poster for reference
- Mentoring Activities handouts
- Various supplies and materials required for mentoring activities (books, paper, pens, pencils, crayons, etc.)

Get Ready

At this point, teachers should have determined the logistics of the mentoring sessions as outlined in Part II. Student mentors will have had the opportunity to complete the Online Mentor Training, practise role plays and engage in further discussions with teachers and peers on any concerns and questions related to the mentoring process. All students involved, both the mentors and mentees, should have a clear idea of the frequency and duration of the mentoring sessions, with a clear end date in mind.

The completion of the Mentoring Journal will support students through the mentoring process. They will feel prepared for each session by completing a Planning Worksheet as well as by reflecting on each session and how they feel that they can improve by completing the Reflection Worksheet after each mentoring experience. Students should be encouraged to collect art work, worksheets and photos for their Journal. A final assessment piece will allow students to reflect on how the experience has impacted their mental health, tying all three parts of the lesson plan together and maintaining a focus on how helping others positively benefits one's mental health.

Activity 1: Putting it into Practice

1. Provide each student with a copy of the Mentoring Journal title page and a duotang.
2. Individually or in pairs, have students plan out their mentoring experience using the Planning Worksheet. Students can prepare using the sample Mentoring Activities or by coming up with their own activity. More activities can be found at alis.alberta.ca/publications by downloading or ordering the High School Teen Mentoring Activity Book. Students should be encouraged to be as specific and detailed as possible

so that they feel prepared. Students are asked to link the activity to the Mental Health Matters poster series. Use the collage poster as a reference for the students as needed.

3. Mentors are now ready to participate in their first mentoring sessions. The mentees and youth mentors will meet in a supervised setting for a designated amount of time. Students can bring their Mentoring Journal for reference as well as any materials they will require for the activity.
4. After the mentoring session, provide mentors with a Reflection Worksheet as an opportunity to reflect on their experience using the guiding questions. This is an important step in the process where students can reflect on their experiences, determine the impact on their mental health, share ideas and plan for future sessions or mentoring opportunities.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 for each mentoring session. Keep all worksheets in the Mentoring Journal.

Activity 2: Closing the Match

1. The process of formally closing a match is very important for the participants. It is important to have a clear date on which the match ends with reminders and planning leading up to this date. The match closure process provides participants with an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the match and the time they spent together.
2. Using the Mentoring Activities handout 'Closing the Match,' support mentors in collaborating with their mentees to decide on a special activity for their last visit. A list of ideas is included on the handout as well as helpful discussion points to have with their mentee.

Class Discussion

1. Why are we mentoring others?
2. How has helping others positively impacted your mental health?
3. What have been some of your favourite moments in the mentoring process?
4. What recommendations would you make for other students just starting out in the becoming mentors?

Conclusion

Mentoring is the presence of a caring individual who provides a young person, or mentee, with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role-modelling over time.

Mentoring, a form of helping others through the development of supportive friendships, positively impacts the mental health and well-being of youth mentors and their mentees.

Research shows that programs engaging youth as mentors results in enhanced self-esteem, competence in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy and increases school connectedness and a sense of belonging. Mentoring is widely recognized as contributing to strong and healthy school communities.

The activities in this three-part lesson plan provide students with a sound understanding of the roles, purpose and impact of mentoring along with training activities to prepare for taking on the role of a mentor. Students are encouraged to take on a leadership role by actively planning for each session, with input from their mentees. An ongoing Mentoring Journal provides the opportunity to keep a record of match activities, successes and challenges, as well as reflect on the impact helping others has on their mental health. Schools and communities will benefit from the relationships that are developed. Student mentors will understand the impact giving back can have on their self-esteem, development and overall mental health and will relate this knowledge to potential opportunities for volunteering and providing service to others in their school and community now and in the future.

Assessment Strategy

Students will participate in the ongoing process of completing a Mentoring Journal. A Planning Worksheet and Reflection Worksheet should be created for every mentoring session. Students should include their Online Mentor Training certificate as well as any items from their mentoring sessions such as art work, worksheets and photos. Teacher observations of the mentoring process may also be included.

Students will culminate the activity with a one-page final reflection piece following their last mentoring session. Drawing from their mentoring experiences, students should answer the following question:

How has helping others through mentoring impacted your positive mental health?

Extension Culminating Activity

Utilizing the Teen Mentor Training resource housed in www.albertamentors.ca, provide students with an opportunity to test out their new knowledge with the interactive Jeopardy game. Students will be quizzed on common definitions, roles and famous mentors in the media.

References

Big Brothers Big Sisters (2012). Pre-Match Training: Strong From The Start Manual.

Government of Alberta. *High School Teen Mentoring Activity Book*. 2010. PDF version retrieved from alis.alberta.ca/publications

Pizzato, Nicole. Mentoring Resources (2008). <http://www.youthfriends.org/resourcecenter/yflibrary.html>

Windsor Public Library. Six tips to help your book buddy succeed. <http://www.windsorpubliclibrary.com/bookbuddy/six-tips.php>

Resources

Alberta Mentoring Partnership <http://www.albertamentors.ca>

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Online Training for Mentors and Mentees <http://moodle.albertamentors.ca/login/index>.

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Mentor Training Event Toolkit housed on www.albertamentors.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters. Learning Centre. <http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/en/home/learningmodules/default.aspx>

Mentoring Canada www.mentoringcanada.ca

Mentor www.mentoring.org

Training New Mentors: Effective strategies for providing quality youth mentoring in schools and communities (2007). The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & The National Mentoring Center <http://www.albertamentors.ca/public/data/documents/trainingnewmentors.pdf>



Mentoring Journal

My Name: _____

My Mentee(s) Name(s): _____



Planning Worksheet- Before the Mentoring Session

Date and time of mentoring session:
Description of the activity:
Length of time this will take:
Materials I will need to bring:
Materials that will be supplied:

Things I need to know to do this activity:

What the mentee will learn:

Links to Positive Mental Health posters: *(check all that apply)*

Connect

Help

Choose

Enjoy

Manage

Discover



Reflection Worksheet - After the Mentoring Session

Things I learned:
How this activity supported my mental health:
How this activity supported my mentee's mental health:
Things my mentee liked about the activity:

Challenges I encountered and how I managed them:

Things that made me feel good about the mentoring session:

Things I would do to improve next time:

Who I would ask for help:



 **Mental Health**
matters



Just like physical health, everyone has mental health.

There are many things we can do to support our own mental health:

- connect with others
- discover strengths
- help others
- manage challenges
- choose healthy lifestyles
- enjoy life

The best way to become comfortable about mental health is to talk about it. Start the conversation today!
 Need help? Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
www.education.alberta.ca/mentalhealthmatters



Mentoring Activities

Learning to Read

K/1/2/3

Sitting down and reading with your mentee is a great activity to help them build the skills and confidence to become stronger readers. The following tips will help you to support their learning.

Tips to Help Your Mentee Succeed

1. Share time

You can support your mentee's self-esteem by sharing reading time. It is also very important to stop and listen to your mentee's questions.

2. Sharing reading and writing activities

There are many ways to share reading and writing activities in natural ways such as following the directions to a game, having a child dictate a story while you write, playing word games, and sharing stories.

3. Build on the mentee's interests

Choose books based on your mentee's interests. Find books and materials that will help the child develop their interests and understand them better. This will help your mentee learn.

4. Offer support and encouragement

When your mentee learns something new, take pride in it and say, "Look what you can do!" When learning does not come easily, help your mentee to build confidence by noticing their strengths and accomplishments and encouraging them to keep trying.

5. Support

Use resources such as the booklists on this page to find books that your mentee will enjoy. Your teacher and/ or the librarian are people who can support you to come up with realistic goals and expectations around your mentee's reading level.

6. Serve as a model

Your mentee will be watching and observing you. Be a good model by showing enthusiasm and a positive attitude for reading and writing.

- For ideas on great books to read with your mentee, Youth Friends compiled a comprehensive reading list for ages K-3 that can be found here:
<http://www.youthfriends.org/resourcecenter/yflibrary.html>

Mnemonics

Grade 3/4

Supplies

- Blank paper
- Mnemonics Worksheet and Memory Tips
- Bag of Goodies

What Mentees Will Learn

Mentees will learn effective learning strategies to help them learn.

What to Do

1. Explain to mentees that you will be taking some items out of a bag, showing it to them and then placing the items on a table.
2. When all the items (10) are on the table, cover them up with the bag and ask mentees to write down as many of the items as they can remember in a couple of minutes.
3. Once time is up to compare your mentee's written answers to the items on the table.
4. Discuss with mentee why they remembered the items they did and, if they remembered all 10 items, how they did this.
5. Go through the Mnemonics Worksheet and Memory tips sheet and practice doing the four memory techniques using the items in the bag.

Mnemonics Worksheet and Memory Tips

1. Organize and Associate

Ask your mentee to organize and associate the items in the bag.

- Group information into meaningful categories. The more meaningful something is, the more likely we are to remember it.
- Associate information with something you do, someone you know, or other material you have learned.

2. Create words

Create an acronym with your mentee.

Tip: Take the first letter of each word and make a word out of it (acronym). You can remember the colours of the rainbow (red, orange, green, blue, indigo, and violet) using the acronym ROY G BIV.

3. Visualize

Ask your mentee to visualize the items in the bag.

- Create visual images of the information. With the items in the bag, it may have been helpful to create a picture of what each of the items looks like.
- Visually map information you are trying to remember on something familiar to you (human body, car, map of Canada).
- Method of Loci: visually place information you need to remember in different areas of your house. When trying to recall it, mentally take a tour through your house to jog your memory of the information.

4. Create poetry

Create a song or a poem with your mentee.

- Put the information into a song, story, rhyme or poem.
- The sillier or more unique (very different) the story or poem, the more likely you will remember it.

The Story of My Life

Grade 5/6

Supplies

- The Story of My Life Worksheet
- Pens, markers, crayons

What Mentees Will Learn

Mentees will make connections between what they are doing now and their dreams in the future. Mentees will learn to make timelines and set goals.




What to Do

1. Ask mentees to write the story of their life by filling in the columns in The Story of My Life Worksheet.
2. For each age, ask them to describe where they live or want to live, what they like or what they think they'll like, and what they do or want to do in the future. They can draw pictures instead of writing descriptions if they prefer.
3. Finally discuss the steps that your mentee would need to take in order to meet these goals. For instance, if they wanted to be a heavy duty mechanic, they would need to succeed in science and math now. Or, if they wanted to be a public relations representative, they would need to study English and social studies.

Sample Questions

For the adult stage, use these questions as a guide:

- Do you think you will be working in the future? If so, where and what will you be doing? If not, why?
- If you do want a particular job, what special education or training do you think you will need?
- How long do you think this training will take?
- Where do you think you would go to do the special education or training?

	Where are you living?	What are you interested in?	What are you doing?
Examples	In Alberta, in a house, in an apartment...	Playing soccer, eating pizza, drawing cartoons...	Going to school, playing with friends, working...
Baby 			
Present 			
Teenager 			
Adult 			

Closing the Match

All Ages

What mentees will learn

Mentees will learn that like many relationships, a mentoring match will reach a point where a mentor and mentee will celebrate their time together and say good-bye.

What to do

1. Talk about your match with your mentee. Talk about what you learned from each other. What were your favourite things about the match? What were your favourite activities? What did you like most about each other? What will you miss most about your visits?
2. Plan a special activity together for your last mentoring session. Ask your mentee what they would like to do to celebrate your match.
3. Find a way to say thank you to one another. The following ideas may be used:
 - Write a thank you note or make a thank you card for one another
 - Take a picture of the two of you and decorate a picture frame as a gift for your mentee
 - Make friendship bracelets for each other
 - Plan a celebration party with music and treats as a class
 - Make a scrap book of all of the art work and activities you have done together
 - Create a story or a drawing (or both!) about your friendship