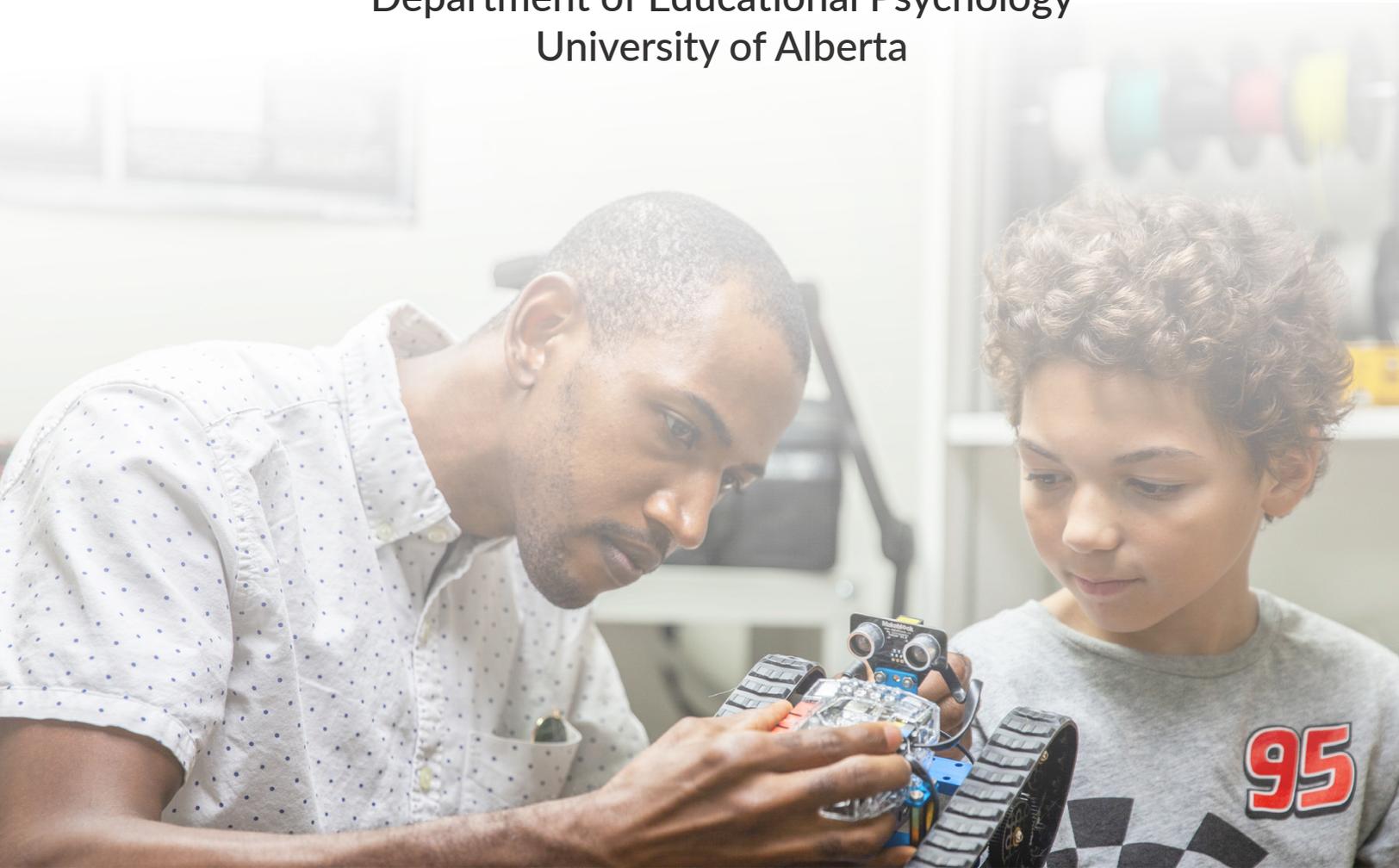


Recruitment Toolkit for Engaging Male Mentors:

Findings from the More Male Mentoring (3M) EnviroScan

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The below information and themes emerged from our semi-structured interviews with nine mentoring agencies in Canada. Theme #1 focuses specifically on recruitment strategies for engaging men in mentorship roles. These strategies are described in detail within this toolkit and examples given by organizations that participated in this study are provided.

The following key messages were also communicated across various interviews:

- Greater recruitment relative to retention challenges with men
- Greater proportion of female relative to male mentors
- More female staff at an organizational level relative to males
- More male children/youth waiting to be matched with a male mentor, relative to females

It should be noted that the organizations interviewed differed in terms of their programming options (i.e. community-based mentorship, school-based mentorship, corporate mentorship, cross-peer mentorship, etc.) as well as where they were at in terms of their male recruitment efforts and initiatives. The information presented, therefore, is reflective of a variety of perspectives and can be drawn on by other mentoring agencies looking to engage men in mentorship roles. It is also recognized that the strategies discussed in this toolkit are not exhaustive. Men are a heterogeneous group with a vast array of backgrounds, beliefs, interests and strengths. Therefore organizations seeking to recruit male mentors need to be mindful of this diversity to be as inclusive as possible in their efforts.

Theme #1:

Strategies for Recruiting Men as Mentors: Engaging Men at the Community & Individual Level

Theme #2:

Characteristics of Mentorship: Multiple Settings, Forms & Associated Benefits

Theme #3:

Masculinity and Mentorship: Challenges and Barriers in Engaging Men and Perceptions of Mentorship as “Women’s Work”

Theme #4:

Current Landscape of Men In Mentoring: Underrepresentation of Men in Mentoring Roles and Agencies and Recognition that the Approach Needs to Change

Theme #5:

Men Tend to “Stay” Once They Are Engaged: Limited Retention Challenges Relative to Recruitment.

Theme #6:

Consideration of Culture: “Foreignness of the Concept” and Efforts to Make Mentorship More Culturally Relevant

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Host male-oriented recruitment events

- Examples may include hosting events at sports bars during games or at a local recreation center or at a comic book / games shop.
- These activities help to engage men and raise awareness in the broader community surrounding the need for male mentors.

“I think also the word “mentor” is a very daunting word. It’s been sort of hijacked by Forbes Magazine where if you want to be a CEO of a Fortune 500 company, it’s good to get a mentor. So I think people think, **especially men,** think that being a mentor means that you have to have your whole life figured out and you have to be the perfect human being before you can give back. But that’s obviously not the case. Any life experience is enough to be a mentor to at-risk youth right? So I think it might seem a little daunting.” (participant comment)

Inform men about what mentorship entails and the benefits involved

- Men might be unsure about what mentorship looks like, the time commitment, the types of activities they would engage in, or what they have to “offer” a kid. It is important, therefore, to familiarize men with the various types of activities that they can participate in with their mentees as well as the time commitment involved (i.e. weekly meetings for the duration of a year).
- Some men might hold the belief that playing sports or partaking in more traditionally male oriented activities are not available within the context of the mentoring relationship. Many agencies, however, do provide opportunities to engage in a wide array of activities to fit a mentor’s interests. As such, educating potential male mentors about what the role entails might help to challenge misconceptions about mentorship. In this sense, men may come to see themselves as being interested in and capable of becoming a mentor.
- Agencies can also tell men what is “in it for them,” what the role can look like, and how easy it can be. This can help to make the concept of mentorship less intimidating.



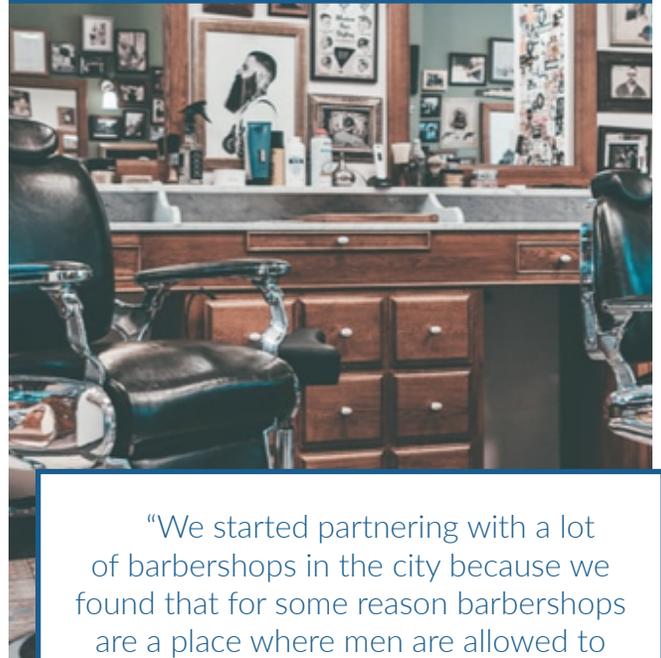
Establish connections with industries, businesses, and job sites that are male oriented and develop a “presence” in the broader community.

- Provide these organizations with information about becoming involved in mentorship and use them as settings to recruit men. Some examples may include:
 - Barbershops
 - Other companies/industries that hire primarily men (i.e. Mr. Lube).
- Agencies can also create partnerships with popular athletes who can participate in events that help to raise awareness of the agency. Involving popular athletes also shows that the agency is up to date, knowledgeable of what is happening in the city, and involved with the “right” people.
- Additionally, older mentoring organizations can consider renovating, rebranding logos, and modernizing the agency. This may help to develop a more “relatable” presence in the broader community.

Organize volunteer appreciation nights and events for male mentors

- Men can bring friends who might be interested in volunteering but have questions or uncertainties. These questions can be answered at the event by program staff.
- Applications can also be provided at the event for men who are interested in starting the process of becoming a mentor.
- Such events also provide male mentors with the opportunity to connect with other males, which has the potential to influence retention. Men might feel isolated as volunteers and such events allow them to connect with other male mentors and share their experiences.

“Men are less guarded at a barbershop for some reason. So we started working with barbershops and getting them to talk to their clients about volunteering.”



“We started partnering with a lot of barbershops in the city because we found that for some reason barbershops are a place where men are allowed to be vulnerable and talk about sort of anything they want to talk about.”

Utilize current male mentors or the larger volunteer team as a resource, and engage them in the recruitment process

- Staff can connect with current male mentors and ask if they have any friends that might be interested in becoming involved in mentorship.
- One on one meetings with potential mentors (i.e. those referred by current male mentors) can serve as an opportunity for program staff to share what the agency does alongside the need for male mentors. Application materials can be made accessible during these meetings to help streamline the process.
- Staff can also ask current male mentors if they have ideas or suggestions for recruiting other men.
- Additionally, agencies can engage their existing volunteer team and ask if they know of anyone that is well suited for the role. These individuals have a good idea of what is expected, what mentorship entails, etc. and might have friends, relatives, or peers whom they feel would be interested and willing to talk more about the opportunity to become a mentor.
- For potential male mentors, being approached by someone that they trust and know rather than a recruiter might make a notable difference. Hearing about the position from someone personally involved and happy in the role might come across as more meaningful and genuine. It also provides more of a “true” view of the mentoring relationship as men are being approached by someone who is currently in one.
- For current mentors in male dominated professions, recruitment staff can ask if they can think of others in their program who might also consider becoming a mentor. Some of these professions have volunteer requirements and, therefore, are a good pool to tap into.
- Current male mentors can also advocate in the broader community as well as within their own social network, providing men with the opportunity to learn about the program (i.e. time commitment, application process, etc.) and come to view it as something they can become involved in and would find enjoyable.

“So they’re not hearing it from somebody who’s trying to sell them somethingit’s coming from somebody who’s happy in their position, who’s finding it a meaningful experience for themselves and who has chosen to tell this particular person about it because of something they see in them.”



Get personal, build relationships, and spread the word in the community

- Staff can reach out to positive male role models in their own lives that may not be aware of the opportunities for mentorship or considered themselves as being suitable for this role but demonstrate care and compassion toward children.
- Agencies can also specifically target men by letting them know that you could really use them in your program.
- Some men might not be aware that opportunities within mentorship agencies are available to men, and that they are actively looking to recruit males. By having conversations with men, staff can answer their questions and “debunk” any myths associated with the position.
- Recruitment efforts can also speak to the universality of mentorship. Some men, for example, are able to empathize with being a youth and feeling alone or as if they did not have someone to connect to. Speaking into that “void” can be incorporated in male recruitment efforts.
- Additionally, extra time may need to be taken to build relationships within communities (i.e. Indigenous communities) through volunteering and attending events. In this sense, staff are making an effort to be part of the community instead of just asking for volunteers. This in turn helps to develop a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Setting up interactive booths at public events can also serve as a means to provide information and raise awareness of the need for male mentors. This helps the organization have a “presence” in the community.
- Moreover, spreading the word in the community through existing connections and attending community events can be done.
- Staff can also target certain businesses or settings within the community (i.e. University student population).

“I’ve been **reaching out to guys that I know** that are in this field that ... well, and actually not even just in the field, like any guys that I know that really have, like a caring compassion for kids, and just be, like look, I know maybe you might not have thought about a thing like this but why don’t you come and try it? ”

“But my experience has been when I target a male and say, **“I could really use you in my program,”** they’re very willing. And the males that I have in my program are every bit as nurturing and capable in the same skills that the women are.”

“So we’ll go and volunteer our time and just start to build relationships there and talk about the work we do and things like that.....So that’s helped us immensely in terms of everybody kind of knows us and knows that we’re being a part of the community versus just always asking the community for something.” “So what’s happening is that they’re getting to know us, and they’re thinking about our agency, and they’re wanting to help us as well because we’re helping them.”

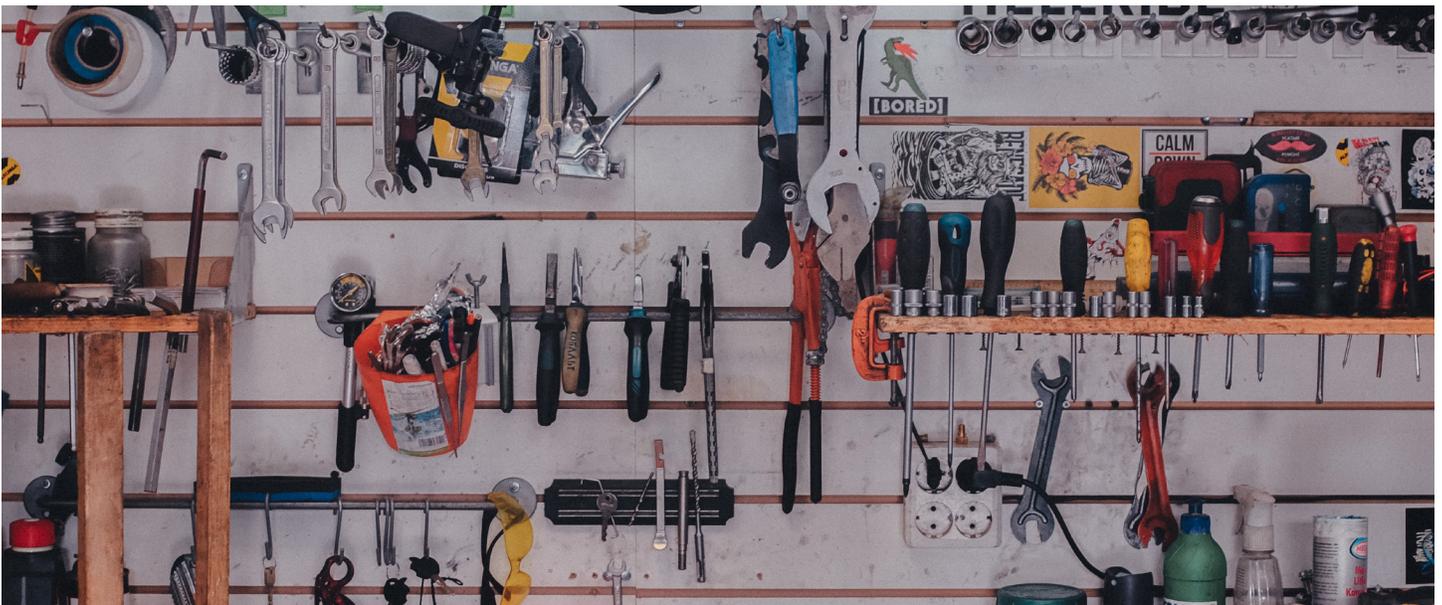
Collaborate with schools and establish school-based mentorship opportunities

- Within schools, there may be opportunities for school-based mentoring programs. Such programs can match male high school students with children in elementary or junior high school.
- Advertisements for male mentors that include pictures of males and utilize “male language” can also be placed in schools.



Provide group-based community events and mentorship activities

- Such events increase men’s awareness of the need for mentors and show young boys what a possible career might be, what the job entails, and the education required. Some examples might include going to an auto body shop, fabrication shop, dealership, police station, fire station, etc.
- Group settings might be more comfortable for males relative to one-on-one mentorship.
- These events also help to demonstrate that being a mentor might not be as difficult as men might have thought and have the potential to shift their perceptions surrounding these youth as “troublemakers” to kids who are just in need of some “extra time.”
- Additionally, such groups can be established for male youth who are on a waitlist for a one-on-one mentor.



If possible, establish a dedicated recruitment team

- This recruitment team can involve males to increase male visibility in the organization. This allows men to see themselves as having a place within the agency.
- Moreover, this recruitment team can focus specifically on engaging mentors, providing them with the time and capacity to try novel strategies and individualize their approach depending on the potential mentors' needs.



Expand traditional mentorship opportunities

- Agencies can consider offering opportunities for shared mentorship.
- This is particularly important for those men who engage in shift work and are unable to meet with their mentee every week.
- In shared mentorship (i.e. two male mentors paired with a male youth), mentors can switch off meeting with the mentee, so that they still get the consistency of meeting with a mentor regularly. This arrangement helps to remove the barrier of shift work/scheduling from preventing men from becoming involved in mentorship.
- Additionally, agencies can establish corporate mentorship opportunities where male youth can be brought directly to an office and meet with their mentor over lunch.
- Couples mentorship opportunities can also be provided (i.e. husband and wife co-mentor a child).

“So, for example, if someone does work shift-work we’ll say maybe you and a friend that’s on another shift could kind of tag team, each take a turn, one week on or one week off, mentoring one student.”



Create advertisements with “male focussed language”

- Instead of emphasizing being a caring or nurturing individual, tailor the advertisements to describe activities that might be of interest to men. For example, an advertisement could include the following statement “if you like to play basketball, you can be a mentor.”
- Such advertisements should also feature pictures of men as mentors so that men can see themselves in this role. Agencies can also consider using photographs of real matches at locations within the community in these advertisements.

As an agency, openly acknowledge the challenge in engaging men as mentors and the need for more men.

- This information can be included in recruitment messages and communicated in conversations with individuals.

“Like if we’re putting out a whole bunch of flowery type, or even nurturing type language, maybe they don’t see themselves in that, so making it more of the male language.”

Meet volunteers where they are at and adopt an individualized approach

- From an agency perspective, be willing to do whatever the volunteer needs to get them through the door. For example, take potential male mentors out for coffee to answer their questions, dispel myths they may possess, etc.
- Utilize multiple ways of entry and access points to becoming a volunteer (i.e. social media, word of mouth, etc.).
- Talk to men about becoming involved in mentorship in areas that they naturally congregate in.

“Some of those volunteers have also referred us to some of their friends, and then we’ve taken them out for coffee as well just to **talk about our agency and the need for volunteers**, and then they’ve all been signed and so it’s been very successful.”



Expand recruitment efforts to target older men as mentors

- Consider dedicating time to recruiting men from older demographics. For many of these men, they may possess knowledge that feel they can share with others and have already passed onto their own children.

“I don’t think I have anything but I just have lots of knowledge about cars and so I want to teach somebody else about a car, taught all my grandkids, and I want to keep teaching.... And so we found him a fifteen-year-old boy that was interested in taking apart a car and that’s what they’re doing.”

When engaging in recruitment, tailor your pitch to the target audience and what might be of interest to them

- Consider what might appeal to the audience you are approaching or trying to recruit and embed this in your recruitment pitch. Some examples are outlined below.
- When speaking to police officers, staff can talk about how mentorship programs are a form of early intervention and help at-risk youth not get involved in risky behaviours.
- Men who are interested in becoming a police officer might have to spend time volunteering with children/youth. As such, gaining experience with those involved in the law might be of interest to and benefit them.
- Other male dominated careers (i.e. firefighters) may also have volunteer requirements, and mentorship can be an option for them.
- Additionally, men who are considering a career in social work can have the opportunity to see if they enjoy working with different groups of children through mentorship (i.e. those involved with the law).
- For men in a university setting who might be thinking about applying for a graduate programme, staff can talk about mentorship as a tool that will help differentiate their resume during recruitment.
- Targeting these specific groups and tailoring the pitch accordingly can be done by mentoring agencies and recruitment staff.

“And then if we talk to businesses, we try to talk to them in a way where we tell them that volunteers get as much out of it as our little brothers and little sisters do, mainly because you have that opportunity to sort of just let loose without thinking about work and be a kid again and enjoy the moment while inadvertently making a huge impact on a child’s life.”

Target your approach to how potential volunteers think and act and adopt a marketing perspective

- Develop recruitment initiatives that capitalize on “why” volunteering might appeal to men.
- Consider how your target demographic thinks and acts and tailor your approach accordingly. Millennials, for example, might be more interested in what they can get out of volunteering and how they are viewed by their peers if they volunteer in the community. Agencies can consider making the program social media friendly to allow them to share the great work that they are doing.
- Additionally, some agencies have partnered with popular sports teams or athletes and noticed an influx of male volunteers after this initiative.
- Agencies can also utilize recruitment strategies that tap into emotional strings of potential mentors. For example, some people volunteer not only to help the community but also to make themselves feel a bit better.
- Moreover, agencies can consider looking at volunteering as a product, volunteers as a consumer, and try to figure out what these volunteers gain from it (becoming a mentor), what they lose from it and then think about how they can amplify their gains and remedy their losses.

Utilize social media to promote the organization’s programs and make enrollment as easy and accessible as possible

- Online training (i.e. webinars) help to streamline the application process and make it more convenient. Some agencies noted that the long enrolment process was contributing to participants dropping out. By simplifying the application process, potential mentors can become excited about volunteering instead of preoccupied with all the steps that they need to take to become involved.
- When developing social media advertisements, design them to target men. Organizations can use real matches in the community so that they men can see themselves engaging in mentorship (example: take a picture of a mentor and mentee playing basketball in a court known to a community).



Recruitment efforts should be “culturally relevant” and approachable to those who might not be familiar with mentorship

- In certain groups, mentorship might have been done “naturally” by a cousin or a member of the extended family. Translating a recruitment poster, therefore, is not enough to engage men from diverse cultural backgrounds. Efforts should be designed to explain mentorship in a way that men from diverse backgrounds can relate to and connect with.
- Agencies can also connect and collaborate with community leaders, and appeal to men in language and in forums where they are at (i.e. faith centers).
- These initiatives help to establish a presence, build relationships, and create a narrative that men can see themselves in.
- The recruitment dynamic may also be different when men are approached to be mentors from people whom they are familiar with or have a pre-existing relationship with.



“It’s really hard to explain mentorship to someone who just doesn’t have an analogy to it in their language or their culture.”



Future Directions:

Engage Male Mentors

- Engage current male mentors in recruitment efforts and future research. Their experiences are valuable and understudied.

Involve Male Staff

- Explore the perspectives of male staff within mentoring organizations.
- How can we use their experiences to involve other men?

Organizational Efforts

- Address the lack of male representation at an organizational level.

Widening the scope: Look outside of the mentorship community and continue to conduct research

- Is the general public aware of the need for male mentors?
- How can we raise public awareness?

Ongoing research to help inform practice

- What recruitment strategies are effective?
- What are the perspectives of male mentees & mentors in terms of the role of gender in mentorship?

More Males Mentoring Enviroscan:

1. What is the name of your agency?

2. Tell me a bit about your agency.

3. What mentorship services do you provide?

- One-to-One Mentoring
- Peer Mentoring
- Group Mentoring
- Cross-age Mentoring
- E-Mentoring
- In-school Mentoring
- Formal Mentoring
- Informal Mentoring

4. Tell me about the state of male mentorship at your agency./

5. Relative to females, does your agency have a shortage of male mentors? If so, why do you think this is?

6. What are some challenges you have in recruiting male mentors?

7. What are some challenges you have in retaining male mentors?

8. What are some effective strategies your organization has used in recruiting or retaining male mentors?

9. What do you think makes these strategies effective?

10. Are you aware of any effective strategies used by other agencies to recruit or retain male mentors?