YOUTH MENTORING: RESEARCH ON PROGRAM PRACTICES

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

MENTOR CANADA

Mentor Canada is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring. Our goal is to build sector capacity to expand access to quality mentoring across Canada. Our work is focused in four areas: research, technology, public education, and the development of regional networks. MENTOR Canada was launched by the Alberta Mentoring Partnership, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition.

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Youth mentoring: Research on program practices. A review of the literature

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2021

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INTRODUCTION

MENTOR Canada's goal is to build the youth mentoring sector's capacity and expand young people's access to quality mentoring opportunities across Canada. Increasing the sector's knowledge of effective mentoring practices play a key role in this area.

Recent research on youth mentoring shows that mentoring has a significant albeit modest effect on a variety of outcomes associated with youth's socio-emotional and cognitive development, as well as on their academic and vocational attainment (DuBois et al., 2011; Raposa et al., 2019). Consequently, researchers argue that it is critical for programs to apply evidence-based practices to increase their effectiveness (Rhodes, 2008).

To support mentoring programs' adoption of evidence-based practices, MENTOR Canada conducted a literature review of the research relevant to the six processes involved in delivering such a program: recruitment and screening mentors, training, matching mentors and mentees, monitoring and supporting matches, and closing the mentoring relationship. A better understanding of the research evidence on youth mentoring is a strong foundation to implement informed and practical strategies aiming to improve program quality and effectiveness (Rhodes, 2008).

The literature review was conducted between September and December 2020. For each of the six processes outlined above, we highlighted themes from existing research. After summarizing the evidence, we emphasized each themes' implications for practice. The review prioritized research related to mentors' experiences. The majority of the research studies summarized here have been conducted in the United States. Nevertheless, the review pays close attention to Canadian studies and puts many of the findings from the United States into the Canadian context.

This literature review will inform the development of MENTOR Canada's Principles of Quality Mentoring: A Framework for Practice (forthcoming, fall 2021). The Principles of Quality Mentoring will support mentoring programs' implementation of contextually relevant principles and practices to enhance program quality and effectiveness. Other research-informed tools such as MENTOR (USA)'s Element of Effective Practice for Mentoring (EEPM)™ and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition's Toolkit on effective mentoring for youth facing barriers to success can also support programs' adoption of evidence-based practices.

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1. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

This literature review on mentor recruitment and retention was conducted between in September 2020. In total, 39 articles were reviewed. This process revealed four main themes that have implications for mentor recruitment and retention:

1. The functional approach to volunteer recruitment and retention;
2. Psychological contract theory and mentors' unfulfilled expectations;
3. Word-of-mouth recruitment;
4. Recruiting male mentors.

THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

For several decades, research has focused on understanding the various motivations that drive people to volunteer in their communities. Gil Cleary is a leading scholar in this area and has been able to identify six common motivations for volunteerism. These include:

1. Values: people who are motivated to volunteer by an internal value of helping others or contributing to a cause they deem worthy;
2. Understanding: volunteers who are motivated to learn more about themselves, others, and/or a particular problem or cause;
3. Social: people who are motivated to volunteer because their friends are volunteers or have others in their social networks who share an interest in volunteerism;
4. Career: people who are motivated to volunteer to make new professional contacts, strengthen their resumes, and/or become acquainted with a future career context)
5. Enhancement: people who are motivated to volunteer to increase their self-esteem, feel better about themselves, and/or feel needed in their community; and
6. Protective: people who are motivated to volunteer to feel less lonely, work through personal problems, relieve guilt, and/or escape from their own personal problems.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) is the most commonly used tool to assess these six motivations (Clary et al., 1998; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Miene, Haugen, 1994). Using the VFI, scholars have discovered that recruitment messages are more successful and persuasive when they match people's personal motivations for volunteering (Clary et al., 1998; Clary et al., 1994). Research has also discovered that volunteers who are able to satisfy their initial motivations for volunteering are more satisfied with their experience and are more likely to remain in their current volunteering position (Clary et al., 1998).

Of particular relevance to youth mentoring programs, a recent study discovered that these six motivations also apply to adults and their motivations for mentoring (Teye & Peaslee, 2020). In this study, 473 mentors who were participating in a Big Brothers Big Sisters program completed the VFI and described their motivations for becoming mentors. Amongst these mentors, values were the most commonly reported motivation for mentoring, such as wanting to be a positive role model and helping kids in their community (Teye & Peaslee, 2020). This finding has also been replicated in a study of volunteer mentors in a school-based mentoring program (Caldarella, Gomm, Shatzer, & Wall, 2010). This study of school-based mentoring also discovered that mentors who were able to satisfy their initial motivations for volunteering were more satisfied in their mentoring relationships and also reported being more interested in mentoring again in the future (Caldarella et al., 2010). Taken together, these findings suggest that adults are often driven by their values to become volunteers in youth mentoring programs. It is important to note that although mentors may be motivated by their values, research has also consistently discovered that mentors are driven by additional motives as well, such as career, social, and understanding (Evans, 2005; Strapp et al., 2014). As such, there seems to be a multi-motivational nature of mentoring (Strapp et al., 2014). These findings have several implications for mentor recruitment and retention.

Implications for Mentor Recruitment

Based on this research, Clary and colleagues would recommend that mentoring programs adopt a functional approach to their recruitment efforts (Clary et al., 1998; Clary et al., 1994). In other words, mentoring programs might consider tailoring their recruitment messages to several, or all of the six motivations above. This recommendation has also been made by several other scholars in the mentoring field (Garringer, 2006; Miranda-Diaz, Clark-Shim, Keller & Spencer, 2020; Strapp et al., 2014; Stukas & Tanti, 2005; Stukas, Clary & Snyder, 2014; Stukas, Daly & Clary, 2018; Teye & Peaslee, 2020). Based on the existing research, these recruitment messages might be more persuasive than more general recruitment campaigns that do not address some of the known reasons and motivations for deciding to volunteer.

Despite these recommendations, it is important for each mentoring program to consider the demographics of their local community and potential volunteers. Notably absent from the research on motivations for volunteering is the inclusion of Indigenous community members in and across Canada. Although these six motivations may apply to mentoring programs and their local pool of potential mentors, special consideration should always be given to the social and cultural diversity of the local context. Mentoring programs in diverse social and cultural communities might consider whether the above motivations are relevant and meaningful to their particular contexts. Hosting focus groups or more informal discussions with community members might be a good start for programs seeking to understand the perceptions and motivations of their local community members.

Implications for Mentor Retention

Based on the research above, mentoring programs may consider paying attention to mentors' motivations over time and how they may be influencing their volunteer experience and intentions to continue volunteering. Understanding whether mentors' motivations are being fulfilled can help practitioners intervene before mentors become disillusioned with their relationships and end them prematurely. This might involve periodically inviting mentors to discuss their motivations and how they might work with the program to satisfy and fulfill these internal motivations over the course of their mentoring experience (Stukas et al., 2018). Other researchers have also suggested that mentors' motivations might be used to facilitate discussions about which activities, mentee, and school/community might be most meaningful for them to become involved with (Caldarella et al., 2010).

Of particular relevance to Canada, some research suggests that there is a gap between how Canadian volunteers want to be recognized for their time and effort, and how organizations typically recognize and reward their volunteers. For example, according to Volunteer Canada's (2013) Volunteer Recognition study, many Canadian volunteers prefer a personal expression of thanks for their time, rather than the typical annual volunteer appreciation reception (Volunteer Canada, 2013, 2017). Canadian volunteers also expressed that they would be more motivated to learn about the impact of their volunteerism rather than receive a physical "reward" such as a certificate of appreciation (Volunteer Canada, 2013, 2017). Finally, younger Canadians reported that they would be particularly motivated to be recognized for their volunteerism in ways that could nourish and support their educational and career aspirations (Volunteer Canada, 2013, 2017). Based on the results of this study, Volunteer Canada developed the Volunteer Recognition Tool, which can help community-based organizations understand how each of their volunteers might want to be recognized for their volunteerism. Based on this study and the youth mentoring research cited above, by ensuring that Canadian volunteers are rewarded for their time and effort in ways that are meaningful and useful to them, mentoring programs might be able to better retain their volunteer mentors over time.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT THEORY & MENTORS' UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

Building upon the theme above, research has discovered that since people are motivated to volunteer for several reasons, they often enter their volunteer positions with several expectations (Kappelides, Cuskelly & Hoye, 2019; Thomas, Pritchard & Briggs, 2019). According to Psychological Contract Theory, a widely cited theoretical framework, these expectations focus on what volunteers will gain by volunteering with a particular organization and how those organizations will treat them. These expectations establish what researchers have labelled a Psychological Contract between volunteers

and community-based organizations (Kappelides et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019). What this means is that volunteers often develop their own ideas and expectations for what their responsibilities will entail and what they will gain from the experience, before they even begin volunteering. For example, research indicates that potential volunteers begin formulating their expectations (i.e., psychological contracts) during their very first interactions with an organization, such as while they are visiting an organizations website or reading descriptions of the volunteer opportunity in recruitment campaigns (Kappelides et al., 2019).

In support of Psychological Contract Theory, mentor's unfulfilled expectations have consistently been associated with the early closure of mentoring relationships (Spencer, 2007; Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack & Keller, 2020). Mentor's unfulfilled expectations can vary, but can include things such as underestimating the time commitment of mentoring, experiencing youth behaviour and familial challenges that are perceived to be too difficult to help with, and a general lack of perceived benefit and satisfaction from acting as a volunteer (Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2020). Of further interest, research has discovered that some mentors enter their mentoring relationships with almost romanticized expectations of their volunteering commitment – believing that mentoring simply involves playing catch in the park and having fun with their mentee (Spencer, 2007). Although these activities are certainly a part of mentoring, when these mentors are met with the sometimes challenging (yet extremely rewarding) task of developing and nurturing a positive mentoring relationship with a youth who may be experiencing various challenges and adversities, mentors' unrealistic expectations can go unfulfilled and they can prematurely end their relationships (Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2020). This theory and research have implications for mentor recruitment and retention.

Implications for Mentor Recruitment

Based on the research above, mentoring programs should carefully consider the language and content that they are using in their recruitment messages and what expectations they might be conveying to potential mentors (Kappelides et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019). Some researchers and mentoring practitioners have suggested that public service campaigns for mentoring programs often portray these volunteer opportunities in an overwhelmingly positive manner, with very little consideration of the challenges inherent to mentoring (Geiss, 2016; Strapp et al., 2014). Based on this research, programs should provide rich descriptions of their volunteer positions, expectations, and responsibilities – which might help potential volunteers adjust their expectations and establish more realistic and accurate psychological contracts and expectations (Geiss, 2016; Spencer, 2007; Strapp et al., 2014). Based on existing research on volunteerism in Canada, this recommendation has also been made by Volunteer Canada (2013, 2017).

Implications for Mentor Retention

Setting clear and realistic expectations may also help mentoring programs retain their volunteer mentors over time. For example, without addressing volunteers' unrealistic expectations, volunteers may experience a mismatch between their initial expectations and their actual volunteering experience, which might result in a "breach" of their psychological contract, which could eventually contribute to volunteer attrition (Kappelides et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019). In support of this recommendation, in a recent study of 537 mentors, those who felt that their mentoring programs set clear expectations were more likely to report being satisfied and highly committed to their mentoring relationships (Drew, Keller, Spencer & Herrera, 2020).

WORD-OF-MOUTH RECRUITMENT

In this review of the literature, word-of-mouth recruitment stood out as the most common recruitment method among volunteer organizations and youth mentoring programs (Garringer, 2006; Glenn, 2004; Kuhn, Nguyen, Silano, Smith, & Stewart, 2019; O'Connor, 2006;

Roaf, Tierney & Hunte, 1994; Shier, Larsen-Halikowski, & Gouthro, 2020; Stukas et al., 2014; Thomas, Pritchard & Briggs, 2019). In general, word-of-mouth recruitment takes place when employees, board members, families, and current volunteers discuss the benefits and merits of a particular organization and how others can get involved (Stukas et al., 2014).

This recruitment method has also been demonstrated to be quite successful in recruiting volunteer mentors. For example, in both existing versions of the Handbook of Youth Mentoring, word-of-mouth recruitment was described as the most successful form of mentor recruitment (Stukas & Tanti, 2005; Stukas et al., 2014). In other words, in several studies, current mentors reported that they became a mentor because someone personally recruited them and asked them to become a mentor (Stukas & Tanti, 2005; Stukas et al., 2014). In Canada's (2015) Guide to exemplary practices in volunteer recruitment and retention, word-of-mouth recruitment was also identified to be a particularly fruitful recruitment technique amongst Canadian populations (Government of Canada, 2015).

Implications for Mentor Recruitment

Based on the research above, scholars have recommended that mentoring programs begin implementing word-of-mouth recruitment strategies (Stukas & Tanti, 2005; Stukas et al., 2014). In general, this might involve encouraging volunteer mentors to discuss their positions with their friends, family, and colleagues, and describe why they got involved and the various benefits that they are experiencing (Ballasy, 2004; Blackman, 1999; Glenn, 2004). Other scholars have recommended that mentoring programs could begin providing mentors with various recruitment resources (i.e., brochures, videos, etc.) that could help them recruit other mentors (Kuhn et al., 2019). Mentoring organizations might also consider hosting various informal gatherings at local businesses, sporting events, and/or local places of worship where current mentors could mingle with potential volunteers to discuss their roles and perceived benefits (Glenn, 2004). In general, current research indicates that mentoring programs should consider implementing strategies that could increase their word-of-mouth recruitment.

RECRUITING MALE MENTORS

Recruiting male volunteers is a consistent challenge for many youth mentoring programs. This literature review identified three documents describing the challenges and potential solutions for recruiting male mentors (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). In each of these documents, two main challenges to male recruitment were identified.

First, male mentors described the potential challenges of stereotypical male gender roles (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). In these discussions, males described how men may not be attracted to volunteerism as these roles are traditionally marketed towards people who are nurturing, compassionate, and caring – characteristics that these men thought were misaligned with their characteristics (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). Garringer (2004) suggests that these stereotypes might especially influence the youth mentoring field, which often emphasizes child and youth development through nurturing and caring relationships.

The second challenge that male mentors described was the stereotypical pressure for men to earn money and support their families, which some researchers have termed the "breadwinner syndrome" (Blackman, 1999, p.8). Despite decades of progress, these documents discovered that men are still being socialized to identify as the primary income-earners in their family units, which often leaves little room in their schedules for volunteerism (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). Some men felt as though the societal pressure to provide financial support to their families was so great that if they decided to volunteer, they would neglect this traditional responsibility and somehow let their families down and/or not live up to their full potential (Blackman, 1999). This research has implications for the recruitment and retention of male mentors.

Implications for Mentor Recruitment

To address the challenge of traditional gender stereotypes, the men in these studies suggested that recruitment messages could begin presenting mentoring in a light that recognizes traditional male characteristics, such as independence and assertiveness (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). This particular sample of men thought that this might help other males recognize that they can make significant contributions to the youth in their community by embracing and applying their stereotypical characteristics. Garringer (2004) also states that programs should be aware that some men might not feel comfortable or capable of building a healthy developmental relationship with a child or youth. Although this may be the case, Garringer (2004) suggests that programs can help men

overcome these stereotypes by discussing the mentoring role in light of more traditional masculine motivations. This might be accomplished by discussing men's opportunities to not only be nurturing and caring, but also addressing real societal issues by stepping up as role models to the youth in their community (Garringer, 2004).

The men in these studies also suggested that mentoring organizations initiate recruitment campaigns that specifically target men (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). This sample believed that the men in their community, and in the general public, were often unaware of the shortage of male volunteer mentors (Blackman, 1999; Garringer, 2004; Glenn, 2004). Based on these findings, mentoring programs might consider tailoring their recruitment messages specifically to the men in their community.

In one study, 19 out of 20 male mentors were recruited through word-of-mouth recruitment (Glenn, 2004). Word-of-mouth recruitment was performed by friends, family members, and/or colleagues and simply involved people talking about their experiences as mentors (Glenn, 2004). Prior to being personally invited to volunteer, the men in this study had not considered volunteering, nor were they aware that they were needed by their local mentoring organizations (Glenn, 2004). Based on these findings, it was recommended that mentoring organizations begin extending well-crafted personal invitations to potential male volunteers (Glenn, 2004). The men in this sample also thought that mentoring organizations could begin encouraging their current male mentors to begin discussing their experiences as mentors and begin extending personal invitations to their family, friends, and co-workers (Glenn, 2004).

To help address general socialization issues, Blackman (1999) suggested that mentoring programs could begin offering more short-term volunteering opportunities for men to become acquainted with the roles and responsibilities of being a youth mentor. Recognizing the importance of screening, training, and child safety – Blackman (1999) suggested that mentoring programs could accomplish this through a form of "job shadowing." This would involve inviting potential volunteers to join a current match on an outing to discover the importance and benefits of mentoring. In terms of child safety, programs would need to get consent from youth, primary caregivers, and mentors beforehand and limit one-to-one contact between the mentee and the potential volunteer. Blackman (1999) suggested that this experience might help men overcome their hesitations and recognize that the societal narratives and stereotypes that they have been hearing are false and that they can apply their skills to make a significant difference in a young person's life.

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2. SCREENING

This literature review on mentor screening was completed in October 2020. In total, 35 articles were reviewed. Two main themes were identified that have implications for mentor screening:

1. Screening and identifying unsafe mentors;
2. Screening and identifying effective/ineffective mentors.

SCREENING AND IDENTIFYING UNSAFE MENTORS

Mentoring programs fulfill an extremely important and valuable purpose in Canadian society by matching children and youth with supportive adult volunteers. Despite the many positive outcomes that mentoring organizations offer young Canadians, the very nature of these programs can sometimes present risks to children and youth. One of the major risks that was identified in this literature review was the potential for children and youth to be sexually abused by their mentor (Herman, 1993; Kremer & Cooper, 2014; Roaf, Tierney & Hunte, 1994).

For several decades, researchers have explored the behavioural patterns of adults who sexually abuse children (Kremer & Cooper, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2006, 2008, 2013). The purpose of this research is to begin identifying certain "profiles" of adults that organizations should look out for during the screening process as they are assessing potential volunteers. Although still inconclusive, this research has discovered that adults who sexually abuse children often:

- have little or no social contact and relationships with other adults;
- feel as though they relate better to children;
- frequently move between occupations, homes, and/or school faculties/departments;
- collect child pornography;
- have hobbies and interests that are appealing to children and youth;
- are often over-involved in activities and communities that are child and youth-focused;
- have low self-esteem and a lack of empathy;
- have a general inability or willingness to develop relationships with adults;
- have a history of poor parent-child relationships; and
- have a history of alcoholism, depression, and/or have been sexually abused in the past (Kremer & Cooper, 2014).

Although research has discovered these various commonalities amongst perpetrators, it is important to mention that research has also discovered that perpetrators can be quite diverse in terms of their socioeconomic status, educational attainment, religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, and age (Kremer & Cooper, 2014). As such, although the research above can help programs identity certain "red flags," they are not guaranteed to identify adults who sexually abuse children. In general, the research above might be used to help programs identify whether applicants possess a combination of these indicators, which might be used as a basis for concern and further investigation and assessment (Kremer & Cooper, 2014).

An examination of cases of abuse in the context of mentoring programs in Canada revealed the following patterns and risks that mentoring organizations should be highly aware of:

- Grooming Behaviours: Be aware of grooming behaviours directed towards staff members (i.e., rather than grooming mentees and their parents, perpetrating mentors may seek to flatter and please staff members by volunteering at fundraising events, bringing their criminal record check to their first meeting, requesting to be matched with one of the more challenging mentees, etc.)
- Specific Mentee Preference: Be aware of applicants who provide detailed descriptions of their preferred mentee (i.e., when asked to describe who they might want to be matched with, perpetrating mentors in this study often provided very specific and detailed responses).
- Intentional Instability: Be aware of applicants who seem to "bounce around" a lot (i.e., perpetrating mentors often moved a lot, frequently changed jobs, were often in-between relationships, and/or moved between faculties and departments as students to avoid detection and punishment).

- Relationship Status: Be aware of applicants who are single and live in neighbourhoods that are misaligned with their current life stage/family status (i.e., perpetrating mentors were often single and some chose to live in family-based neighbourhoods to increase their access to potential victims).
- Social Network: Be aware of applicants who have a weak network of adult friends (i.e., perpetrating mentors usually have a lack of adult friends and tend to spend more time with children and youth).
- Early Abuse: Be vigilant about monitoring and supporting during the early phase of relationships and be aware of certain red flags (i.e., mentors usually abused their mentees within the first couple of mentoring sessions, sometimes even during the first meeting).
- Lack of Disclosure: Understand that mentees (especially male mentees) are highly unlikely to disclose the abuse to their parents, friends, or mentoring program staff during the course of their relationship.
- Behavioural Changes: Look for behavioural changes in mentors and mentees, rather than relying on mentees disclosing the abuse to their parents, friends, or mentoring program staff.
- Validate Gut Feelings: Create an organizational culture that validates gut feelings about potential applicants (i.e., in almost every case of child sexual abuse in this study, there was an adult who had a "weird" or "off" feeling about the mentor. Importantly, these adults often did not pursue these feelings and treat them seriously. As an organization, staff should be empowered to follow their informed intuition and be able to pursue further assessment and exploration due to these feelings).

This review also discovered that school-based mentoring programs may also pose risks for children and youth in Canada. For example, in a recent study on the prevalence of sexual abuse by K-12 personnel in Canada, researchers discovered that between 1997 and 2017, there were 750 cases involving 1,272 Canadian students (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2019). Although teachers represented the highest number of perpetrators (86%), other school personnel were also involved, including school volunteers (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2019). Consistent with previous research, this study also discovered that only 53% of children and youth disclosed their sexual abuse after it had occurred, with boys significantly less likely to disclose (25%) than girls (75%).

Implications for Screening

Mentoring programs must develop screening procedures that can help them identify potentially unsafe mentors and prevent them from volunteering in their programs.

In a recent review of more than 400 research articles, scholars identified several strategies that non-profit organizations can implement to help prevent child sexual abuse (Kaufman, & Erooga, Mathews, & McConnell, 2019). Researchers discovered that perpetrators often capitalize on organizational policies and processes that fail to protect the children and youth participating in their programming. For example, in several studies, perpetrators described that they took advantage of organizational processes that were relaxed, complacent, and sometimes careless (Kaufman et al., 2019). In response to these findings, these scholars strongly urged community-based organizations to develop strong cultures of safety that explicitly describe processes and standards for protecting children and youth (Kaufman et al., 2019). Organizations can accomplish this by developing safety policies in six key areas: (a) staff and volunteer screening; (b) establishing codes of conduct; (c) monitoring the implementation of safety practices; (d) creating safe organizational environments; (e) appropriately educating/training staff and volunteers; and (f) responding to, as well as reporting child safety concerns (Kaufman et al., 2019). In general, organizations must develop clear goals and plans for the prevention of child sexual abuse by considering the potential vulnerabilities in their current programming and developing comprehensive prevention plans (Kaufman et al., 2019).

This review has identified three seminal publications that can help mentoring organizations develop their own screening procedures and/or bring their existing policies into stronger alignment with existing best-practices. According to Public Safety Canada (The Screening Handbook, 2012), MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai, 2015), and prominent mentoring scholars (DuBois & Karcher, 2014), these best-practices include:

1. Assessment Criteria: conditions for accepting or rejecting mentors that can be used to help staff screen potential applicants and justify their decisions. Criteria should also be explicitly

and clearly described for potential applicants to help them assess their own suitability and become aware of the strong organizational culture and policies of child protection and safety.

2. Written Application: applicants are invited to respond to several questions designed to help staff assess their general suitability for the mentoring program.
3. Interview: applicants are invited to participate in a face-to-face interview designed to help staff further assess their suitability and provide opportunities for follow-up from the written application.
4. Criminal Record Check:[1] applicants are invited to submit a Criminal Record, Police Information, and/or Vulnerable Sector check to determine their suitability for mentoring. Programs may also wish to conduct criminal record checks on all adults living with the applicant and/or check sex offender and child abuse registries and driving records).
5. References: staff interview multiple adults who are familiar with and close to the applicant. Staff are encouraged to interview personal and professional references, as well as contacting all child and youth-based organizations that the applicant has had contact with in the past.
6. Home Visit: applicants are invited to provide a tour of their home to help staff assess the suitability of the environment for mentoring. Home visits also offer an ongoing opportunity to become acquainted with the applicant and continue assessing their suitability. Home visits are especially important for programs that allow meetings to occur at the mentor's home.
7. Evidence-Based Screening Tools: applicants are invited to complete questionnaires designed to identify adults who might have various motivations, attitudes, and beliefs that are more supportive of safe and effective mentoring relationships.
8. Mentor Agreement: successful applicants agree in writing to fulfill the time commitment and meeting frequency required by the mentoring organization.

Mentoring organizations might consider adopting several or all of the above best-practices while screening potential applicants. For those seeking further information, the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (2017) offers a wide range of tools, advice, and templates for establishing and strengthening volunteer management practices. Public Safety Canada also offers a Code Audit Tool that allows organizations to evaluate their volunteer management practices according to the benchmarks set by the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (2017).

Public Safety Canada has also produced a Screening Handbook (2012) that offers clear guidelines for any program looking to develop screening policies and practices. The Screening Handbook provides a volunteer checklist that can help organizations assess their current screening practices and consider how they might be strengthened and improved, according to best-known practices and government regulations and policies. In a recent national dialogue, many volunteer coordinators and managers felt as though the Screening Handbook contained lots of useful and valuable information, despite being relatively less known amongst their professional colleagues – indicating that this resource might be a good place to start while learning how to develop effective screening protocols (Volunteer Canada, 2017).

Despite these recommendations, it is important to acknowledge that mentoring organizations must balance the rigour of their screening procedures with the need to process applicants in a timely and efficient manner. As such, although mentoring programs are encouraged to implement all of the above best-practices, each program may need to consider their local context, values, and needs and make adjustments accordingly. Programs are also strongly encouraged to consult their local provincial legal requirements for child/youth safety and protection. Finally, the best-practices above, although research-informed and effective, do not guarantee the complete protection of children and youth.

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[1] In Canada, there are three kinds of criminal background checks, each with their own strengths and limitations (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2018). In the existing research, it is highly recommended that mentoring organizations do not strictly rely on criminal record checks as their primary screening tool. There are certain offences/risks that may not be discovered, depending on the type of record check completed. Mentoring organizations are strongly encouraged to increase their knowledge of each test and use fingerprinting whenever possible. For example, during Volunteer Canada's (2014) *National Dialogue on Screening Volunteers*, representatives from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police strongly recommended that organizations consider using.

In addition to establishing strong screening protocols and procedures, mentoring organizations may also wish to offer certain skill-building opportunities for mentees and their primary caregivers. Based on existing knowledge of sexual abuse perpetrators, some prevention programs invite children and youth to learn about healthy relationship boundaries, common strategies and behaviours used by perpetrators, and how to effectively respond to these situations. In a recent review of 70 sexual abuse prevention programs (the majority of which were implemented in Canada and the United States), scholars found strong evidence for their effectiveness to help children and youth increase their knowledge of sexual abuse and how to respond to these situations in a safe and constructive manner (Del Campo & Favero, 2020). These programs can also help parents of children and youth improve their knowledge of sexual abuse and their capacity to deal with these issues with their children (Wurtele, Moreno & Kenny, 2008).

For those who are interested, there are a variety of Canadian-based sexual abuse education programs, such as the Who Do You Tell? program that has been implemented in Calgary for 35 years. According to a recent study, this program has strong evidence for its effectiveness in helping children and youth significantly increase their knowledge and attitudes of child sexual abuse (Tutty, Aubry & Velasquez, 2020). The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, The Canadian Red Cross, and Little Warriors are also examples of Canadian-based organizations that offer child sexual abuse education and prevention programming.

It is important to note that these educational programs do not guarantee that children/youth and their primary caregivers will be safe from child sexual abuse. Of further note is the fact that some researchers have questioned the appropriateness of inviting children, youth, and/or primary caregivers to participate in these programs (Del Campo & Favero, 2020; Kaufman et al., 2019).

A central concern is that these programs might shift the responsibility of child safety and protection to the participants themselves, rather than the mentoring organization (Del Campo & Favero, 2020; Kaufman et al., 2019). Ultimately, mentoring organizations should consider their current vulnerabilities for child sexual abuse and begin implementing strong screening policies and practices.

SCREENING AND IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE/INEFFECTIVE MENTORS

In addition to screening for potentially unsafe mentors, research has also begun to explore how mentoring programs can begin using screening tools to identify more effective volunteer mentors. Theoretically, this research is grounded in the belief that although volunteers may not possess a criminal record, they may possess certain characteristics that will influence their ability to work with children and youth in a safe and positive manner. As such, some researchers argue that it is the responsibility of mentoring organizations to not only "screen out" unsafe applicants, but to also conduct screening procedures that will help them identify adults who may be more effective as mentors (Cavell, Mutignani, Alfonso, & Smith, 2020; Garringer et al., 2015; Schmiesing & Henderson, 2001; Stukas, Clary & Snyder, 2014; Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack & Keller, 2020).

In this small yet growing body of research, various mentor characteristics have been identified as contributors to high-quality mentoring relationships:

- Helping Professionals: Across two large-scale meta-analyses, research has consistently found that mentors from helping professions (i.e., teachers, nurses, social workers, etc.) are often more likely to develop high-quality mentoring relationships (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Raposa et al., 2019).
- Previous Experience: Volunteers who have previous experience working with children and youth (or more directly as previous mentors) are often more likely to develop high-quality mentoring relationships and sustain them over time (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Raposa, Rhodes & Herrera, 2016).
- Self-Efficacy: Adults who have higher levels of self-efficacy and confidence as mentors have been found to be more likely to develop higher-quality mentoring relationships (Boat, Weiler, Bailey, Haddock & Henry, 2019; Cavell et al., 2020; Karcher, Nakkula, and Harris, 2005; Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Pavinelli, 2002; Raposa et al., 2016).
- Empathy: Research has discovered that mentors who are more empathetic, including towards children/youth and people of different ethnicities and cultures (i.e., ethnocultural empathy) are

more likely to develop high-quality mentoring relationships (Miranda-Diaz, Clark-Shim, Keller, & Spencer, 2020; Spencer, Gowdy et al., 2020; Spencer, Pryce, Barry, Walsh & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2020).

- Conscientiousness: Generally defined as someone who is careful, diligent, and motivated to perform their responsibilities well, research has discovered that mentors who score high in conscientiousness often develop high-quality mentoring relationships (Boat et al., 2019; Cavell et al., 2020; Herman & Usita, 1994).
- Extraversion: Research has discovered an association between mentors who are more sociable and outgoing and high-quality mentor-mentee relationships (Boat et al., 2019; Cavell et al., 2020).
- Secure Attachment: In one study, mentors who reported more secure attachment with others were more likely to develop high-quality mentoring relationships (Cavell et al., 2020).
- Positive Perceptions: Mentors who report more positive perceptions of children/youth and their families/communities have been found to develop high-quality mentoring relationships (Garringer et al., 2015; McMorris, Doty, Weiler, Beckman & Garcia-Huidobro, 2018).

In contrast, research has also discovered that certain mentor characteristics are associated with lower quality mentoring relationships:

- Age: Compared to older adults, some research has discovered that high-school and college students are less effective as mentors and more likely to prematurely end their mentoring relationships (Garringer et al., 2015; Grossman et al., 2012; Raposa et al., 2019).
- Marital Status: In one widely cited study, married volunteers aged 26-30 were less likely to develop high-quality relationships and were more likely to prematurely terminate these relationships (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).
- Unrealistic Expectations: In a recent study on why mentoring relationships end prematurely, researchers found that mentors' unrealistic expectations about the relationship stood out among many variables (Spencer et al., 2020; see literature review on mentor recruitment and retention for a more detailed discussion of mentors' expectations).
- Mental Health Challenges: Mentors who are experiencing depression and greater emotionality have been found to be less effective at developing high-quality mentoring relationships (Boat et al., 2019; Preston & Raposa, 2020).
- Negative Perceptions: Mentors who report more negative perceptions of children/youth and their families/communities have been found to develop lower quality mentoring relationships (Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes & Herrera, 2010).

Taken together, research has identified several characteristics that might influence an applicant's ability to develop a positive and supportive mentoring relationship. This body of research has implications for mentor screening.

Implications for Screening

Based on the research above, several scholars have recommended that mentoring programs begin screening applicants to identify certain characteristics that might make them more or less effective as mentors (Cavell et al., 2020; Garringer et al., 2015; Schmiesing & Henderson, 2001; Stukas et al., 2014; Spencer, Gowdy et al., 2020). Statistics Canada and The National Mentoring Resource Centre offer access to surveys and questionnaires that might be of value.

Before using any standardized screening tool, mentoring programs may need to consider the cost and psychometric properties (i.e., the strengths and limitations) of each tool and whether existing programming requires this level of screening (Garringer et al., 2015). It is also important to note that although it may not be reasonable for mentoring programs to implement a standardized screening tool, programs can still benefit from the research above in more informal ways. For example, researchers have pointed out that mentoring programs could use the research above to create specific interview questions that assess some of the known characteristics of effective mentors, such as an applicant's level of conscientiousness, empathy, and self-efficacy (Boat et al., 2019).

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3. TRAINING

This literature review on mentor training was conducted in October 2020. In total, 53 articles were reviewed. This process revealed seven main themes that have implications for mentor training:

1. Current benchmarks and best practices;
2. Developmental and instrumental approaches to mentoring;
3. The importance of post-match training;
4. Online mentor training;
5. Training mentors in cultural humility and competence;
6. Indigenous approaches to mentor training;
7. Training mentors in the ingredients of high-quality mentoring relationships.

CURRENT BENCHMARKS AND BEST-PRACTICES

This review identified two seminal documents that describe the current benchmarks and best-practices for mentor training (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai 2015; Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014). According to these publications, current best-practices for mentor training include:

1. A minimum of two hours of in-person pre-match training;

2. Pre-match mentor training that focuses on the following topics:

    - Program requirements (e.g., expected match length, frequency, and duration; procedures for being late to mentoring sessions; match termination protocols, etc.);
    - Mentor's goals and expectations (i.e., opportunity to discuss the mentor's expectations for the mentee, parent/guardian, and the mentoring relationship, and address any unrealistic expectations if need be);
    - Mentors obligations and appropriate roles;
    - Relationship development and maintenance (i.e., discussing the typical challenges and rewards of mentoring relationships and how they typically develop over time);
    - Ethics and safety (i.e., how the mentor should respond, both legally and ethically, to various situations that might occur during their mentoring experience);
    - Relationship closure (i.e., discuss the protocols for closing mentoring relationships in a constructive and friendly manner);
    - Sources of assistance available to support mentors;
    - If relevant, opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of youth (e.g. children with an incarcerated parent, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, etc.);
    - Initiating the mentoring relationship; and
    - Developing an effective, positive relationship with the mentee's family.

3. Pre-match training on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served:

    - Appropriate physical contact;
    - Contact with the mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact);
    - Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule);
    - Approved activities;
    - Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality;
    - Confidentiality and anonymity;
    - Digital and social media use;
    - Overnight visits and out of town travel;
    - Money spent on mentee and mentoring activities;
    - Transportation;
    - Emergency and crisis procedures;
    - Health and medical care;
    - Discipline;
    - Substance use;

- Firearms and weapons;
- Inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g., siblings, mentee's friends);
- Photo and image use;
- Evaluation and use of data;
- Grievance procedures;
- Other program relevant topics.

4. Implementation of training materials that are informed by empirical research or are themselves empirically evaluated

In addition to these four best-practices, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership provides several enhancements that programs might implement. These enhancements include:

1. Providing additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum for a total of six hours or more.

2. Addressing the following post-match training topics:

- How developmental functioning may affect the mentoring relationship;
- How culture, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics of the mentor and mentee may affect the mentoring relationship; and
- Topics tailored to the needs and characteristics of the mentee.

3. Closure procedures

Implications for Mentor Training

Taken together, MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring (4th edition) provides the most popular synthesis of research evidence on mentor training (Garringer et al., 2015). In a study of 45 Big Brothers Big Sisters Agencies responsible for 29,708 matches, researchers discovered that these research-informed training standards were predictive of match length, which is often critical component of successful mentoring relationships (Kupersmidt, Stump, Stelter & Rhodes, 2017).

Despite these best-practices and recommendations, it is also important to note that each mentoring program should consider the demographics of their local community while constructing their training protocols. As a starting point, MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring can help mentoring organizations structure the foundation of their training procedures to ensure they are informed by the best research evidence available. After constructing this foundation, mentoring programs could then infuse their training protocols with more contextual learning opportunities that would prepare mentors to develop positive relationships with the local population of mentees. Some of the themes below offer a more Canadian-based perspective on mentor training that might help address these more contextual needs.

DEVELOPMENTAL AND INSTRUMENTAL APPROACHES TO MENTORING

This literature review discovered two main approaches to mentoring that can help inform approaches to mentor training.

In the first approach, mentors are trained to adopt a developmental approach to their mentoring relationships (Morrow & Styles, 1995). In general, this approach encourages mentors to prioritize the development of a strong emotional connection with their mentee by emphasizing fun-based activities and discussions. In the second approach, mentors are trained to adopt a more instrumental approach to their mentoring relationships (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992). In general, this approach encourages mentors to help their mentees develop new knowledge and skills by emphasizing more goal-oriented activities and discussions. Further definitions of these two approaches are offered below.

- Developmental Approach: Places an early emphasis on activities and discussions that will strengthen the sense of friendship, trust, and closeness between mentors and mentees. After developing a strong connection, mentors may then begin to introduce their mentees to new ideas and activities that will broaden their knowledge and help them work towards their goals

(Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Li & Julian, 2012; Morrow & Styles, 1995; Spencer, 2006). Mentors give their mentees voice and choice during the selection of more goal-oriented activities (Karcher & Hansen, 2014).

- Instrumental Approach: Places an early emphasis on activities and discussions that will help mentees learn new skills and begin achieving their goals. After engaging in more goal-directed activities, mentors may then begin to focus on nourishing their friendship with their mentees (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

It is important to note that despite their perceived differences, both mentoring approaches share many of the same characteristics, such as being youth-centered, collaborative, and focused on developing and maintaining a positive and supportive relationship with the mentee (Garringer et al., 2015). What differentiates the two approaches is what mentors are trained to focus on during the early stages of their relationships. For example, mentors who adopt a more developmental approach to mentoring will often spend the early stages of their relationships focused on discussions and activities that will bring them closer to their mentees and strengthen their emotional connection (Karcher & Hansen, 2014). In contrast, mentors who adopt a more instrumental approach will often spend the early stages of their relationships focused on helping their mentee develop new forms of knowledge and skills by engaging in more goal-oriented activities (Karcher & Hansen, 2014). On balance, the current research evidence is mixed as to whether inviting mentors to adopt a more developmental or instrumental approach leads to better outcomes for youth.

For example, in a recent meta-analysis of 48 mentoring studies published between 1975 and 2018, researchers discovered that overall effect sizes (i.e., the magnitude of outcomes for youth) were more than double when programs adopted a more instrumental, specific, and targeted approach to mentoring (Christensen, Hagler, Stams, Raposa, Burton & Rhodes, 2020). In other words, mentoring programs that trained mentors to implement specific interventions within the context of their relationship (i.e., implementing a mindfulness-based course to reduce mentee anxiety), produced larger outcomes than programs that adopted a more developmental and friendship-based approach (i.e., relationships where the connection between mentor and mentee were seen as the primary mechanism of change). While discussing their results, these researchers recommended that mentoring organizations begin training mentors to adopt a more instrumental approach to mentoring that encourages mentors and mentees to engage in more structured activities that will help mentees work towards and achieve their self-identified goals (Christensen et al., 2020). In support of these recommendations, other large-scale research projects have also discovered that more instrumental mentoring relationships can help mentors develop strong connections with their mentees and produce positive outcomes for participating youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Jarjoura, Tanyu, Forbush, Herrera & Keller, 2018).

In contrast, in their study of 806 youth participating in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs, DuBois and Keller (2017) found no evidence that inviting youth to participate in structured activities during their relationships led to better outcomes. These findings are also consistent with at least one other large-scale research study that found no differences between more developmental or instrumental mentoring relationships (Brezina, Kuperminc & Tekin, 2016).

Furthermore, in a recent study, scholars explored the ingredients of high-quality mentoring relationships in Canada (De Wit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose & Lipman, 2020). In this longitudinal study, 355 mentees and 356 parents from 20 different Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across Canada described their experiences of high-quality mentoring relationships. The youth in this study described that they had a high-quality relationship with their mentor because they shared attributes with them, received emotional engagement and support, and had a long-lasting relationship with their mentor. Similarly, the parents in this study felt as though their child had a high-quality mentoring relationship because they had a long-lasting relationship with their mentor and because they themselves had a good relationship with the mentor. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that a more developmental approach to mentoring (i.e., building a strong emotional connection that encourages mentees to disclose and discuss their emotions) may be more effective at developing high-quality mentoring relationships (DeWit et al., 2020). The authors further suggested that training protocols could be designed to help mentors adopt a more developmental approach by identifying the similar values, interests, and goals that they share with their mentee and having the skills and willingness to discuss their mentees personal problems and concerns (DeWit et al., 2020).

Implications for Mentor Training

Taken together, the current research evidence is mixed as to whether inviting mentors to adopt a developmental or instrumental approach leads to better outcomes for youth. In their widely cited chapter on mentoring activities and interactions, Karcher and Hansen (2014) summarized the research evidence and concluded that mentoring programs should seek to achieve a balance between the two mentoring approaches. Other researchers tend to agree with this recommendation, including those who have found evidence that one approach might offer more benefits to participants than the other (Christensen et al., 2020; Garringer et al., 2015; Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014). For example, Christensen and colleagues (2020) have strongly cautioned that mentoring programs need to be mindful that more goal-oriented activities do not overshadow the critical importance of developing a caring, fun, and supportive friendship between mentors and mentees. In the spirit of mentoring, mentors should always be trained to prioritize a more youth-centered, collaborative, and relational approach – rather than rigidly focusing on improving mentee's outcomes by completing various structured activities and/or interventions.

On balance, mentoring organizations will need to consider which approach to mentoring best suits their overall purpose, values, and needs of their local community. It is not a question of whether each approach should be adopted, but rather when mentors should emphasize friendship and emotional support, and when they should encourage more goal-oriented activities and discussions (Karcher & Hansen, 2014). In general, it appears that mentoring organizations should train mentors to achieve a balance between establishing a warm, caring, and supportive emotional connection and working towards more targeted goals in a collaborative and youth-centered manner (Karcher & Hansen, 2014; Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014). By working closely with mentees and their families, mentors and support staff can work together to determine when mentees might need more emotional support and fun-based activities, and when they may want to start focusing more on developing new knowledge and skills.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POST-MATCH MENTOR TRAINING

Research has demonstrated that post-match training or ongoing training is critical for program success. For example, in a widely cited meta-analysis, researchers discovered that when mentoring programs offered their mentors post-match training opportunities, they achieved larger effect sizes and outcomes for participants (DuBois et al., 2002). Research has also found that mentors' feelings of self-efficacy can decline over the course of their relationship, even if mentors felt confident at the beginning of their relationships (Garringer et al., 2015). As such, post-match training opportunities can help mentors understand what is working and what might not be working in their relationships and adjust their strategies. Furthermore, although mentoring programs are strongly encouraged to provide mentors with realistic expectations for mentoring, post-match training can also help mentors deal with their unmet expectations and begin shaping more realistic expectations and motivations for their relationships (Garringer et al., 2015). These are very important opportunities as research has consistently discovered that mentors' unmet expectations often lead to early-match closure (Spencer, 2007; Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack & Keller, 2020). In yet another study, researchers partnered with a Big Brothers Big Sisters organization to examine the impact of post-match mentor training and peer support (e.g., received guidance from an experienced volunteer during the first year of their match) on the quality of mentoring relationships and youth outcomes (Peaslee & Teye, 2015). The researchers investigated 459 matches across three years, discovering that post-match training and peer support increased mentor satisfaction and length of relationships (Peaslee & Teye, 2015). Finally, another study on school-based mentoring discovered that training and ongoing support can help retain mentors over the long term (McQuillin, Straight & Saeki, 2015). Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring programs begin providing post-match mentor training.

Despite these positive findings, a widely-cited meta-analysis discovered that among a sample of 53 mentoring programs, only 23% of them offered their mentors post-match training opportunities (DuBois et al., 2002). In a larger sample of 1,500 programs, researchers also discovered that post-match training was only offered by 62% of programs (Garringer, McQuillin & McDaniel, 2017). Taken together, these studies indicate that post-match training opportunities are relatively rare, despite their importance for supporting mentors and producing positive outcomes.

Implications for Mentor Training

The research above strongly suggests that mentoring organizations should consider providing their mentors with post-match training opportunities. Other research suggests that mentors are interested in attending in-person mentor support groups and can benefit from their participation (Jarjoura et al., 2018). This research also discovered that mentors can benefit from on-line support groups, such as mentor blogs and/or discussion groups/boards (Jarjoura et al., 2018).

In addition to these resources, this literature review identified two more recent innovations in post-match mentor training that might be useful to mentoring organizations.

In the first example, Video-Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) was recently investigated as a post-match mentor training option (McNally, 2020). In this small study, three mentors participating in a school-based mentoring program participated in VERP training (McNally, 2020). In general, VERP is a strengths-based method for helping people improve their relationship skills by engaging in several cycles of guided reflection. Working in partnership with a skilled facilitator, VERP begins by inviting mentors to identify a personal goal for their mentoring relationship. While selecting their goal, mentors are often encouraged to select goals that will improve their mentoring practice and strengthen their relationship with their mentees. After selecting their goals, mentors in this study were then invited to participate in three cycles of reflection. First, mentors were invited to record a 10-minute video of a mentoring session with their mentee. After recording their video, mentors reviewed their interaction and selected several clips that reflected progress and improvement towards their goal. To complete the cycle, mentors were then invited to meet with the facilitator to review their video together, discuss their progress, and adjust their goals if necessary. The mentors who participated in this study all felt that VERP helped them improve their mentoring skills and confidence, which subsequently strengthened their relationships and the positive outcomes experienced by their mentees (McNally, 2020). This small study cautiously provides evidence that VERP may be an effective cutting-edge option for providing ongoing post-match training to mentors.

In the second example, research on mentor attunement provides helpful recommendations for post-match mentor training. According to Pryce (2012), attunement involves a mentor's ability to be mindful of their mentee's needs and preferences and respond to them in a timely, sensitive, and appropriate manner. Highly attuned mentors have been shown to develop high-quality relationships with their mentees (Pryce, 2012). Based on this research, Pryce and colleagues have developed a mentor training model, which they call the Mentoring FAN (i.e., Facilitating Attuned Interactions). Acknowledging the critical role that mentoring practitioners play in the facilitation of high-quality mentoring relationships, the FAN model seeks to build stronger connections between mentoring practitioners and mentors, which ultimately helps mentors develop stronger connections with their mentees (Gilkerson & Pryce, 2020). In the FAN model, the role of the mentoring practitioner shifts from expert to collaborator (Gilkerson & Pryce, 2020). Through this collaborative effort, the FAN builds mentor's capacity and self-efficacy to reflect on their own mentoring challenges, co-construct plans and strategies with staff, and reflect on their learning and growth as a mentor. FAN helps both mentoring practitioners and mentors increase their communication skills by guiding them through stages of learning and reflection during their support meetings (Gilkerson & Pryce, 2020; Pryce, Gilkerson & Barry, 2018). The stages of reflection and learning are as follows:

- Calming: Staff is mindful and centered before meeting with the mentor. Staff identifies, regulates, and understands emotional reactions throughout the meeting with the mentor.
- Feeling: Staff listens to the mentors' feelings with empathy, concern, and care.
- Thinking: Staff collaborates with the mentor to think through their current challenges or concerns and develop a plan to address them in a responsible and caring manner.
- Doing: Staff supports the mentor to enact the plan by focusing on their strengths, providing information, and/or practicing the plan together as a team.
- Reflecting: Staff supports the mentor to discuss what they have learned about themselves, their approach to mentoring, and how they will carry this learning into their relationship with their mentee.

Research has discovered that the FAN model can improve mentoring practitioner's empathy, listening and collaboration skills, ability to reflect on themselves as support staff, gain insight about themselves

and their work, and increase their attunement to the needs of mentors and youth (Gilkerson & Pryce, 2020). For mentors, the FAN model has been shown to improve their relationships with both their mentees and the staff members responsible for supporting their mentoring relationship (Pryce, Gilkerson & Barry, 2018). For example, mentors reported that the FAN model increased the amount of constructive feedback that they received from staff members, which ultimately increased their confidence as mentors and helped them build new knowledge and skills for mentoring (Pryce, Gilkerson & Barry, 2018).

On balance, research strongly suggests that mentoring programs should provide their mentors with post-match training opportunities to support mentors and strengthen program outcomes.

ONLINE MENTOR TRAINING

Some mentoring organizations are electing to use more online-based mentor training programs (Garringer et al., 2015). Online training can offer various benefits by delivering a highly standardized, engaging, scalable, and accessible means of mentor training (Garringer et al., 2015). Online training platforms might also be more appealing to busy volunteers and provide opportunities for organizations to quickly update their training modules as new research-informed best practices and ideas arise (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014).

To date, research suggests that online training opportunities can also increase the effectiveness of mentor training efforts. For example, in a recent study, mentors who received both in-person and online training reported more knowledge about mentoring, had more realistic expectations, understood their roles better, and felt better prepared to mentor, compared to mentors who only received in-person training (Kupersmidt, Stelter, Rhodes & Stump, 2015). In general, the research evidence for the effectiveness of online mentor training programs is small. Because of this, researchers have encouraged practitioners to consider adopting a blended approach to mentor training that incorporates both in-person and online components (Garringer et al., 2015).

Implications for Mentor Training

Based on the research and recommendations above, online mentor training should complement rather than replace in-person training opportunities.

For those interested, MENTOR Canada and the Alberta Mentoring Partnership offer a free online Mentor Orientation that would be a great place to start. Mentoring Central also offers an online training program, “Building the Foundation,” which was developed by Drs. Kupersmidt, Rhodes, and Stelter. Mentors who received this training had less unrealistic expectations, felt more confident, effective, and knowledgeable about their mentoring roles and responsibilities, compared to mentors who did not receive the training (Kupersmidt, Stelter, Rhodes, & Stump, 2017). Dr. Michael Karcher’s online training program also provides helpful insights for training high-school mentors.

TRAINING MENTORS IN CULTURAL HUMILITY AND COMPETENCE

As mentoring programs have become increasingly popular, researchers have noticed a need for training opportunities that can help mentors build relationships with mentees from different social and cultural backgrounds (Garringer et al., 2015). In general, this body of research explores how mentors have successfully developed cross-cultural mentoring relationships, and how future training opportunities can help mentors increase their cultural humility and competence (Duron et al., 2020; Sánchez, Pryce, Silverthorn, Deane, & DuBois, 2019; Suffrin, Todd & Sánchez, 2016).

Cultural Humility: Cultural humility involves having an accurate view of oneself, remaining open and interested in the beliefs of others, and not assuming one’s culture, knowledge, or skills are superior to others (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence involves having the knowledge of another’s culture, worldview, and beliefs, and the skills necessary to interact with them in an appropriate and culturally-sensitive manner (Duron et al., 2020; Suffrin, 2014).

These training opportunities are critical as research has consistently documented that White, female-identifying adults from middle- to upper-class neighbourhoods represent the overwhelming majority of volunteers in mentoring organizations (Duron, Williams-Butler, Schmidt & Colon, 2020; Garringer et al., 2017). Although certain mentoring organizations may be more successful in recruiting mentors from more diverse social and demographic backgrounds, the importance of cultural training remains.

Training mentors to develop cross-cultural mentoring relationships is important as research indicates that some relationships can end prematurely, in part, due to mentor's inabilities to bridge cultural differences (Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2020). Previous research also indicates that mentors who feel more culturally competent report feeling more satisfied with mentoring, indicating the importance of helping mentors develop this type of knowledge and skills (Suffrin et al., 2016). Some research has also discovered that this kind of training is associated with the satisfaction and retention of mentors (Suffrin, 2014).

Without proper multicultural training, mentors might also be susceptible to the fundamental attribution error, which occurs when people blame outgroup members for their problems and challenges (i.e., victim-blaming) and ignore the broader contextual and societal factors that might be contributing to their current circumstances and behaviours (i.e., racism, discrimination, poverty, etc.). A growing body of research also indicates that when mentees feel as though their mentors are more culturally competent, they are more likely to develop high-quality relationships (Sanchez & Colon, 2005).

Duron and colleagues (2020) recently explored White mentors' experiences mentoring racially diverse youth involved in the juvenile justice system. During their interviews with 23 mentors, these researchers discovered that mentors were able to establish connections with their mentees despite their differences by being willing to share their personal thoughts, feelings, and challenges (Duron et al., 2020). After opening themselves up to their mentees, the mentors discovered that their mentees often disclosed their own personal and environmental challenges, such as poverty, trauma, and systemic forms of racism (Duron et al., 2020). These sensitive conversations ultimately brought mentors and mentees closer, raised mentor's consciousness about structural issues facing racially diverse youth, and decreased their biased and judgmental beliefs about youth involved in the justice system (Duron et al., 2020). Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that future mentor training opportunities should focus on increasing mentor's cultural humility, which can help them reflect on their own biases, challenge their judgmental beliefs, and increase their willingness and ability to connect with a diverse mentee in a culturally-sensitive manner.

In a similar study, researchers explored the relationship development between 40 adolescent girls of colour and their mentors, some of whom were White (Sánchez et al., 2019). Consistent with previous research (Suffrin et al., 2016), the researchers discovered that mentor support for racial and ethnic identity significantly predicted increases in youth's reports of relationship quality (Sánchez et al., 2019). In other words, mentors who were culturally competent enough to encourage their mentees to explore their racial and ethnic identities created the foundation for high-quality relationships. Based on their findings, these researchers recommended that mentoring programs begin training mentors to support their mentees' ethnic and racial identities. By doing so, the researchers suggested that programs can help mentors' affirm mentees' identities and provide a safe and caring space for them to explore who they are – a critical task during adolescent development (Sánchez et al., 2019).

Implications for Mentor Training

Based on the research above, mentoring programs are encouraged to consider introducing cultural competence and cultural humility training into their programming. To accomplish this, researchers who specialize in this area (Sanchez & Colon, 2005; Suffrin, 2014; Suffrin et al., 2016) have recommended that cultural competence training focus on the following goals:

- raising mentors' awareness about their multiple forms of privilege;
- inviting discussions about mentors' own cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions; and
- increasing mentors' knowledge about their mentees' cultural norms and practices, including the various forms of societal barriers they might be facing as a result of their cultural and ethnic identity.

Acknowledging that cultural humility is a life-long learning process, these researchers also strongly recommend that cultural training be an ongoing opportunity for mentors to learn new skills and receive guidance as cultural issues arise in their relationships (Sanchez & Colon, 2005; Suffrin, 2014; Suffrin et al., 2016). While developing these kinds of training opportunities, mentoring organizations might consider inviting local community members who have local knowledge and expertise of their particular culture to participate and provide meaningful suggestions (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Inviting local community organizations that specialize in specific populations might also be a good first step to ensuring mentor training opportunities are aligned with local cultural practices (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Researchers have also suggested that organizations could begin measuring the cultural competence of both their mentors and staff members. Using this information, programs could then begin to offer training opportunities tailored to the specific needs of their mentors and staff members (Sanchez & Colon, 2005).

In conclusion, cultural differences between mentors and mentees should not be viewed as a challenge to be overcome through enhanced training. These differences should be celebrated as important learning opportunities for mentors to reflect on their own backgrounds, privileges, and biases, which can ultimately help them become more culturally sensitive and competent as mentors.

The National Mentoring Resource Center also offers several helpful resources that might be of interest to mentoring programs, such as guides on cultural competence, mentoring boys and young men of colour, newcomers, immigrant and refugee youth, and Latinx youth. Volunteer Canada also provides its own Guide for Cultural Competency.

INDIGENOUS APPROACHES TO MENTOR TRAINING

Research on Indigenous approaches to youth mentoring is a meaningful area of study in Canada. In Canada, colonization was driven by the belief that Euro-Christian beliefs were superior to Indigenous beliefs and values. In light of Canada's history of colonization, it is extremely important for mentoring programs to consider whether their programming (i.e., theory-of-change, mentor training protocols, etc.) aligns with the cultural beliefs and values of the local Indigenous community members.

In a recent study on the mentoring experiences of Indigenous youth in Canada, researchers discovered that Indigenous youth were significantly less likely to be in long-term mentoring relationships, compared to non-Indigenous youth (DeWit, Wells, Elton-Marshall & George, 2017). Despite this finding, Indigenous youth were significantly more likely to report being in a high-quality mentoring relationship that involved consistent contact with their mentor. This study also found that Indigenous youth with mentors experienced significantly fewer emotional challenges, compared to their non-mentored Indigenous peers (DeWit et al., 2017). Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that mentoring offers an effective intervention for Indigenous youth in Canada. Explaining further, the authors mentioned that because the majority of Indigenous youth were being mentored by non-Indigenous mentors, mentoring programs might be even more effective if Indigenous mentors and more culturally appropriate training are incorporated into mentoring programs (DeWit et al., 2017).

Previous research with Indigenous community members strongly supports this recommendation. For example, according to Indigenous community members living in Saskatoon, it is critical to invite the local Indigenous community to participate in all aspects of the design of mentoring programs intended to benefit Indigenous youth (Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007). Of relevance for mentor training, participants in this study strongly encouraged that mentoring programs develop learning opportunities that will increase mentor's cultural awareness (Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007). Indigenous community members encouraged the inclusion of Elders during this process, who could help guide the construction of learning opportunities for mentors that would be culturally-appropriate and sensitive (Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007). Some core topics that mentor training might include involve Canada's history of colonization, residential schooling, intergenerational trauma, and the ongoing systemic racism that Indigenous communities are facing in Canada (Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007). In general, the participants in this study strongly encouraged mentoring programs to invite Indigenous community members to meaningfully participate in the construction of mentoring programs intended to benefit their communities. This recommendation has also been made by other researchers in

Canada (Galipeau & Giles, 2014), the Government of Alberta (2007), and the Alberta Mentoring Partnership (2017).

Implications for Mentor Training

Based on the research above, mentoring organizations should strongly consider whether their current mentor training and programming aligns with the cultural practices of their local Indigenous community members.

For those who are interested in learning about a Canadian-based mentoring program for Indigenous youth, the Canadian Best Practices portal provides details about the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program. The program is targeted towards children in grades 7 through 12 and focuses on improving mentee's social, physical, mental, and spiritual health. The curriculum was co-developed by teachers and Aboriginal youth living in Winnipeg. Since 2010, the program has been successfully implemented in many diverse communities across Canada (Langlais, 2020; Lopresti, Willows, Storey, McHugh, & Team, 2020; Zhou, 2018). Recent research suggests that the program is flexible enough to include all core components, while also leaving room for local cultural infusions, activities, and discussions by Elders and other community members (Lopresti et al., 2020).

Of relevance for mentor training, the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program is guided by the research and teachings of two Indigenous scholars – Dr. Martin Brokenleg and Dr. Verna Kirkness. Dr. Martin Brokenleg is a North American scholar who was written many articles on Indigenous youth programming. Dr. Brokenleg's research on the Circle of Courage might be particularly useful. The Circle of Courage outlines the four developmental needs of all children and youth: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. Brokenleg (1996) notes that although Indigenous communities are quite diverse, these four developmental needs may be culturally sensitive enough to benefit Indigenous youth and support their needs. Dr. Kirkness is a Cree scholar who has made many meaningful contributions to our educational policies and practices while learning alongside Indigenous community members. Dr. Kirkness's research on the 4 R's – Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility can help mentoring organizations understand different approaches to learning and how they can construct learning environments that respect their Indigenous community members. For those who are interested in learning more about Indigenous ways of knowing and being, the Canadian Council on Learning might be a good place to start. Two publications that might be especially helpful include: Redefining how success is measured in First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Learning (2007); and The state of Aboriginal learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success (2009). As mentoring practitioners, it is our responsibility to not only provide culturally-relevant mentor training opportunities, but to also structure our programming in ways that support Indigenous youth and their cultural ways of learning new skills and knowledge.

Other Canadian-based resources also exist that can help inform Indigenous approaches to mentor training procedures, including the Alberta Mentoring Partnership (2017), the Government of Alberta's (2007) Handbook for Aboriginal Mentoring, and the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship (2017/2018) Training Manual.

In summary, mentoring organizations are strongly encouraged to partner with local Indigenous community members and consult with models of Indigenous learning and being while co-constructing their Indigenous approaches to mentor-training protocols. As a final note, it is important to recognize that there is not just one Indigenous culture in Canada. As such, the research provided in this section should be treated as touchstones that can be used to inform a more local approach to Indigenous mentor-training. In general, we recommend that mentoring organizations begin establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships with their local Indigenous community members and begin co-constructing mentor training opportunities that honour and respect their local traditions, values, and beliefs.

TRAINING MENTORS IN THE INGREDIENTS OF HIGH-QUALITY MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The final theme discovered during this literature review was the ingredients of high-quality mentoring relationships. Researchers have investigated the ingredients of high-quality mentoring relationships (i.e., what mentors said and did during mentoring sessions to produce successful relationships).

Drawing upon their findings, these researchers made several recommendations for improving mentor training protocols.

For example, in a recent qualitative study, researchers interviewed 22 mentors and 15 mentees participating in a community-based mentoring program in Toronto, Canada (Shier, Larsen-Halikowski & Gouthro, 2020). The purpose of this study was to identify factors that contribute to successful mentoring relationships that can be used to support the training of mentors. Results found that mentors and mentees described three broad elements of successful mentoring relationships: consistency, mentor-led communication strategies, and mutually satisfying exchanges (Shier et al., 2020). To support consistency, mentors made themselves available by being willing to connect with their mentee outside of their mentoring sessions via email or other agency-approved methods of communication. Within their relationships, mentors also engaged in communication strategies that led to strong relationships, such as setting mutual goals and activities (i.e., reading more books or exercising more) and providing guidance and encouragement. Finally, mentors and mentees reported that self-disclosure and authenticity helped them develop high-quality relationships by opening up to one another and gaining insights into each other's lives. While discussing the implications of their study, the researchers recommend that future mentoring programs train their mentors to disclose information about their lives to their mentees and engage in mutually determined goals and activities.

Researchers have also started exploring the benefits of "humanistic mentoring" (Cruz, Goff & Marsh, 2020). Similar to a more developmental approach, humanistic mentoring encourages mentors to focus their attention on building and maintain a close and supportive friendship with their mentee, rather than simply providing them with guidance and advice. Humanistic mentoring emphasizes storytelling between mentors and mentees as a strategy for promoting reciprocity, mutuality, and empathy within relationships (Cruz et al., 2020). In this study, mentors were trained and encouraged to share personal stories as a strategy for strengthening their mentoring relationships. Results of the study discovered that mentees appreciated mentors' personal stories and anecdotes, providing preliminary evidence that humanistic mentoring and storytelling may be helpful training approaches.

In addition to these more recent studies, research has consistently discovered that the following mentor behaviours can positively impact youth mentoring relationships:

- Authenticity: Authenticity can help mentors develop close relationships with their mentees by demonstrating their willingness to be themselves and share their genuine personalities, values, and interests – rather than attempting to be "cool" or hide certain elements of themselves (Spencer, 2006; Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014; McNeven, McKay, & Main, 2020).
- Empathy: Empathy promotes close emotional connections and friendships by demonstrating to mentees that mentors are able to understand their experiences and perspectives. Mentors who are empathetic to their mentees also encourage a safe environment for emotional discussions to occur, which can support trust and closeness (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014). Mentoring organizations might consider training mentors to be more empathetic by learning how to convey empathy via body language, gestures, and tone (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014; Spencer, 2006)
- Trust: Researchers have long theorized that trust plays a central role in the development of positive relationships between mentors and mentees (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014; Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang & Noam, 2006).
- Collaboration: Collaboration can help bring mentors and mentees closer by providing opportunities for them to work together towards the mentee's goals or maneuver difficult emotions and discussions as a team (Spencer, 2006).
- Companionship: Feelings of companionship involve enjoying one another's company and being friends (Spencer, 2006).
- Attunement: Attunement involves a mentor's ability to be mindful of their mentees' needs and preferences in their relationship and respond to them in a timely and appropriate manner (Pryce, 2012). Highly attuned mentors are able to pick up on their mentee's verbal and non-verbal cues and flexibly adjust their mentoring approach to meet their growing needs.
- Self-Disclosure: Self-disclosure can promote closeness and trust between mentors and mentees by allowing the dyad to share important aspects about their lives and deepen their understanding of one another (Dutton, Deane, & Bullen, 2020). By listening attentively to one another's disclosures, mentors and mentees can also convey their interest in one another and commitment to deepening their connection (Dutton et al., 2020).

- Autonomy, Belonging, and Competence: Supporting mentees' feelings of autonomy, belonging, and competence can help develop positive relationships. Autonomy refers to feeling in-control of one's behaviours and actions. Belonging refers to feeling like an integral part of a group. Competence refers to feeling self-efficacious. Research on mentoring has discovered that when mentors support these three feelings, they are able to develop positive and supportive relationships with their mentees (Dantzer, 2017, 2018; Henneberger, Deutsch, Lawrence & Sovik-Johnston, 2013; Simoes & Alarcao, 2013, 2014).

Implications for Mentor Training

Taken together, the research above has discovered that long-term positive mentoring relationships can occur when mentors engage in certain relationship-enhancing behaviours.

Based on this research, mentoring programs might consider training mentors to adopt these behaviours at the beginning of their relationships, which might help them develop stronger connections with their mentees.

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4. MATCHING

This literature review on matching was conducted in November 2020. In total, 56 articles were reviewed. This process revealed five main themes that have implications for mentor matching:

1. Current benchmarks and best practices;
2. The similarity-attraction paradigm;
3. Same-gender vs. cross-gender matching;
4. Same-race vs. cross-race matching;
5. Youth-initiated mentoring;
6. Re-matching.

CURRENT BENCHMARKS AND BEST-PRACTICES

This review identified two seminal resources that describe the current benchmarks and best-practices for mentor matching (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai 2015; Pryce, Kelly & Guidone, 2014). According to these publications, current best-practices for mentor matching include:

1. Considering the characteristics of the mentor and mentee while making matches, such as interests, geographic proximity, age, gender, ethnicity, race, personality, goals, strengths, and the expressed preferences of the mentor, mentee, and parents/guardians.
2. Arranging and facilitating an initial meeting between the mentor, mentee, and parent/primary caregiver, when relevant.
3. Inviting mentors, mentees, and parents/primary caregivers to sign a commitment agreement to one another and the mentoring program (i.e., consenting to the program's rules and guidelines, agreed frequency and duration of the mentoring relationship, roles of each person within and around the relationship, and risk management polices).

In addition to these three current benchmarks, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership describes additional "enhancements" that mentoring organizations might consider during the matching process. These enhancements include:

- Matching mentee's with mentors who are at least three years older than them;
- Hosting a "matching event" where prospective mentees and mentors can meet with one another and provide the program with feedback about their matching preferences;
- Inviting parents/caregivers to provide the program with their own preferences and feedback on who they would like to mentor their child;
- Conducting the initial match meeting between a mentor and their mentee at the mentee's home, if the mentor will be picking the mentee up from their home regularly;
- Preparing mentors for their first meeting with their mentee by providing background information about their mentee, reminding them about confidentiality, and discussing potential benefits and challenges of mentoring their specific mentee; and
- Preparing mentees and their parents/caregivers for their first meeting with their mentor by providing background information about their mentor, any family values/rules that should be shared with the mentor, and what information the family would like to share with the mentor and when.

THE SIMILARITY-ATTRACTION PARADIGM

A common assumption in the mentoring field is that mentoring relationships are most effective when the mentor and mentee share similar interests (Campbell & Campbell, 2007). While making this suggestion, researchers and practitioners often refer to a well-known socioecological concept that has been termed the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm (Byrne, 1971). As human beings, the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm suggests that we are attracted to others who we perceive as more similar to ourselves. A large body of research supports this claim – indicating that perceived similarity in a wide-range of relationships is a key ingredient in promoting high-quality, stable relationships (Raposa, Ben-Eliyahu, Olsho & Rhodes, 2019).

Influenced by this theory, Eby and colleagues (2013) conducted a widely-cited meta-analysis to help clarify the impact of similarity between mentors and mentees. After reviewing data from 40,737

mentors and mentees who participated in youth, academic, and workplace mentoring programs, the researchers were able to distinguish between three kinds of similarity between mentors and mentees:

- Deep-Level Similarity: Similarity in personality, attitudes, beliefs, and values;
- Surface-Level Similarity: Similarity in race, ethnicity and/or sex; and
- Experiential Similarity: Similarity in geographic location, life experiences or circumstances, educational experiences, and/or career interests.

In their meta-analysis, Eby and colleagues (2013) discovered that deep-level similarity had the strongest effect on mentees, in terms of relationship quality and perceptions of receiving both instrumental and psychosocial support. Experiential similarity also had a favourable influence on relationship quality, with surface-level similarities having little to no influence on mentees perceptions of relationship quality and support (Eby et al., 2013). It is important to note that the majority of the studies included in this meta-analysis involved workplace mentoring programs. As such, the results may not be entirely generalizable to youth mentoring programs. Despite this limitation, the results of this study support the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm and the practice of matching mentors and mentees on deep-level similarities, such as personality, values, beliefs, and attitudes (Eby et al., 2013).

Of particular relevance for the youth mentoring field, two meta-analyses and one large-scale study have advanced our understanding of how similarity between mentors and mentees influences the quality of their relationship (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes & Silverthorn, 2011; Raposa et al., 2019). In the first meta-analysis, researchers explored the matching protocols of 55 mentoring programs published through 1998. In this study, the researchers *did not* discover a significant association between matching mentors and mentees based on interests and program effectiveness. In the second meta-analysis, researchers explored the matching protocols of 77 mentoring programs published between 1999 and 2010 (DuBois et al., 2011). In contrast to the results of the first meta-analysis, the researchers discovered that programs achieved stronger effects for youth when they matched mentors and mentees based on similar interests. Finally, in a recent large-scale study of 9,803 mentoring dyads, researchers discovered that a shared *dislike* of certain activities was associated with longer mentoring relationships (Raposa et al., 2019). This study also discovered that matches in which there were a lot of youth interests that were *not* shared by mentors were the most likely to end in early-match termination.

In contrast, some research indicates that a lack of shared personality traits can sometimes lead to better outcomes. For example, in a study with 23 high-school mentors and 16 mentees from grades 4 through 6, researchers discovered that mentees matched with mentors who had *dissimilar* personalities showed better improvements in grades, attendance, and social connectedness (Jolevski, 2012). Similar results have also been found in at least one other study of community-based mentoring (Cox, 2005). Furthermore, in a recent experimental design study, researchers discovered that matching mentors and mentees on the basis of experiential similarity (i.e., both mentors and mentees shared a visual impairment), did not significantly influence match outcomes (Heppe, Kupersmidt, Kef & Schuengel, 2019). In fact, when mentees with a visual impairment were randomly matched with a mentor who also had a visual impairment, the match was more likely to end prematurely (Heppe et al., 2019).

Taken together, although the existing research is mixed, the vast majority of research suggests that matching mentors and mentees based on similarity can help promote deeper mentoring connections.

Implications for Matching

Based on the research above, mentoring organizations will likely benefit by attempting to match mentors and mentees based on similarity. To accomplish this, organizations might consider inviting mentors and mentees to report their favourite activities and interests (Pryce et al., 2014). Mentoring programs typically accomplish this by inviting mentors and mentees to complete checklists that have them rank-order their favourite and least-favourite hobbies and interests. Furthermore, based on the results of a widely-cited study, mentoring organizations might consider matching mentors and mentees based on their shared *dislike* for certain activities (Raposa et al., 2019). Finally, mentoring organizations might also consider matching mentors and mentees based on similar personality characteristics.

To help accomplish these recommendations, the Ontario Mentoring Coalition and the National Mentoring Resource Centre offer insights and resources into matching based on similarity.

SAME-GENDER VS. CROSS-GENDER MATCHES

Building upon the research above, another common assumption in the mentoring field is that when mentors and mentees are matched by gender identity (a shared similarity), they will form and develop better relationships. This assumption often lies on the belief that same-gender mentors and role models, especially during adolescence, can help mentees develop healthy identities (Liang, Bogat & Duffy, 2014).

Since the majority of mentoring programs use same-gender matching, there is a small body of research exploring this topic. As such, to date, three meta-analyses and two large-scale studies have largely informed our understanding of the influence of gender on the matching process (DuBois et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2011; Raposa et al., 2019). In the first investigation of 55 mentoring programs, matching based on gender was not found to be a significant moderator of program effectiveness (DuBois et al., 2002). Similarly, in the second investigation of 77 mentoring programs, researchers did not find a positive association between gender-based matching and program effectiveness (Dubois et al., 2011). In contrast, in the third meta-analysis, researchers discovered that mentoring programs had larger effects when they involved a larger number of male-identifying mentors (Raposa et al., 2019). Finally, in two large-scale studies of both community-based and school-based mentoring, researchers found no differences between same-gender and cross-gender mentoring relationships, in terms of relationship qualities, durations, and outcomes (Herrera, Sipe & McClanahan, 2000 as cited in Liang & Grossman, 2007; Kanchewa, Rhodes, Schwartz & Olsho, 2014).

In a seminal publication on the role of gender-based matching in mentoring relationships, researchers summarized our current evidence and concluded that there is no definitive evidence for the benefits of either cross- or same-gender matching (Liang, Bogat & Duffy, 2014). As such, these authors encouraged programs to adopt a mentee-focused approach that takes their preferences into consideration, rather than simply assuming they will prefer, and benefit from a same-gender mentor.

Implications for Matching

On balance, the current research evidence on cross- vs. same-gender matching does not provide favourable evidence for either approach. As such, researchers have recommended that mentoring programs adopt a more tailored approach to matching on the basis of gender identity (Liang et al., 2014). In general, mentoring organizations need to consider the purpose of their programming and whether they are comfortable with cross-gender matching. For example, due to the consistent challenges of recruiting male mentors, some mentoring organizations have started to match male mentees with female mentors.

Taken together, mentoring organizations should consider adopting a more individualized approach to matching that invites mentees and their parents/caregivers to voice whether or not they want a same-gender or cross-gender mentor (Liang et al., 2014). Since the current research evidence does not favour either approach, empowering mentees and their parents to make their own choice is likely the most appropriate strategy.

CROSS-RACE VS. SAME-RACE MATCHES

A common conversation in the mentoring field is whether or not children and youth should be matched with mentors who share the same race or ethnocultural identities (Garringer et al., 2015; Pryce et al., 2014). In part, this conversation began through the recognition that many youth mentoring relationships are being initiated between mentors and mentees who come from very different social, cultural, and racial backgrounds. For example, researchers have consistently documented that White, female-identifying adults from middle- to upper-class neighbourhoods are often matched with children and youth from very different social and cultural backgrounds (Pryce et al., 2014). As a result, researchers and practitioners have started exploring the potential impact of race on youth mentoring relationships.

In a widely-cited publication on the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in mentoring relationships (Sanchez, Colon-Torres, Feuer, Roundfield & Berardi, 2014), researchers began by outlining important definitions:

- Race: A social construction based on physical characteristics, such as skin tone, that can often lead to generalizations and stereotypes.
- Ethnicity: Groups of people who share a common history, language, ancestry, religion, traditions, and/or beliefs.
- Culture: The shared beliefs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling, and living among members of a certain community/population.

While reading about the research below, it is important to keep these definitions in mind. Some researchers have noted that some studies have not distinguished between race, ethnicity and/or culture (Sanchez et al., 2014).

Despite these definitional concerns, a wide range of researchers have discovered arguments for both same-race and cross-race matching (Armitage, Heyes, O'Leary, Tarrega & Taylor-Collins, 2020; Campbell & Campbell, 2007; Hoffman, Alamilla & Liang, 2018; Jucovy, 2002; Liang & Grossman, 2007; Liang & West, 2007; Lindwall, 2007; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman & Maxine Lee, 2002).

In general, proponents of same-race matching suggest that this matching strategy can:

- Enhance the effectiveness of mentoring by ensuring mentors and mentees share important similarities;
- Increase the chances that mentors will be able to empathize with their mentees experiences as a minority;
- Increase the chances that mentors will be able to help their mentees develop constructive responses to racism and prejudice;
- Further erode the belief that White European values and beliefs are superior to other racial, ethnic, and/or cultural practices;
- Avoid the possibility that mentees will internalize the subconscious racial attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices of their cross-race mentor;
- Increase the chances that mentors will be able to help their mentees develop healthy racial, cultural, and/or ethnic identities; and
- Convey the message to mentees that members of their own racial, ethnic, and/or cultural community are capable of providing them with supportive mentorship and guidance.

In contrast, while acknowledging the potential challenges and required sensitivities of cross-race matching, proponents of this matching strategy suggest that this approach can:

- Outweigh the challenges and time-delays of waiting to match mentees with same-race mentors;
- Lead to effective and supportive mentoring relationships, despite differences in race, ethnicity, and class;
- Erode racial barriers by creating opportunities for youth and adults from different backgrounds to develop close and meaningful relationships with one another;
- Support the recruitment of mentors based on deeper and more meaningful criteria, such as personal experiences, skills, common interests, and an openness and sensitivity to other cultural, racial, and/or ethnic beliefs and practices; and
- Support the development of healthy racial, ethnic, and/or cultural identities by ensuring mentors are trained and supported to create opportunities for their mentees to explore their own identities and heritages in a safe, warm, and supportive space.

Building upon these arguments, research has explored the benefits of cross-race or same-race matching. In general, this research has produced mixed results (Garringer et al., 2015).

In support of cross-race matching, three meta-analyses *have not* discovered a significant relationship between matching mentors and mentees based on race/ethnicity and program effectiveness (DuBois et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2011; Raposa et al., 2019). In at least three other large-scale studies of both school-based and community-based mentoring, researchers have similarly found no significant advantages of same race/ethnicity matching (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000; Morrow & Styles, 1995; Rhodes et al., 2002). It is important to note that one of these studies did discover that mentors

in cross-race matches often worried about the racial and cultural differences in their relationship – highlighting the importance and value of cross-cultural training (Morrow & Styles, 1995). On balance, while discussing the results of their respective studies, these researchers suggested that race, by itself, does not significantly contribute to the development of a high-quality mentoring relationship.

In contrast, in support of same-race matching, four school-based mentoring studies have discovered that same-race/ethnicity matching was positively viewed by a range of mentees, including refugees and immigrants (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006), Hispanic middle school girls (Kaplan, Turner, Piotrkowski, and Silber, 2009), Chinese high-school students (Yeh, Ching, Okubo, and Luthar, 2007), and Latino college students (Torres-Campos et al., 2009). In another large-scale study of 9,803 mentoring relationships, researchers also discovered that mentors and mentees who were similar in terms of race and ethnicity were more likely to be in long-term mentoring relationships (Raposa et al., 2019). Researchers have also discovered that Latinx mentees perceived their mentors to be more helpful (i.e., personal and career development) and were more satisfied with the mentoring program when they were matched with a mentor of the same ethnicity (Santos & Reigadas, 2000 as cited in Liang & Grossman, 2007). Furthermore, in a study on workplace mentoring, dyads that were randomized to same-race matches reported stronger mentoring relationships, compared to cross-race relationships (Ensher & Murphy, 1997 as cited in Raposa et al., 2019). Finally, other research suggests that youth, parents, and mentors sometimes prefer to be matched with someone of similar race and/or ethnicity (Hoffman et al., 2018; Sanchez & Colon, 2005; Schippers, 2008; Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico & Lewis, 2011 as cited in Sanchez et al., 2014).

Taken together, the current research evidence does not strongly support the strict adoption of either same-race or cross-race matches (Pryce et al., 2014). This research has implications for matching.

Implications for Matching

Based on the research above, the most recent version of the *Elements of Effective Practice* (4th Edition) suggests that matching mentors and mentees according to race is not a critical dimension of relationship success (Garringer et al., 2015). Despite this recommendation, it is critically important for mentoring programs to consider the various ramifications of cross-race matching.

In a thoughtful yet critical exploration of cross-race matching, Lindwall (2017) offers various insights into the potential challenges of matching mentors with mentees from very different social, cultural, and racial circumstances. To begin, Lindwall (2017) reminds us that the vast majority of mentoring programs were founded by members of the "dominant culture" – which, in the field of mentoring, often refers to White, middle- to upper-class Europeans (p.74). In contrast, many mentoring organizations serve communities that are often composed of minority children and youth from more diverse social, cultural, and racial backgrounds (Lindwall, 2017). As such, Lindwall (2017) makes the case that mentoring organizations need to be aware of the potential negative impacts of matching mentors from the dominant culture with mentees from more marginalized communities and cultures, in terms of their racial, ethnic, and/or cultural identity development. In our Canadian context, these insights are especially relevant given that the colonization of Indigenous and Aboriginal communities was often driven by the belief that Euro-Christian values and cultural practices were superior to all others (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2018).

To overcome these potential challenges, Lindwall (2017) suggests that mentoring organizations begin assessing the mindsets of both mentors and mentees – in terms of their racial, ethnic, and or/cultural identities. After gathering this information, mentoring practitioners might avoid matching mentees with underdeveloped cultural/racial/ethnic identities with a mentor who has a strong sense of the right way to live and behave, according to their own racial, cultural, and ethnic biases (Lindwall, 2017). In contrast, by assessing these variables prior to the matching process, staff members might be able to match mentees with mentors who will be able to validate their race, navigate respectful conversations about their cultural and ethnic beliefs/practices, and help them decide which beliefs and values they hold dear and want to incorporate into their sense of self. In general, Lindwall (2017) recommends that mentoring programs take a more nuanced approach to mentor matching that is sensitive to the impact of cross-race matching, in terms of mentee's identities. Lindwall (2017) suggests that the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure may be able to help with this.

In their seminal publication on cross-race matching, Liang and West (2007) echo these suggestions and offer further insights and corresponding action-steps for mentoring programs. First, the authors

encouraged programs to be mindful that cross-race matching is not benign and can influence the quality of mentoring relationships via the level of mentor cultural sensitivity and competence, cultural mistrust by the mentee, and how the mentor provides feedback to their mentee. To address this challenge, the authors strongly encouraged programs to take a more individualized approach to matching by inviting mentees and their parents/primary caregivers to report whether they want to be matched with a mentor of the same race, culture and/or ethnicity (Liang & West, 2007). Second, the authors stated that although the current research evidence is mixed regarding cross-race vs. same-race matching, we do know that how mentors interact with their mentee deeply influences the quality of the relationship. As such, when we make cross-race matches, we need to be especially mindful of the mentor's cultural competency/sensitivity, how they are relating to their mentee's differences, and whether they are currently able to navigate sensitive discussions about racial/ethnic identity.

In general, while considering same-race or cross-race matching, mentoring programs are strongly encouraged to match based on the needs of the mentee and their family (Liang & West, 2007). By inviting mentees to voice their preferences for either a same- or cross-race mentors, organizations can better align their programming with the needs of their children and youth. Recent research also suggests the importance of parental satisfaction with their child's match (Shamblen, Courser, Schweinhart & Thompson, 2019). For example, in a sample of 350 recently matched mentoring relationships, the only significant predictor of an early match closure was parental dissatisfaction with the match (Shamblen et al., 2019).

As a final recommendation, researchers often encourage practitioners to consider their local context, purpose, and theory-of-change while making their matching decisions (Garringer et al., 2015). For example, in particular communities, such as those that have been historically marginalized due to race, same-race matching might be part of a larger communal conversation – making the importance of same-race matching much higher. As such, some parents/caregivers and their children may not feel comfortable being matched with a cross-race mentor. In these communities, mentees and their parents may have increased levels of *cultural mistrust*, which can influence the quality of their mentoring relationship (Sánchez, DuBois, Silverthorn & Pryce, 2012). Cultural mistrust often involves a negative attitude towards a racial majority due to histories of racism, prejudice, and discrimination (Sanchez et al., 2012). In one prominent study on cultural mistrust, 21 African American and Latinx adolescent girls were matched with White mentors. The researchers discovered that mentee's levels of cultural mistrust towards Whites predicted an increase in perceiving their mentors as less culturally competent and lower reports of relational quality, by both mentees and mentors (Sanchez et al., 2012). The results of this study have also been replicated with high-school aged mentees (Sánchez, Feuer, & Davis, 2012 as cited in Sanchez et al., 2014). Taken together, this research indicates that, in some cases, same-race matching may be favourable. Mentoring programs might consider assessing the degree of cultural mistrust among mentees and whether they would benefit from being matched with a cross-race mentor. The Cultural Mistrust Inventory for Adolescents is a tool that can be used.

Taken together, mentoring programs are encouraged to adopt a more context-based approach to their matching decisions. The research above indicates that, in some cases, same- or cross-race matching may be the best decision. As a final note, mentoring staff need to be aware that reducing mentors and mentees based on their race will likely not guarantee similarities. For example, a mentor and a mentee might share the same race, but come from widely different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Sanchez et al., 2014). As such, mentoring staff may need to consider the role of race while also acknowledging and considering the ethnic/cultural similarities that might help strengthen a relationship (Sanchez et al., 2014). As such, even while making same-race matches, practitioners are invited to balance their consideration of race with deeper psychological characteristics that might increase similarity and connection between mentors and mentees – such as personality, values, experiences, and beliefs (Hoffman et al., 2018; Sanchez et al., 2014). Ultimately, the number one implication for matching is to consider the preferences of mentors, mentees, and parents/primary caregivers regarding matching based on race, ethnicity, and culture (Sanchez et al., 2014).

YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Youth-Initiated Mentoring (YIM) is an approach to mentor recruitment and matching that invites youth to select their own mentors (Schwartz, Parnes, Austin & Browne, 2020). As a hybrid model, YIM

combines the advantages of both formal and natural mentoring by inviting mentees to identify the natural mentors in their own communities and empower them to formalize these pre-existing relationships into mentoring relationships (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016). The core purpose of YIM is to offer mentees more *voice and choice* during the mentor-nomination and matching process. *Caregiver-Initiated Mentoring* is also a new approach that invites parents to recruit mentors to support their own children (Weiler, Scafe, Spencer & Cavell, 2020; Weiler, Kazlauskaite, Keyzers, & Cavell, 2020). Caregiver-Initiated Mentoring offers a more developmentally-appropriate mentor-nomination process for younger children, while simultaneously empowering caregivers to have more voice and choice in who becomes their mentor.

To date, research indicates that YIM can offer various benefits to mentoring programs and the communities they serve (Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer & Grossman, 2013; Spencer, Drew, Gowdy & Horn, 2018; Spencer, Gowdy, Drew & Rhodes, 2018; Spencer, Tugenberg, Ocean, Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016; van Dam et al., 2017; van Dam et al., 2019).

Mentor Nomination and Matching Process:

- Mentees appreciate the opportunity to nominate and select their own mentor;
- Mentees are willing and able to nominate at least one mentor from their social network;
- Mentees often nominate professionals (i.e., teachers, coaches, social workers, etc.) or adults closely connected to their families (i.e., extended family members, close family friends, etc.); and
- Mentees often nominate mentors with similar racial, ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds as themselves.

Quality of Relationships:

- Mentors and mentees quickly develop feelings of trust and connection, based on their familiarity with one another;
- Some mentors enter their relationships with more confidence and commitment;
- Mentors provide mentees with social-emotional, instrumental, and informational support;
- Some mentors provide advice and guidance that is attuned to mentees social, cultural, and racial circumstances;
- YIM relationships can be durable and enduring, compared to formal relationships.

Outcomes:

- Mentees have experienced increases in their psychological well-being and relationships with others; and
- Mentees have been able to work towards and achieve their educational and occupational goals.

In a recent meta-analysis on the effectiveness of YIM, researchers discovered a small-to-medium effect size (i.e., magnitude of outcomes) across 14 studies (van Dam et al., 2020). In other words, the effect size for YIM programs seems to be a bit larger (g=0.30), than formal mentoring (g=0.21; Raposa et al., 2019) and natural mentoring (g=0.22; van Dam et al., 2019). Although the results of this meta-analysis may be influenced by the fact that YIM programs are often more specific and targeted (i.e., using professionals to help the mentee in cooperation with mentors), the results offer evidence that this approach can provide significant benefits for mentees and mentoring organizations (van Dam et al., 2020).

There is also evidence that the field of mentoring could benefit by offering mentors themselves more opportunities to decide who will become their mentee. For example, in a recent study on premature match closures, 11 mentors participating in a Big Brothers Big Sisters program reported that, in part, their relationships ended due to a *quick matching process* (Corley, 2020). In particular, these mentors felt as though they were not given enough time to consider who they would like to be matched with – with one mentor reporting they had under an hour to decide (Corley, 2020). During one interview, a mentor described feeling as though their pre-match questions were simply "rattled off like a list" with the staff member "just checking boxes" (Corley, 2020, p. 62). This study brings attention to the need to balance our efforts to match mentees as quickly as we can with a more mindful approach and conversation. In general, the evidence from this study suggests that mentoring organizations can

benefit from slowing down the matching process and allowing mentors more time to consider who they might want to mentor.

Implications for Matching

Based on the research above, mentoring organizations might consider adopting a YIM-based approach to their matching procedures. As previously mentioned, this review identified two seminal publications on the mentor matching process (Garringer et al., 2015; Pryce et al., 2014). In both of these publications, researchers discussed the critical importance of inviting mentees and their parents to participate in the mentor-matching process. YIM has also been acknowledged in the Elements of Effective Practice as an approach to mentor matching that can promote match longevity and youth outcomes (Garringer et al., 2015).

To date, several resources exist that can help mentoring organizations learn more about YIM and build their capacity to begin adopting this approach:

- Dr. Johanna Greeson's research and textbook, Caring Adults 'R' Everywhere (C.A.R.E)
- The YIM Foundation (currently only offered in Dutch)
- Dr. Renee Spencer's publications with mentoring practitioners
- MENTOR's Webinar on Youth-Initiated Mentoring

Alternatively, mentoring organizations might consider a more partial adoption of this approach that simply incorporates more opportunities for mentees to have voice and choice during the mentor nomination and matching process. For example, believing that the most satisfied matches are those who have some influence during the matching process, some mentoring organizations have attempted to provide matches with more control by hosting "meet-n-greet" sessions (Holt, Brenna & Johnson, 2008; Karcher, 2007; Karcher, Nakkula & Harris, 2005; Karcher & Santos, 2011). During these events, program staff set up a series of activities that invite mentors and mentees to interact with one another and begin developing relationships. After a brief meet-n-greet, mentors and mentees are then invited to make a note of who they felt a natural connection towards and who they would feel comfortable initiating a mentoring relationship with. Using this information, program staff make the final matching decision, with an effort to match mentors and mentees who reported a natural connection. Similar approaches, such as speed mentoring, have also been successfully conducted in other workplace-based mentoring programs (Eubanks, MacKinnon, Shay, Criscione & Saunders, 2020).

RE-MATCHING

This review discovered that since mentoring relationships can end prematurely, some mentoring organizations re-match mentees to new mentors. The practice of re-matching is often justified by the belief that even sequential mentoring relationships can benefit mentees over the long-term (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz & Rhodes, 2012). In contrast, some researchers have suggested that re-matching may trigger mentees' sensitivity to loss and/or inconsistent relational histories with adults (Grossman et al., 2012).

One study has explored the impact of re-matching mentees after their previous relationship was terminated (Grossman et al., 2012). In this study of 1,139 school-based relationships formed through Big Brothers Big Sisters, researchers discovered that re-matching actually had a negative impact on mentees, such as their performance in school. In particular, the researchers discussed how re-matching may have not allowed mentees a sufficient amount of time to constructively close their previous relationship and digest the reasons for it ending. On balance, the researchers pointed out at patching together multiple mentoring relationships can lead to more negative effects, compared to if the same mentee was never matched with a mentor in the first place.

Implications for Matching

Based on the research above, researchers have suggested that mentoring programs consider the pros and cons of rematching a mentee (Garringer et al., 2012). Particular consideration may be placed on the mentees previous relationships with adults and whether re-matching will simply serve as yet another reminder that adults cannot be trusted as stable sources of support.

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5. MONITORING & SUPPORT

This literature review was completed in December 2020. In total, 37 articles were reviewed. This process revealed three main themes that have implications for monitoring and support:

1. Current benchmarks and enhancements;
2. A systemic model of youth mentoring;
3. The impact of staff members on mentoring relationships.

CURRENT BENCHMARKS AND ENHANCEMENTS

This review identified one seminal publication that describes the current benchmarks and best-practices for monitoring and support (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai 2015). According to this publication, current best-practices for monitoring and support include:

1. Contacting mentors and mentees bi-weekly for the first month of their relationship, and then once a month thereafter.
2. Contacting a supportive adult in the mentees' life (i.e., parent, guardian, teacher, etc.) bi-weekly for the first month of their relationship, and then once a month thereafter.
3. During each support contact with mentors, mentees, and/or a supportive adult, staff should ask each person about: mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety concerns, quality of their mentoring relationship, and the impact of the relationship on their mentee, using a standardized procedure.
4. Using an evidence-based protocol for gathering in-depth information from mentors and mentees about the quality of their relationship (i.e., using an evidence-based questionnaire).
5. Regularly assessing the quality of all matches to determine if they should be closed or invited to continue.
6. Documenting information about each mentoring session between mentors and mentees, such as the date, length, and description of activity.
7. Providing mentors, mentees, and parents/caregivers with ongoing support and resources to help them address challenges in their relationships as they arise.
8. Providing mentors with ongoing training and support opportunities, at *least* once a year.
9. Providing mentors with ongoing feedback on their mentoring approach and mentee outcomes to help them continuously improve and encourage retention.

In addition to these current benchmarks, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership describes additional "enhancements" that mentoring organizations might consider while monitoring and supporting their mentors and families. These enhancements include:

- Conducting a *minimum* of one in-person monitoring and support meeting per year with the mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian.
- Hosting one or more group activities for matches and/or offer information about activities that matches might wish to participate in together. Families can also be invited to participate, when relevant.
- Recognizing mentors for their contributions each year of the mentoring relationship.
- Recognizing mentees and their families for their contributions each year in supporting the mentees' engagement in the program.

Implications for Monitoring and Support

Mentoring programs should monitor and support their mentoring relationships. Monitoring and support can help mentoring programs assess each relationship, provide more attuned and individualized support, reinforce program guidelines and goals, and offer strategies that can help promote stronger connections and relationships (Keller, 2005). Monitoring and support is also critical for ensuring child safety within mentoring relationships, such as preventing sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse (Kremer & Cooper, 2014). To prevent these risks, frequent monitoring is especially recommended during the early stages of the relationship – while also acknowledging that long-term monitoring is also critical since perpetrators often take time to groom their victims (Kremer & Cooper,

2014; see mentor screening literate review for a more detailed discussion of sexual abuse and steps to prevent it).

While providing monitoring and support, common goals and activities might include: encouraging a more collaborative decision-making process between mentors and mentees, offering suggestions for activities, managing expectations, intervening during conflicts, and maintaining a case record that documents important information about each mentoring session (i.e., date, activity performed, relationship satisfaction, etc.).

Although research base on monitoring and support is still growing, current research strongly supports this activity. For example, in a meta-analysis of 55 mentoring organizations, researchers discovered that when programs offered monitoring and support, they dramatically increased their effect sizes (i.e., the magnitude of outcomes they produced for participants; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002).

Other research has also discovered that by monitoring and supporting mentoring relationships, mentoring organizations can offer their participants various benefits, such as:

- Increasing the frequency of contact between mentors and mentees (Herrera, DuBois & Grossman, 2013);
- Increasing the overall length of mentoring relationships (Herrera et al., 2013; Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman & McMaken, 2008; Sass & Karcher, 2013);
- Increasing the overall quality of mentoring relationships (Herrera et al., 2008; Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbeton & Pepper, 2000; Sass & Karcher, 2013; Weiler, Boat & Haddock, 2019);
- Improving outcomes for mentors and mentees (DuBois et al., 2002; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, McMaken & Jucovy, 2007; Herrera et al., 2008; Sass & Karcher, 2013); and
- Increasing mentor retention rates (Herrera et al., 2007; Herrera et al., 2008; McQuillin, Straight & Saeki, 2015; Stukey, 2016).

Despite these benefits, research indicates that the implementation of the best-practices for monitoring and support is often inconsistent. For example, in a recent study involving 29,708 matches across 45 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, results revealed that *only one* program was meeting the benchmarks of effective practice for monitoring and support (Kupersmidt, Stump, Stelter, & Rhodes, 2017). Although the authors note that this was likely due to the fact that, at the time, the standard was quarterly contact (vs. monthly), the results still indicate significant room for improvement. For example, this study discovered that in addition to a very small number of programs contacting matches on a monthly basis, staff members were also not consistently documenting critical information while making these contacts, such as dates, lengths of meetings, and the nature and quality of each mentoring session (Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

Taken together, mentoring organizations are strongly encouraged to develop their own comprehensive strategies for monitoring and supporting their mentoring relationships that address all of the above benchmarks (Garringer et al., 2015). To begin this process, mentoring organizations might consider assessing their current practices for monitoring and support. To date, researchers have often used the Elements Quality Improvement Process (EQUIP) (scroll to bottom) to successfully assess program practices. Mentoring organizations might also consider inviting mentors to report on the monitoring and support that they are currently receiving, and how it might be improved. This can be accomplished using the Mentor's Perceived Program Support Scale (Marshall, Davis, Lawrence, Peugh & Toland, 2015) or by using certain questions from the "Programmatic Support" subscale of the Match Characteristics Questionnaire (Harris & Nakkula, 2008). In addition to these options, Volunteer Canada has a broad range of resources for managing and supporting volunteers.

SYSTEMIC MODEL OF YOUTH MENTORING

A systemic model of youth mentoring encourages us to look beyond the mentor-mentee dyad and begin considering how the people surrounding these relationships can influence the outcomes of this relationship-based intervention (Keller, 2005). Proponents of this systemic model invite both researchers and mentoring programs to explore how factors beyond the mentor-mentee relationship

(i.e., staff members, parents/guardians, program policies and procedures) are influencing the mentoring relationship and how they might be improved through monitoring and support (Cavell and Elledge, 2014; Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Keller & DuBois, 2019). In other words, the success of any given mentoring relationship depends upon not only the interactions between the mentor and mentee, but also the relationships they develop with caregivers and staff members.

A recent study took a more systemic look at why certain mentoring relationships end prematurely (Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack & Keller, 2020). In this study of 36 matches participating in four different Big Brothers Big Sisters programs, researchers discovered that three different kinds of relationships can either encourage or discourage the success of any given mentoring relationship:

1. Relationships Between Mentors and Primary Caregivers: Although strong mentor-mentee relationships are a key ingredient for longevity, these relationships are unlikely to continue if the relationships surrounding the match are strained (Spencer et al., 2020). For example, over half of the mentors and caregivers in this study reported that they had challenging relationships with one another, which significantly contributed to the relationship ending. Common challenges between mentors and caregivers included mentors holding deficit-based views of their mentees' family, not having the required skills to navigate mentees' personal and family-based issues, and caregivers not being satisfied with who their child was matched with (Spencer et al., 2020).

2. Relationships Between Mentors and Staff Members: This study discovered that mentoring organizations play a critical role in match longevity via their program practices, policies, and staffing patterns (Spencer et al., 2020). For example, just under half of the mentors in this study reported that they had a challenging relationship with their assigned staff member, which influenced the quality of their experience at the mentoring organization. Common challenges in these relationships were mentors feeling frustrated with the nature and quality of the support they received (e.g., some mentors found the regular check-ins to be redundant, repetitive, robotic, and superficial). Due to these challenges, mentors also reported a lack of willingness to reach out to staff members while encountering a challenge in their relationship (Spencer et al., 2020).

3. Relationships Between Staff Members and Primary Caregivers: Finally, this study discovered that in almost a third of the relationships, staff members reported negative feelings towards primary caregivers (e.g., deficit-based views of families, which tended to focus on a lack of communication skills and investment in the program).

In terms of the policies and practices of mentoring organizations, two factors contributed to early match closure:

1. Staffing Changes: Nearly half of the relationships experienced a change in their assigned staff member, with some experiencing two or three changes (Spencer et al., 2020). Staff turnover often resulted in mentors, mentees, and caregivers experiencing a gap in monitoring and support, and lacking information on who to contact when challenges arose in their relationships. New staff members also reported feeling overwhelmed and underinformed of their newly assigned matches, due to a lack of in-depth note-taking from the previous staff member (Spencer et al., 2020).

2. Monitoring and Support: In many relationships, participants reported a lack of consistent monitoring and support, which contributed to the ending of their relationships (Spencer et al., 2020). Many mentors reported a lack of quality monitoring and support, which resulted in them closing the match without even consulting their assigned staff member.

Taken together, the results of this study highlight the importance of broadening the focus of monitoring and support efforts beyond the mentor-mentee relationship. This study demonstrates that premature relationship terminations often occur via breakdowns in multiple relationships surrounding the mentor-mentee relationship. Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring programs begin assessing the broader network of relationships surrounding mentors and mentees, and providing monitoring and support to relationships that pose certain risks and challenges (Spencer et al., 2020).

In another study taking place in Australia, researchers took a systemic approach to understanding the various "red flags" in relationships and which "repair strategies" staff members can use during monitoring and support contacts (MacCallum, Beltman, Coffey & Cooper, 2017). Results revealed the following six red flags:

- Mismatched expectations between the mentor and the mentoring organization;
- Mentors lack of understanding of the realities of the mentee's life;
- Mentors and mentee not connecting after a few meetings;
- External factors that influence the mentor or mentee availability;
- Staff member concerns about inconsistencies (i.e., mismatched reports on what occurred during mentoring sessions; mentors ignoring guidelines; and mentees cancelling meetings with short notice); and
- A lack of support from parents and teachers.

After identifying these red flags, program staff members identified the following repair strategies:

- Increasing support offered to mentors;
- Supporting mentors to become more flexible (i.e., helping mentors recognize that their current approach might not be working as well as they would like; helping mentors learn from this, and be more flexible with their strategies);
- Supporting mentors to become more responsive and sensitive (i.e., helping mentors consider how situations can be handled in different ways and begin adapting more to the preferences and needs of the mentee); and
- Increasing support offered to mentees.

Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring organizations begin paying more attention to the broader social context surrounding mentoring relationships while offering supporting and monitoring (MacCallum et al., 2017).

In another recent study, researchers explored how mentors' relationships with their mentees' families impacted their mentoring relationships (Ellison, Cory, Horwath, Barnett & Huppert, 2020). In this study of 204 mentors participating within 37 different mentoring programs, the researchers discovered that when mentors had high-quality relationships with their mentees' families, they were significantly more likely to "go the extra mile" within their relationships by engaging in prosocial behaviour that was above their required mentoring requirements for both their mentee and the mentoring organization (Ellison et al., 2020). Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring organizations begin providing more opportunities for mentors and primary caregivers to develop positive relationships with one another (Ellison et al., 2020).

In another study, seven different mentoring organizations were invited to test out various enhancements for 1,310 mentees facing risk factors (Herrera et al., 2013). Of relevance for monitoring and support, the agencies decided to have monthly contact with mentors *and* youth and primary caregivers via phone or in-person. Although contacting mentors once a month was common practice for most programs, contacting mentees and their primary caregivers once a month was a new approach (typical practice was every two months). Certain agencies also decided to offer support groups for mentors, which 94% of mentors found helpful, although attendance at these meetings was difficult (Herrera et al., 2013). In general, results revealed that when mentors received increased support, they were more likely to meet with their mentees on a consistent basis and develop high-quality relationships (Herrera et al., 2013). Results also revealed that despite best-efforts and intentions, only 34% of mentees and 48% of primary caregivers received regular monitoring and support contacts from staff members (Herrera et al., 2013). Based on these results, the authors encouraged mentoring organizations to begin contacting and supporting mentees and primary caregivers on a more consistent and regular basis (Herrera et al., 2013).

Finally, a recent Canadian study taking supports the importance of considering the broader context beyond the mentor-mentee dyad (De Wit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose & Lipman, 2020). In this study, researchers examined the experiences of 997 mentees and their parents who were participating in 20 different Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across Canada. An important finding of this study was a consistently positive correlation between a high-quality relationship between mentors and primary

caregivers and the overall relationship quality between mentors and mentees (De Wit et al., 2020). Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring organizations begin offering more training and support for mentors to develop high-quality relationships with caregivers. These opportunities might involve agency-sponsored social events for mentors and caregivers to spend quality time with one another.

Implications for Monitoring and Support

Based on this growing area of research, mentoring organizations might consider broadening the purpose of their monitoring and support to also include assessments of relationships beyond the mentor-mentee dyad.

To do so, the National Mentoring Resource offers a tool that can help staff members consider the various relationships surrounding mentors and mentee while providing monitoring and support. This tool can help staff members identify strengths and weaknesses in the network surrounding mentors and mentees and begin providing support to potential challenged relationships. The Match Characteristics Questionnaire can also be used to assess mentor's perceptions of their relationships with parents/caregivers (Nakkula & Harris, 2014).

THE IMPACT OF STAFF MEMBERS ON MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

This review identified several recent articles that explore the impact of staff members on relationship quality (Boat, Weiler, Bailey, Haddock & Henry, 2019; Homan, Epley & Bloir, 2020; Keller, Drew, Clark-Shim, Spencer & Herrera, 2020; Keller & DuBois, 2019; Kok, Espinoza, Worker, Go, & Miller, 2020; Lyons, McQuillin & Henderson, 2019; McQuillin et al., 2015; Sass & Karcher, 2013; Weiler, Boat & Haddock, 2019 as cited in Keller & DuBois, 2019; White et al., 2020). In general, this body of research indicates that staff members can influence mentoring relationship quality via their level of competence (Keller & DuBois, 2019; Sass & Karcher, 2013), work engagement (Keller & DuBois, 2019), style of providing support (Keller & DuBois, 2019), and how long they spend checking-in with mentors during their support contacts (Keller et al., 2020).

In a recent special issue on supporting volunteerism in youth development programs, several researchers offered insights into how we can better monitor and support mentors (DuBois, 2020). Research in this special issue discovered that mentoring organizations can improve their monitoring and support practices by considering various questions:

- What *kinds* of support are offered? In one of the studies within this special issue, researchers discovered that volunteers preferred specific *kinds* of ongoing support for their volunteer roles (Kok et al., 2020). In order of preference, volunteers reported that they wished to receive ongoing support via: learning from other mentors in peer support sessions; online learning; in-person learning; classes and conferences; and more self-directed forms of ongoing learning (Kok et al., 2020). The results of this study suggest that volunteers often prefer to interact with other volunteers as a form of ongoing support. The strong desire to connect with other volunteers was also reported in another study included in this special issue (White et al., 2020). While offering these forms of ongoing peer support, it might also be important to consider whether they are being offered as one-off events, or in a more self-directed manner. For example, another study in this special issue, involving over 10,000 volunteers, found that volunteers often preferred more *self-directed forms of learning* compared to in-person training and support opportunities (Homan et al., 2020). The volunteers in this study reported that these opportunities might involve peer-to-peer mentoring, online forms of learning (a database of volunteers with expertise in certain areas and a willingness to share their knowledge), and reading resources at their own pace (Homan et al., 2020). On balance, these studies provide evidence for the need for more peer-to-peer learning in volunteer programs, compared to the traditional "top-down" approach. In support of this, another study discovered 87% of mentors across ten mentoring organizations appreciated interacting with other mentors and receiving peer support via in-person support groups, blogs, and/or discussion groups/boards – which also helped them develop closer connections with their mentees (Jarjoura, Tanyu, Forbush, Herrera & Keller, 2018).

  In yet another study on school-based mentoring, researchers and practitioners collaborated to develop an online mentoring session feedback tool (Moy & Lee, 2020). The tool was designed to help mentors adhere to the goals of the program while also provide mentees an opportunity to

reflect on their experience and provide a rating of the helpfulness of each session. Using their cell phones, mentors scanned a QR code after each mentoring session and reported on the activities they performed with their mentee (Moy & Lee, 2020). In general, the researchers discovered that this tool helped mentors stay on track during their mentoring relationships and better adhere to the overall mission and goals of the mentoring program (Moy & Lee, 2020). Based on these findings, the authors recommended future programs consider creating opportunities for mentors and mentee to monitor their *own* relationships using various feedback tools. In at least one other study, researchers have invited mentors to use a tool designed to help them follow the goals of the program, which resulted in positive outcomes (Dantzer, 2018). Taken together, this research suggests that mentoring programs can empower mentors and mentees to monitor their own relationships and begin taking a more reflective and mindful approach to each mentoring session.

Finally, a third study acknowledged that volunteers have different preferred "languages" of receiving recognition for their volunteerism (Morris, 2020). This study highlights the importance of identifying each volunteers *language* and providing them with ongoing monitoring and encouragement that speaks to them in their language (see our previous discussion on mentor recruitment for more information on volunteer recognition; along with a helpful tool developed by Volunteer Canada).

- How *much* support is offered? In one of the studies within this special issue, researchers investigated how the *amount of time* dedicated to match support contacts influenced mentors volunteering experiences (Keller et al., 2020). In this study, 504 mentors were recruited from 55 different mentoring organizations. Results indicated that mentors who received no support or short amounts of support (i.e., 1-5 minutes) reported the lowest levels of volunteering experiences and quality of supervision (Keller et al., 2020). Results also indicated that mentors who received regular contacts that lasted *at least 6 minutes* rated their volunteer experiences and quality of supervision significantly higher than those who did not (Keller et al., 2020). In other words, as long as support contacts lasted more than 5 minutes, mentors were significantly more likely to report an enjoyable volunteering experience characterized by high-quality monitoring and support by their mentoring organization (Keller et al., 2020). The results of this study indicate that mentoring organizations should encourage staff members to spend at *least* five minutes connecting with mentors, rather than engaging in quick check-ins – which previous research indicates can seem robotic and repetitive (Spencer et al., 2020). In general, the authors of this study encouraged staff members to engage in more deep and meaningful conversations with mentors, rather than offering brief surface-level check-ins. In a similar study, researchers discovered the critical importance of monitoring and support for retaining mentors (Stukey, 2016). In this sample of 198 mentors, results revealed that the amount of *in-person* contact between staff support specialists and mentors positively predicted mentor retention. These results highlight the importance of in-person contact, compared to telephone or e-mail. Based on these results, the authors strongly recommended that mentoring organizations develop policies and procedures that would encourage face-to-face contact between volunteers and staff members (i.e., at least once a year).

- How can mentoring staff make a difference? In a recent study, researchers explored the influence of program staff on the quality of 450 mentoring relationships taking place across ten different Big Brothers Big Sisters community-based programs (Keller & DuBois, 2019). The researchers were interested in discovering how specific characteristics of mentoring staff (i.e., style and approach to monitoring and support) influence relationship quality between mentors and mentees. Results indicated that mentoring relationships were, in part, influenced by staff members. In particular, staff members' level of work engagement, approaches to match support, and ratings by their supervisors regarding their competence were all associated with the quality of mentoring relationships (Keller & DuBois, 2019). While explaining their results, the authors suggested that staff members who are more engaged at work may demonstrate to mentors and mentees that they are energized by their work and dedicated to helping volunteers succeed in their roles (Keller & DuBois, 2019). Next, the authors highlighted that what staff members emphasize during support contacts can influence mentoring relationship quality. For example, this study discovered that a more laissez-faire style was most predictive of lower relationship qualities (Keller & DuBois, 2019). This style was typically characterized by letting matches develop naturally, encouraging matches to handle situations by themselves in their own way, and not offering explicit advice that would be perceived as too prescriptive and top-down which could be interpreted by mentors and mentees as a staff member's lack of interest. It is also important to note that, adherence to program guidelines and policies predicted more favourable mentoring relationship qualities (Keller & DuBois, 2019).

In a similar study, researchers suggested that staff members should strive to help mentors find a "sweet spot" between a more developmental and instrumental approach to mentoring while offering them ongoing forms of support (Lyons et al., 2019). In particular, these researchers discovered that when mentors were guided to develop a close and emotionally-supportive relationship with their mentee, while also making rooms for goal-setting and constructive feedback, mentees experienced optimal outcomes (Lyons et al., 2019). In another study, researchers discovered the importance of helping mentors understand that they may experience "dips" in their relationship satisfaction over time, even though they have high-quality relationships with their mentees (Spiekermann, Lyons & Lawrence, 2020). Based on this research, during support contacts, staff can help mentors understand that fluctuations in their relationships are normal. In addition, programs might also consider monitoring weekly relationship satisfaction in order to predict oncoming "dips" in relationships and be able to intervene accordingly. In a final study, researchers explored whether certain program characteristics (e.g., program structure, supportive relationships with staff, opportunities for skill building) could help mentors develop supportive mentoring relationships with youth who were characterized to be "at-risk" (Weiler et al., 2019). In this study of 455 mentoring relationships, the researchers discovered that when mentors felt supported by the mentoring organization they were more likely to develop high-quality relationships with their mentees, even when their mentee was determined to be "at-risk" (Weiler et al., 2019). In particular, mentors felt supported when they received high levels of program structure (i.e., clear schedules, ideas on what to do, where to meet, etc.), supportive relationships (i.e., feeling like they have someone to talk to about their challenges), and opportunities for skill-building (i.e., learning about child development, mentoring best-practices, helping strategies, etc.) Based on these findings, the authors recommended that mentoring organizations consider enhancing their program structure, opportunities for mentors to feel supported, and opportunities for skill-building – all characteristics that are changeable (Weiler et al., 2019).

Implications for Monitoring and Support

Taken together, this research suggests that mentoring organizations might consider what *kinds* of ongoing support they are offering their mentors, *how* often they are contacting them, for how long, and how staff members might be influencing mentoring relationships. The Alberta Mentoring Partnership, MENTOR, and the National Mentoring Resource Center all offer helpful insights to develop a more comprehensive plan for monitoring and support.

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6. CLOSING

This literature review was conducted in December 2020. In total, 24 articles were reviewed. This process revealed four main themes that have implications for the successful closure of mentoring relationships:

1. Current benchmarks and best practices
2. Premature match closures
3. The process of closing mentoring relationships
4. Recent innovations surrounding the closure of mentoring relationships

CURRENT BENCHMARKS AND BEST PRACTICES

This review identified two seminal publications that describe the current benchmarks and best-practices for closing mentoring relationship (Basualdo-Delmonico & Spencer, 2014; Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai, 2015). According to these publications, current best-practices for closing mentoring relationships include:

1. Establishing a procedure to manage both anticipated and unanticipated closures;

2. Establishing a procedure to manage the closure process when one member of the relationship is unable/unwilling to engage in the process;

3. Conducting exit interviews with mentors, mentees, and primary caregivers;

4. While interviewing mentors and mentees, staff members should discuss the following:

    - Participants feelings about the closure of their relationship;
    - Reasons for the closure of the relationship;
    - Positive experiences and growth that have occurred throughout the relationship;
    - Staff should discuss the procedure for notifying the mentor/mentee and their parents to provide sufficient time to prepare the mentor/mentee for closure;
    - Review of the rules for post-closure contact;
    - Creating a plan for the last meeting between the match; and
    - Discussion of re-matching, if interested.

5. Creating a written public statement to mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians that outlines the procedures for closing matches and the policies for post-closure contact between mentors and mentees.

In addition to these best-practices, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership provides several enhancements that programs might implement. These enhancements include:

1. Initiating a discussion with mentors, mentees, and parents/caregivers at the conclusion of the agreed upon time period of the mentoring relationship to explore if everyone wishes to continue the match for an additional period of time;

2. Hosting a final celebration meeting/event for mentors and mentees to finalize their progress and transition, or acknowledge new changes in the mentoring relationship (i.e., new frequency of meetings going forward); and

3. Providing training and support to mentees, mentors, and parents/primary caregivers about how mentees can identify and connect with natural mentors in their lives.

Implications for Closure

Research has consistently documented the importance of closing mentoring relationships in a constructive and supportive manner (Garringer et al., 2015). For mentees, the closure of a mentoring

relationship may trigger memories of poor relational histories with adults, have them question the reasons for the closure, and increase the chances of various emotional disturbances (Garringer et al., 2015). For example, research has shown that if the closure process is not conducted in a responsible and constructive manner, it can lead mentees to experience feelings of disappointment, anger, and guilt (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Lakes & Karcher, 2013; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog & Eriksson, 2016; Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, Walsh & Drew, 2017). In general, researchers have encouraged mentoring programs to put as much care and attention to the constructive closure of mentoring relationships as they put into creating and nourishing these relationships (Garringer, Fulop & Rennick, 2003).

To help with this process, MENTOR, the Ontario Mentoring Coalition, the National Mentoring Resource Center, and the Alberta Mentoring Partnership offer helpful resources that can guide the creation of a research-informed closure protocol.

PREMATURE MATCH CLOSURES

In general, research has consistently discovered that a large portion of youth mentoring relationships end prematurely. It is estimated that anywhere between 30%-55% of youth mentoring relationships end before they fulfill their expected time commitment (Basualdo-Delmonico & Spencer, 2017; Grossman, Chan, Schwartz & Rhodes, 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Lymburner, 2006). Researchers have also explored early relationship closures in Canada (DeWit et al., 2016). In this study of 569 mentoring relationships matched across 20 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, results showed that 34% of youth experienced an early relationship closure before the 12-month required commitment (DeWit et al., 2016). Research also suggests that when relationships do end prematurely, they can often lead to detrimental outcomes for mentees, such as increased problem behaviours, alcohol use, and decreased perceptions of self-worth and academic competence (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007).

This review identified 11 articles describing the particular reasons for premature match closure (Burton, 2017; Corley, 2020; DeWit et al., 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt, Stump, Stelter & Rhodes, 2017; Lymburner, 2006; Shamblen, Courser, Schweinhart & Thompson, 2020; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2019; Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, Walsh & Drew, 2017; Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack & Keller, 2020). This research is important as it can help staff members understand why relationships end, which might help them anticipate challenges and intervene when necessary. This body of research has identified the following reasons for premature match closures:

- Changes in life circumstances: Relationships may end prematurely due to mentors acquiring a new job, moving away, or starting their own family. Mentees may also move away or change their schools (Burton, 2017; Spencer et al., 2017).
- Perceived lack of mentee interest: Relationships may end if the mentor perceives that their mentee is not interested in the relationship or became involved with the mentoring organization for external reasons (Burton, 2017; DeWit et al., 2016; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2017).
- High-school or college mentors: Research has identified that high-school or college-age mentors are at an increased risk of ending their volunteer commitments prematurely (Burton, 2017; Grossman et al., 2012).
- Mentor Abandonment: In some relationships, mentors simply disappear and stop all communication with mentees and the mentoring organization (Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2017).
- Mentor Dissatisfaction: For various reasons, mentors may become dissatisfied with their volunteer position and may withdraw from the program (Spencer et al., 2017).
- Parent/Primary Caregiver Dissatisfaction: Parents and primary caregivers can also contribute to relationship deterioration when the match is not meeting their expected goals for their child (Shamblen et al., 2020; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2020).
- Mentor and Mentee's Gender: Female mentors and mentees are more likely to be involved in prematurely closing relationships (DeWit et al., 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Lymburner, 2006). The reasons for this are still largely unclear.

- Matching Issues: Research has discovered that when mentors or mentees experience challenges during the matching process, they are more likely to end their relationships prematurely (DeWit et al., 2016).
- Behavioural Challenges: Mentees who are displaying various behavioural challenges (i.e., school-functioning problems, engagement in risky behaviours, self-regulation challenges, criminal activity, and internalizing and externalizing behaviours) are more likely to be involved in relationships that close early (DeWit et al., 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017).
- Mentee Age: Middle school (11-14) and high-school (14-19) mentees have been found to be more likely to be involved in prematurely closing relationships (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017).
- Mentor Age: High-school mentors, college-students, and young adults (18-24) have all been associated with an increased risk of early match closure (Kupersmidt et al., 2017). Mentors who are married and between the ages of 26-30 have also been found to be slightly more likely to end their relationships prematurely (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). In contrast, mentors who have completed some university/college education have been found to be over three times more likely to be in a long-last relationship (Lymburner, 2006). In addition, mentors who had completed undergraduate education were five times more likely to make it past the 12-month commitment (Lymburner, 2006).
- Family Risk Factors: Various family-based risk factors (i.e., low educational achievement, lack of housing and employment stability, mental illness, violence, incarcerated parent, involvement in foster care, immigrant-status) have been associated with premature match closures (Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Lymburner, 2006). Mentees who are victims of prior physical, emotional, or sexual abuse are also more likely to be involved in relationships that close early (Grossman et al., 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).
- Mentor's Relationship Skills: In some cases, research has discovered that mentor's lack of relationship skills (i.e., a lack of youth-focus; unrealistic expectations for mentee's behaviour; inability to bridge cultural and economic divides, etc.) can contribute to early relationship closures (Grossman et al., 2012; Spencer, 2007).
- Unrealistic Expectations: Mentor's' unrealistic expectations have been linked to early-closing relationships (Corley, 2020; DeWit et al., 2016; Spencer, 2007).
- Rushed Matching Process: In at least one study, mentors reported that they ended they relationships because the matching process was rushed (Corley, 2020).

Implications for Closure

Based on the research above, researchers have recommended that mentoring programs remain mindful of the various reasons for premature match closures (Burton, 2017; Corley, 2020; DeWit et al., 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Lymburner, 2006; Shamblen et al., 2020; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2019; Spencer et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2020). By monitoring for these various red flags, mentoring programs may be able to intervene early enough to save a mentoring relationship that is at-risk of ending prematurely (see literature review on monitoring and support for more details).

THE PROCESS OF CLOSING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

This review identified several studies that have detailed the importance of the relationship closure process (Garringer et al., 2003; Lakes & Karcher, 2013; Miller, 2007; Spencer et al., 2019; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). Based on this research, it is critically important for mentoring organizations to consider how they are conducting their closure meetings. For example, research has found that mentors and mentees who have strong emotional connections are more likely to engage in a well-planned and constructive closure, while mentors and mentees with weak emotional connections are more likely to engage in poorly-planned meetings, or simply bypass the meeting altogether (Spencer et al., 2014). Since mentoring programs often provide services to mentees and families who are experiencing certain challenges (i.e., single-parent homes, lack of adult role models, involvement in foster care, financial instability, incarcerated parents, etc.), the closure process may hold special significance for mentees and primary caregivers (Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017).

In a recent study, researchers conducted interviews with 48 pairs of mentors, mentees, and primary caregivers (Spencer et al., 2017). In this study, the researchers discovered three different types of closure experiences:

1. Planned and Completed: In this study, 20 matches were able to have a well-organized closure that allowed for mentors and mentees to say goodbye to one another in-person. In most of these relationships, all parties were well aware of the closure of the relationship and the various reasons for the closure. Most of the participants in this group felt as though the closure process was well-managed, especially when mentors were able to provide a clear and reasonable explanation for why the relationship was coming to a close. In general, these closures allowed all participants to be satisfied with the experience and feel less disappointed about the closure.
2. Planned but not Completed: In this study, 8 matches planned a closure meeting, but were not able to attend. Plans for closure involved having the mentor write their mentee a final letter of appreciation or going on one more outing together. In general, these relationship endings were classified as "messy" and unsatisfying to all parties. The relationships that ended in this manner often did not involve a close emotional connection between mentors and mentees.
3. Agency Ended: In this study, 20 matches were formally closed by staff members. In general, this often occurred because the agency lost contact with mentors, or another party indicated they wanted to end the relationship. The majority of the relationships in this group did not involve a close emotional connection between mentors and mentees.

Based on the results of their study, these researchers pointed out that mentoring organizations can achieve more constructive and satisfying closures by inviting mentors and mentees to engage in a well-organized and thoughtful discussion about the end of their relationships (Spencer et al., 2017). The research below offers insights into how mentoring organizations can conduct the relationship closure process in a constructive and supportive manner.

Lakes and Karcher (2013) provide helpful recommendations for framing and conducting the closure process in a manner that can lead to learning and growth:

- Identify challenges in relationship and discuss opportunities for growth: If the relationship is closing due to the behaviours of the mentor or mentee, these should be highlighted and discussed in a constructive manner. For example, if the mentee engaged in certain behaviours (i.e., rudeness, tardiness, absenteeism, etc.) that placed strain on their relationship, they might be invited to reflect on these behaviours and describe how they may have impacted their mentor (Lakes & Karcher, 2013). In addition, the person on the receiving end of these challenging behaviours might be invited to reflect on how they responded to them, how their responses might have altered their relationship, and how they might respond to these behaviours in the future. These individual conversations can inspire mentors and mentees to reflect on their behaviour and prepare to engage in the closure meeting in a more constructive manner (Lakes & Karcher, 2013).
- Highlight non-personal reasons for match closure: If the relationship is closing for other non-personal reasons (i.e., changing schedules, moving away, etc.) these should be highlighted to help mentors/mentees understand and be reassured that they did not contribute to the closure of the relationship (Lakes & Karcher, 2013).

In a similar article, Zilberstein and Spencer (2017) provide helpful recommendations for closing mentoring relationships from a more attachment-based perspective. After reviewing the literature on attachment and interpersonal relationships, the authors stated that mentoring programs can achieve positive closures by ensuring the process is planned, growth-promoting, process-oriented and clear.

- Planned: Consistent with MENTOR's recommendations (Garringer et al., 2015), planned closures offer mentors and mentees opportunities to engage in various constructive procedures, such as celebrating their positive experiences together, marking any milestones and/or skills that were gained, discussing their feelings about the relationship ending, planning to engage in a favourite activity one last time, and/or engaging in an activity they had planned and hoped to do, but have not gotten around to yet. Staff members might also reach out to parents/caregivers to anticipate how the mentee may react to the closure and plan how the process can be in stronger alignment with the mentees personality and expectations.
- Growth-Promoting: Closures that are growth-promoting emphasize the learning and achievements that have occurred in the relationship and view the closure as a transition, rather

than a loss or termination. As a more transition-based process, the closure provides an opportunity to reflect on the relationship and plan for how both partners will continue to learn and grow, even if they won't be seeing each other anymore.

- Process-Oriented: Closures that are process-oriented provide mentors and mentees the opportunity to deeply reflect on their relationships and experience the wide range of emotions attached to the closure of their relationship. Process-oriented closures invite mentors to accept, hold, and respect their mentees emotions regarding the closure of their relationship by helping them work through their emotions and navigate next steps.
- Clear: Closures that are clear avoid empty promises and mixed messages by explicitly informing all parties when the mentoring relationship will end and how the mentor and mentee will communicate with one another going forward, if both parties are interested. Mentors should be encouraged to avoid making half-hearted comments designed to comfort their mentee (i.e., don't worry, we will stay in touch). In contrast, staff members should guide mentors and mentees to co-construct clear guidelines for how they will continue communicating with one another after the closure of their relationship.

Finally, in a more recent study, researchers set out to discover how closures were managed, communicated, and experienced by mentors, mentees, parents/caregivers, and mentoring staff (Spencer et al., 2019). In this sample of 623 key stakeholders, researchers discovered the following helpful insights:

- Mentee's Experiences: In this study, 93% of mentees reported that their relationships ended sooner than they had hoped or expected. Furthermore, a large majority of mentees (74%) also reported that they did not have a final chance to say goodbye to their mentor in-person and that it was extremely rare for staff members to reach out to them and help them during the closure process (6%).
- Parent/Primary Caregiver Experiences: Similar to mentees, a large portion of parents (68%) were surprised that their child's match would be closing in the near future. Consistent with mentees, parents also reported that the closure process was largely unplanned (63%), with no formal goodbye occurring between their child and their mentor (73%). Furthermore, only 6% of parents reported that they received help from staff members in terms of how to prepare their child for the closure process. As such, 48% of parents reported being dissatisfied with how their child's mentoring relationship concluded.
- Mentor's Experiences: In support of the reports by mentees and their parents, 69% of mentors reported that they did not formally say goodbye to their mentee after deciding they could no longer fulfill their commitment. In contrast to mentees and parents, a large portion of mentors (63%) reported that they received support from staff members in terms of how to handle the closure process in a constructive manner and say goodbye to their mentee.
- Staff Member's Experiences: Staff members reported that it was uncommon for mentors and mentees to formally say goodbye to each other in-person (28%). Staff members also reported that their role during closures was primarily to help coach the mentors (44%), followed by parents (30%), and then mentees (11%).

According to the authors of this study, these results "paint a sobering picture" of relationship closures and the general need for much more care and attention in helping matches close in a positive and supportive manner (Spencer et al., 2019). In the majority of the relationships studied, there was a lack of clear communication and constructive dialogue between mentors and mentees (Spencer et al., 2019). Without purposefully reflecting on their relationships, celebrating their growth, and making plans for the future, a large portion of participants reported being highly dissatisfied with how their mentoring experience concluded (Spencer et al., 2019).

Implications for Closure

In general, the research above points towards the critical importance of handling relationship closures in a supportive and growth-oriented manner. The research above also suggests that staff members should be mindful of the closure process and place significant effort on ensuring mentees are provided with support during this process.

To help with these recommendations, Garringer and colleagues (2003) have developed several self-assessment questions that can help organizations reflect on their current closure practices and identify areas in need of improvement. These questions include:

- What are some of the reasons why matches may end in our program?
- What are the "red flags" and indicators that a match may need to be terminated by our staff?
- Do we have written procedures and policies that address the closure of matches?
- Do our procedures and policies take into account the many different reasons why a match may end?
- Do our procedures and policies provide opportunities for positive closure for the youth, volunteer, and parents/guardian?
- Is our staff aware of outside support services that may help a mentor or mentee deal with the closure of the match or move on to another mentoring opportunity? (Garringer et al., 2003, p. 56).

Another important consideration is how mentoring programs will manage the continued communication between mentors and mentees once their relationships have concluded. Research indicates that developing a written protocol for digital communication can help with this process (Garringer et al., 2015). Developing such a plan can benefit both mentors and mentees. For example, in a sample of 258 mentors and 147 staff members participating in programs across Canada and the United States, researchers discovered that digital communication between mentors and mentees (via Facebook) was linked with higher-quality and longer lasting relationships (Schwartz et al., 2014). This study also discovered that more than two-thirds of mentors said that they planned to continue their relationship with their mentee via digital communication, after closure (Schwartz et al., 2014). The researchers suggested that these findings could be used to help frame the closure as more of a transition of the relationship into a different form and style of hanging out and communicating, rather than a complete ending to the friendship.

RECENT INNOVATIONS SURROUNDING THE CLOSURE OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

In recent years, several researchers have encouraged the field of mentoring to broaden its scope beyond the mentor-mentee dyad (Austin et al., 2020; Meltzer & Saunders, 2020; Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016; Varga & Zaff, 2018). Although this research is broadly applicable to the youth mentoring process, it holds particular usefulness for relationship closures.

For example, in their seminal article, Schwartz and Rhodes (2016) outline several innovative approaches to mentoring. Among these approaches is Network-Engaged Mentoring, an approach to mentoring that purposefully encourages mentors to help their mentees connect with other supportive adults in their lives (e.g., teachers, coaches, afterschool staff etc.). Acknowledging the time-limited nature of most mentoring programs, this approach to mentoring encourages mentors to help their mentees build the skills to continue receiving mentorship from other adults once their relationship has concluded.

In a recent examination of Network-Engaged Mentoring, researchers studied 766 mentoring relationships taking place across 23 different mentoring organizations in the United States (Austin et al., 2020). In this study, the researchers discovered three distinct approaches to mentoring that have implications for the closure process (Austin et al., 2020).

1. Status Quo Mentors: This group of mentors developed low-to-moderate levels of closeness with their mentees. These mentors also engaged in low levels of connecting their mentee with other supportive adults and low levels of mediating for their mentees. In total, 71.6% of mentors fell into this category. This mentoring approach had limited impact on mentees (i.e., no changes in parent-child relationships and mentee help-seeking behaviour).
2. Connector-Mediators: This group of mentors developed moderate levels of closeness with their mentees. These mentors also engaged in moderate levels of connecting and mediating behaviour on behalf of their mentees. Connecting behaviour involved: introducing mentees to other adults; introducing mentees to community-based programs, services, and resources; introducing mentees to new situations and settings; and introducing mentees to people who could teach them new skills and provide guidance. Mediating behaviour involved: connecting with other adults to ensure mentee's were being treated fairly in their schools and

communities; speaking up for mentee's when they were experiencing challenges; meeting with teachers or other professionals on behalf of mentee's; and speaking with the mentee's peers on their behalf. In total, 7.6% of mentors fell into this category. This mentoring approach had limited impact on mentees (i.e., no changes in parent-child relationships and mentee help-seeking behaviour).

3. Close Connectors: This group of mentors developed moderate-to-high levels of closeness with their mentees. These mentors also engaged in moderate-to-high levels of connecting, and low levels of mediating. In total, 20.8% of mentors fell into this category. The mentees in this group experienced the greatest benefits in terms of their relationships with their parents, extracurricular involvement, and help-seeking behaviors.

Based on these results, the authors suggested that an important goal for mentoring organizations should be to increase mentee's skills and opportunities for mentorship beyond their one-to-one relationship with their mentors (Austin et al., 2020). By encouraging mentors to engage in connecting behaviours, programs may be able to extend the scope and benefits of their programming beyond the required duration of their mentoring relationships (Austin et al., 2020).

In support of this, recent research also suggests that formal mentoring programs can increase mentors' skills and willingness to mentor the young people in their communities (Meltzer & Saunders, 2020). In other words, research is beginning to highlight the potential for mentoring programs to not only improve individual outcomes for participating mentees, but to also offer community-building benefits for the broader community via helping mentors develop their skills in youth-development (Meltzer & Saunders, 2020).

Implications for Closure

Based on the research above, mentoring organizations might consider how they can begin broadening the purpose of their programming to include opportunities for mentees to connect with a wide range of supportive adults in their communities. By doing so, organizations could prepare mentees for the closure of their relationships and frame them as an opportunity for new relationships to blossom. If programs are hesitant to try Network-Engaged Mentoring, they could simply consider incorporating conversations about other adults into the closure process (i.e., inviting mentees to discuss the supportive adults in their lives and who they might reach out to going forward).

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