

Raising the Profile of Mentoring: Recruiting more Mentors across Canada

Report

The State of Mentoring in Canada
May 2021



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A report by:



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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The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is a non-profit research organization, created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate new programs. SRDC's two-part mission is to help policy-makers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing these policies.

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FOREWORD

Young people must be at the centre of Canada's post-pandemic recovery. MENTOR Canada firmly believes that mentoring is a key tool to foster a more equitable and inclusive recovery.

Research has demonstrated that connections and safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships play an integral role in young people's healthy development and resilience. The social isolation many of us experienced as a result of the pandemic provided us with first-hand experience of how critical relationships are for our mental health and well-being. Disconnected, we languish.

In 2019, shortly after MENTOR Canada was created, we undertook a comprehensive research project about the state of youth mentoring in Canada. As part of The State of Mentoring Research Initiative, we conducted three studies to 1) map the mentoring gap and understand which young people had or did not have access to mentors growing up, 2) capture the mentoring landscape and increase our understanding of the prevalence and scope of mentoring programs and services across the country, and 3) raise the profile of mentoring and examine adults' views on the place of youth mentoring in Canadian society and understand what motivates them to mentor or, conversely, what prevents them from doing so. Our goal was to gather information that MENTOR Canada, and the youth mentoring sector more broadly, could use to guide our efforts to build sector capacity and, ultimately, increase young people's access to quality mentoring opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic not only forced us to make some changes to The State of Mentoring Research Initiative, it endowed it with new meaning.

The pandemic disrupted young people's ability to access supportive relationships outside of their immediate family. Social distancing guidelines and other public health measures such as school closures impeded many young people's access to informal mentors, many of whom are teachers and coaches, as well as formal mentors since programs suspended their operations or shifted to virtual settings. Although many emphasized a need to stay socially connected despite physical distancing, some of our most vulnerable young people faced additional barriers that prevented them from doing so.

Over the last decade, a robust body of international research has shown that mentoring can have a significant effect on a wide range of young people's outcomes, including their social and emotional development as well as their educational and vocational attainment. This is true for both natural or informal mentoring relationships as well as mentoring relationships that develop through formal programs. Our State of Mentoring research findings showed that young adults who have been mentored while they were growing up are more likely to report positive educational outcomes such as high school completion and pursuing further education after high school than their non-mentored peers. They are also more likely to report positive career-related outcomes. They are more likely to report feelings of belonging to their local community and being able to count on people to support them (social capital). They are more likely to report positive mental health than their non-mentored peers.

Mentoring must be integrated into holistic approaches to empower youth to fulfil their potential and increase opportunities at home, school, and in the workforce in the post-pandemic world.

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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has almost universal appeal. It is relatable and relatively easy to understand. Indeed, many of us can recall a time when a person took us under their wing, offered advice or helped us acquire new skills. This may have occurred during our childhood or adolescence, in the early stages of our careers, during important transitions, or at any other time in our lives when we welcomed a little extra support. To some of us, the fact that this person acted as a mentor may only have become clear in hindsight.

Mentoring has increased in popularity in recent decades. References to its potential and importance have become frequent in public and corporate discourses. Underlying this popularity is the belief that mentoring is a flexible relationship-based approach and a powerful tool to increase opportunities at the individual and societal level. Canadians of all convictions share the belief that mentoring has the potential to transform lives.

Despite this seemingly widespread endorsement of the importance of mentoring to support the positive development and empowerment of our young people, we know relatively little about the individuals who step up to mentor youth across Canada.

THE STATE OF MENTORING RESEARCH INITIATIVE

As an advocate for youth mentoring, the recently created MENTOR Canada undertook exploratory research to better understand the current state of mentoring in the country. MENTOR Canada worked with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) to execute *The State of Mentoring Research Initiative*. The research advisory committee, comprised of academics, practitioners, and young people, provided insights into the development, administration, and analysis of the research. The research initiative is inspired by similar studies conducted by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (USA) and the Alberta Mentoring Partnership.

The State of Mentoring Research Initiative is a critical piece of foundational work to inform quality improvement and decision-making around future directions for the field. It comprises three distinct studies:

- **Mapping the Mentoring Gap**

This study seeks to understand young adults' access to mentors and the barriers to accessing mentors they may have encountered during their childhood and adolescence. The study also explores young people's experiences of mentoring and the effect of having had a mentor on their current lives.

- **Capturing the Mentoring Landscape**

This study seeks to better understand the prevalence, scope, structure, strengths and challenges of youth mentoring programs and services across Canada.

- **Raising the Profile of Mentoring**

This study seeks to measure adults' engagement in mentoring relationships outside their immediate families and to identify their motivations and barriers to engaging in mentoring. This study also examines adults' opinions about the role that mentoring relationships should play in Canadian society.

The findings from these three studies will guide MENTOR Canada's efforts to attract new partners, advocate for increased investment, support existing programs and services, and develop a long-term strategy to enhance youth mentoring. Together, we can build a Canadian mentoring movement.



RAISING THE PROFILE OF MENTORING

Between September and November 2020, 3,500 adults from across Canada participated in an online survey about youth mentoring and its place in our society. 6 percent of respondents identified as Indigenous, 16 percent as racialized, and 16 percent of respondents had an immigrant background. The average age (mean) of respondents was 47.7 years. To supplement the survey findings, we conducted 18 interviews with adults who have mentored young people. Most interview participants had experience as formal mentors, and a few also had experience as informal mentors (for additional details about the study's methodology and the survey sample, see Appendices A & B).

The information gathered helped us answer the following questions:

- What are adults' attitudes and opinions about youth mentoring and its role in young people and Canada's future?
- Who are the adults that step up to mentor young people? How might engagement look different across demographic groups?
- What motivates adults to mentor young people? What benefits do they, and their mentees, reap from this engagement?
- What do mentoring relationships look like from the mentors' perspectives?
- What barriers prevent adults from mentoring? What could persuade more adults to engage in mentoring?

In our survey, we explored how responses to these questions varied between people who have a history of mentoring compared to those who have never mentored before. We also explored how responses varied between survey respondents who indicated that they do not currently mentor but would be likely to do so in the next five years compared to those who do not currently mentor and would be unlikely to do so in the next five years.

22 percent of survey respondents recalled having had a mentor while they were growing up. Almost 5 percent of them recalled participating in a formal mentoring program and 19 percent recalled having an informal mentor. A small proportion of respondents, approximately 1 percent, recalled having both formal and informal mentors.

The proportion of respondents who had been mentored during their youth was greater for those under the age of 30 compared to those aged 30 and older. Indeed, 38 percent of respondents aged 18 to 29 recalled having a mentor during their youth compared to 20 percent of respondents aged 30 or more.¹ Although it is possible that some older respondents may have been unable to recall if they had a mentor growing up, mentoring has grown in popularity and awareness of mentoring has become more common in recent decades. For example, results from the **Capturing the Landscape** survey show that as many as 61 percent of mentoring programs in Canada were created within the last two decades.

DEFINITIONS

Mentors are caring, supportive people in a young person's life. Not everyone has a mentor. A mentor is someone other than a parent or guardian who is usually older and with more experience than their mentee, who the mentee can count on to be there for them, believe in and care deeply about them, and inspire them to do their best, and influence what they do and the choices they make now or in the future.

Mentoring can be formal or informal.

Formal mentoring is when an organization like a school or a community group matches a young person with an adult with whom they develop a relationship in a structured manner through regular meetings and activities.

Informal mentoring is when someone (usually older or an adult) comes into a young person's life and a mentoring relationship develops naturally. Sometimes an informal mentor is someone who works or volunteers with young people, for example, a teacher, coach, or youth worker. They may go above and beyond their job and develop a mentoring relationship with a young person. An informal mentor can also be someone like an Elder, auntie, neighbour, or family friend who develops a mentoring relationship through their natural connection to a young person.

To capture the full spectrum of youth mentoring across developmental stages, the survey asked respondents to provide details about their experience mentoring "young people" between the ages of 6 and 25.



WHAT IS THE PLACE OF MENTORING IN CANADIAN SOCIETY?

Even if only about one-fifth of adults recalled having been mentored during their youth, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed that mentoring relationships outside of the immediate family are important for young people. 79 percent of respondents felt that mentoring relationships are important for children and youth while growing up. Respondents who have experience as mentors and those who would be likely to mentor in the next five years were even more likely to believe that mentoring relationships play a critical role for young people:

- 88 percent of respondents who have mentored felt that mentoring is important for young people;
- 91 percent of respondents likely to mentor also agreed that mentoring relationships are important.

Furthermore, more than four out of five of all respondents believe that young people need more mentoring support to help maximize their success in adulthood. 62 percent of respondents believe that growing up in today's society is harder and that, as a result, more mentors are needed:

- 61 percent of respondents reported that their community needs more quality mentors for their young people;
- 60 percent agreed that their community needs more quality mentoring programs.

Again, a greater proportion of respondents with mentoring experience and those who are likely to mentor in the near future recognized that there is a need for more mentors and mentoring programs:

- 72 percent of current and past mentors and 68 percent of respondents likely to mentor felt there is a need for more mentors;
- 68 percent of current and past mentors and 66 percent of respondents likely to mentor felt there is a need for more mentoring programs.

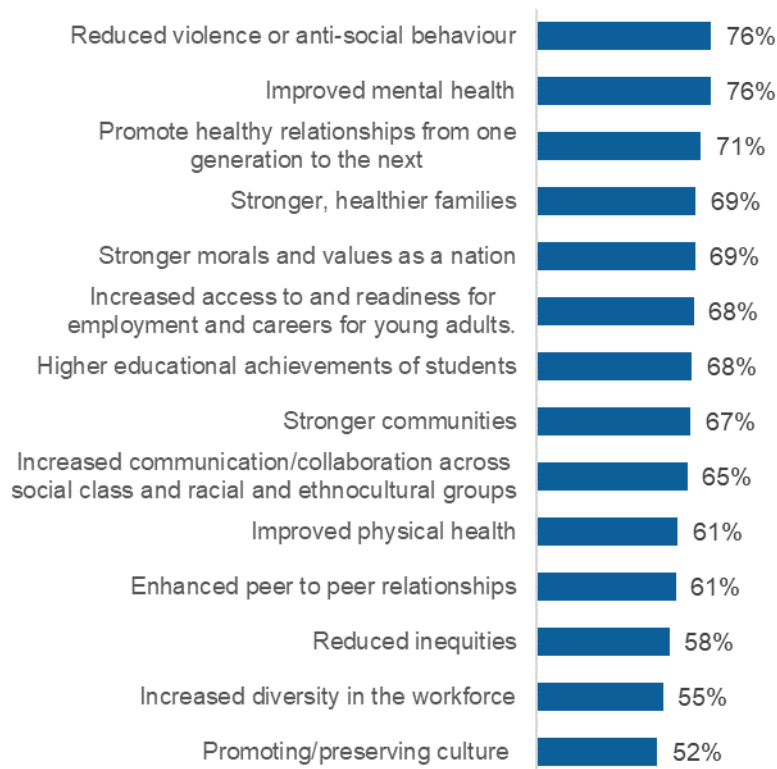
Four in five respondents recognized that mentoring helps not only young people but Canadian society as a whole. They believe that when young people receive mentoring, society reaps a myriad of benefits. Some of the most commonly endorsed major benefits include improved mental health, reduced anti-social behaviour or violence, healthy intergenerational relationships, increased collaboration and communication across social class and ethnocultural groups, as well as some benefits related to education and employment (see Figure 1).

“Although the key to building a productive society relies on furthering the well-being of children through mentoring, its inadvertent positive effects on the mentors make it a dual approach to improve community connections. This eventually leads to benefits that spill into all aspects of a thriving town, province, country, and world.”

- Interview participant



Figure 1 Opinions on benefits of youth mentoring for Canadian society (n= 3,500)



COVID-19 and Mentoring

The pandemic had a significant impact on more than three-quarters of mentoring relationships:

- 36 percent of respondents who were currently mentoring reported that they spent less time mentoring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 27 percent reported that they stopped mentoring altogether;
- 26 percent reported that they changed their mentoring activities.

The pandemic also had an impact on adults' ability or willingness to become mentors:

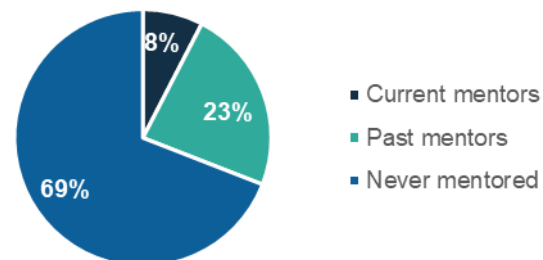
- 32 percent of respondents not currently mentoring reported that they were less likely to mentor a young person now compared to before the pandemic.



WHO MENTORS?

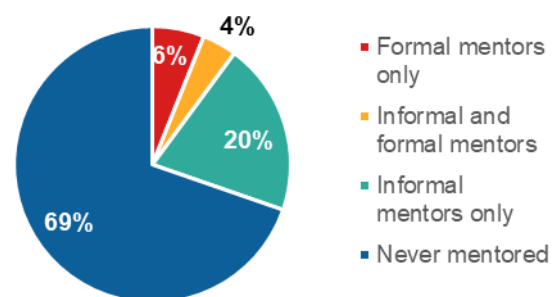
Nearly one in three adults in Canada reported having some experience as a mentor (see Figure 2). 8 percent of survey respondents reported that they were currently mentoring at least one young person between the ages of 6 to 25, or that they had done so in the last 12 months. Another 23 percent reported that while they were not currently doing so, they had mentored a young person in the past. Respondents who have mentored young people were more likely to have received mentoring when they were growing up. Indeed, close to half of them (48 percent) had mentors while growing up compared to 22 percent for all respondents.

Figure 2 Percentage of respondents who have mentored a young person since turning 18 (n=3,500)



The majority of adults who identified as a mentor have mentored youth informally (see Figure 3). 77 percent of current mentors and 78 percent of past mentors have some experience as an informal mentor. Nearly one-third of current (32 percent) and past mentors (31 percent) reported that they were mentoring or had mentored young people through a formal mentoring program. That is equivalent to roughly 10 percent of all respondents with experience as formal mentors. A small number of respondents, roughly 12 percent of respondents with mentoring experience, also have experience both as formal and informal mentors.

Figure 3 Percentage of respondents who have mentored a young person (current and past) by type of mentoring (n= 3,500)²



Age is an important factor associated with mentoring experience (see figure 8). Respondents aged 60 and over were significantly more likely to have previous mentoring experience than respondents between the ages of 18 to 29*. However, the proportion of young people between the ages of 18 to 29 who report having mentoring experience is greater than all age groups except for respondents over the age of 60. This may be the result of the growing popularity of cross-age peer-mentoring programs for young people in Canada.

Statistics accompanied by an asterisk (*) throughout the report are statistically significant, with at least 95 percent confidence.

A few additional demographic characteristics or lived experiences show an association with experience as a mentor:

- 57 percent* of Indigenous respondents had been a mentor compared to 29 percent of non-Indigenous respondents;
- 58 percent* of respondents who identified as transgender had mentoring experience compared to 30 percent of cisgender respondents;
- 37 percent* of respondents with a functional disability compared to 28 percent of respondents who do not have a disability;
- 56 percent* of respondents who had spent time in government care compared to 30 percent of respondents who had not spent time in care.

Relationship status, household income, education level, and volunteering were also associated, to varying degrees, with mentoring experience (see table 1).



Table 1 Proportion of respondents currently or previously mentoring and proportion of respondents likely to mentor by different characteristics³ (n=3,500)

Characteristic	% Current or past mentors	% Likely to mentor	Characteristic	% Current or past mentors	% Likely to mentor
Relationship status			Annual Household Income		
Never legally married	24.8%	25.8%	Less than \$25,000	24.6%	18.1%
Legally married	34.8%	21.3%	\$25,000 to less than \$35,000	31.2%	25.7%
Separated, but legally married	37.5%	31.5%	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000	22.6%	19.4%
Divorced	35.1%	20.9%	\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	27.7%	22.4%
Widowed	38.3%	N/A	\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	34.1%	24.9%
Living with a common-law partner	25.8%	23.3%	\$100,000 to less than \$125,000	35.3%	23.8%
Highest level of education			\$125,000 to less than \$150,000	36.2%	28.7%
Certificate of Apprenticeship	33.1%	25.9%	\$150,000 to less than \$250,000	34.2%	24.0%
Other trades certificate or diploma	29.0%	18.9%	\$250,000 to less than \$500,000	45.6%	27.5%
College, CEGEP or other non-university	25.5%	19.1%	\$500,000 or more	N/A	N/A
University diploma or certificate BELOW Bachelor's	43.9%	26.6%	Participated in any volunteering activities		
Bachelor's degree	31.6%	25.1%	No	18.9%	18.2%
University diploma or certificate ABOVE Bachelor's	42.2%	26.7%	Yes	39.7%	26.3%
Professional degree	55.2%	27.3%			
Master's degree	41.1%	29.6%			
Doctorate degree	59.1%	32.0%			

Other demographic characteristics such as diverse ethnocultural identity (compared to White) or recent immigration status (10 years or less) (compared to Canadian-born and non-recent immigration status) were not associated with a greater or lesser likelihood of having experience as a mentor.

Even though a significant number of adults across Canada are engaged in mentoring, there is an opportunity to grow the number of adults who step up to mentor children and youth. Indeed, over two-thirds of adults have never mentored a young person.

WHY MENTOR?

There are many reasons why adults choose to mentor children and youth (see Figure 4). Many of these motivations fall into three main categories: stepping up to respond to a need or a specific request, a desire to give back, and a commitment to live by personal values. For some people, fun or enjoyment was also an important motivator.

More than half of current and past mentors who responded to the survey indicated that they were motivated to mentor because they saw a specific need and felt that they could help. Some chose to get involved because a young person asked them to be their mentor. A few did so because parents or caregivers asked them to mentor their child.



Many current and past mentors also indicated that one of their major motivations was to pass along their knowledge, skills, or wisdom to young people. Others wanted to give back to their community and several indicated that they wanted to pay it forward because they benefited from mentoring when they were growing up.

Values are also an important reason why adults get involved in mentoring. Several mentors got involved because mentoring reflected their values of service and nurturing. Others indicated that it reflected their values of equity and social justice. Some indicated that it reflected their faith. On a more general level, some mentors got involved because they were concerned about the next generation.

Interview participants echoed many of the themes uncovered through the survey. The motivations they outlined for mentoring included values and the desire to give back, responding to a need, passing on wisdom and experience, and enjoying spending time with young people.

Overall, adults who mentor are more likely to be motivated by altruistic motives than self-interested ones. Fewer than one in five survey respondents with mentoring experience indicated that enhancing their careers or resumes was a major reason for getting involved. Although few mentors were motivated by the prospect of enhancing their careers, many still reported that their experience provided them with benefits that had an impact on their professional life. Over 30 percent of current and past mentors reported in the survey that their mentoring experience afforded them some career-related benefits, including skills. 40 percent also reported that mentoring helped them improve their communications skills.

Figure 4 Major reasons for mentoring



"I love spending time with kids, they are a breath of fresh air. Serving others gets you out of an insular state."

– Interview participant

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES?

Survey respondents with mentoring experience confirmed that these relationships are reciprocal and provide several benefits for mentors as well as mentees (see Figure 5). Foremost among the benefits for mentors was the sense of giving back to the next generation: it was endorsed as a major benefit by 62 percent of current mentors and 60 percent of past mentors. More than half of current and past mentors also reported that having a sense of purpose was a major benefit of their experience.



Another major benefit of mentoring is that it allows many mentors to broaden their horizons. A majority of current mentors stated that their experience helped increase their empathy and tolerance of others and broaden their perspectives of their communities and the world.

Current and past mentors also indicated that having fun or having interesting experiences was an important benefit associated with mentoring.

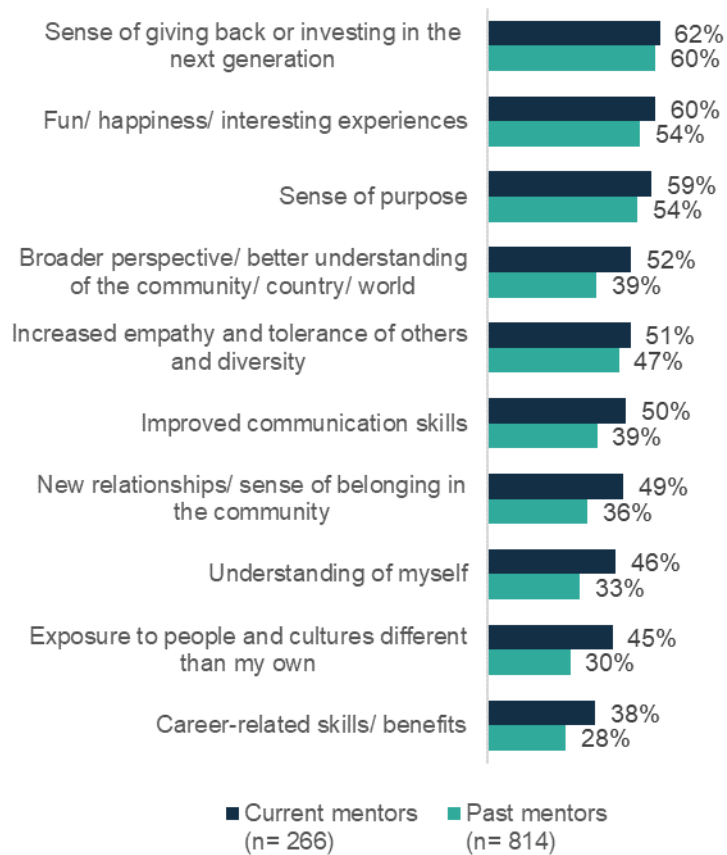
Mentors also perceive many benefits for the young people they have supported (see Figure 6). According to mentors, the top major benefit for young people was providing them with a positive role model (endorsed by 58 percent of past mentors and 46 percent of current mentors). Helping young people improve their decision-making skills was another commonly endorsed benefit (52 percent of past mentors and 43 percent of current mentors) as was support in navigating personal and interpersonal challenges.

Respondents with a history of mentoring also believe that a major way in which mentored youth can benefit from the experience is by feeling or being empowered to pursue their individual growth and success which can help them achieve their potential.

The value of mentoring for mentors and mentees was a common theme throughout interview and open-ended survey responses. Mentoring can counteract the social isolation and disconnection that many young people – and adults – experience in our society. Safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships play a critical role in promoting children's wellbeing and positive development.⁴ Interview participants mentioned that we are often missing a sense of connection in our busy world. They described mentoring as a way of filling a void and providing youth with something that they may not otherwise have access to at school or in their families. One participant explained how learning how to make connections is a transferable skill: "I learned how to make friends and make a bond with someone younger, I can transfer that to making connections with people of all ages." Survey respondents with a history of mentoring also emphasized how it is a mutually beneficial experience. One respondent explained: "I get as much as I give and learn so much about the next generation."

A great many respondents indicated that their mentoring experience provided them with a sense of purpose, of fulfilment, and that it helped them feel more connected to young people and to their communities. One respondent mentioned that "it felt empowering to support a young person in achieving their goal". Another interviewee explained how mentoring made them "more compassionate".

Figure 5 Benefits obtained from mentoring for current and past mentors



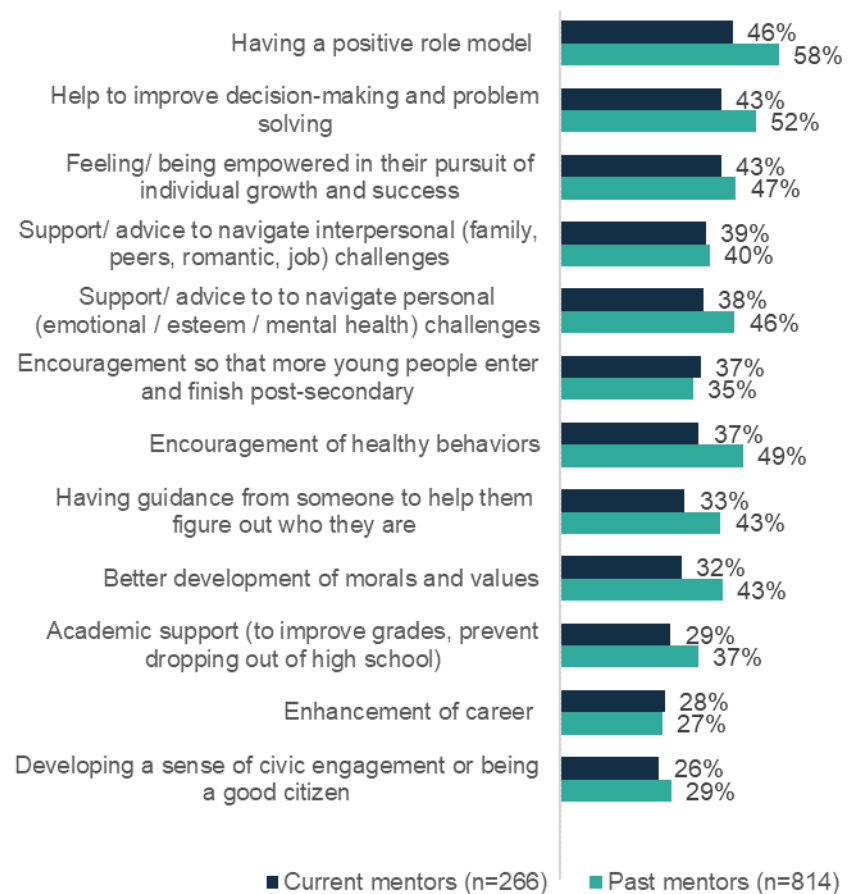
Several survey respondents also described the joy and pride they experience when they witness their mentees' growth and success: "it gives me great joy to see the kids I mentor expand their horizons, etc. from what I have taught/shown them. They start thinking on their own instead of listening to their peers and becoming independent thinkers." One respondent emphasized how mentoring brings "a sense of hope for the future" and added "young people have so much to offer when we listen".

Interview participants perceived several benefits for their mentees including being happy to see their mentor and having someone to focus on them and have fun with them and having someone to talk to and open up to. One mentor explained about how he had encouraged his mentee's interest in illustration and comic books and that he was now seeing that interest flourish. Mentors noted other positive changes in their mentees such as becoming more confident and more honest and choosing a career path. Other mentors noticed positive changes in their mentees' interpersonal relationships such as strengthening their relationship with their parents and getting better at making friends, making better friend choices, and being able to resist negative peer influences. One mentor explained how the relationship had helped their mentee become more trusting: "The world has let them down, they don't trust, they test people and try to push them away. Mentoring is a way to rebuild that."

One interview participant summed up the value of mentoring: "The value of mentorship cannot be overstated... Helping people and changing lives brings satisfaction and meaning and mentoring is one of the most powerful ways to do that. I've been so blessed that a little bit of mentorship from my side has gone a long way in their personal development, and they say that to me. A little bit of mentorship can lead youth to gain perspective at a younger age, gain a sense of connection."

Even survey respondents with no mentoring experience believe that young people reap significant benefits from mentoring relationships. 71 percent of them believe that mentored children and youth benefit from having a positive role model. 60 percent believe that mentoring encourages healthy behaviours. 58 percent believe that mentored children and youth benefit from support to navigate personal challenges. Only 7 percent of respondents who have no mentoring experience do not believe that youth can benefit from mentoring.

Figure 6 Mentors' perceived major benefits for mentored young people



WHO COULD BE PERSUADED TO MENTOR?

We asked survey respondents who were not currently mentoring if they were at all likely to become a mentor to a young person in the next five years. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) indicated that they were likely to do so (see Figure 7). However, only 7 percent indicated that they were very likely to do so.

Individuals with certain demographic characteristics, identities, or lived experiences had greater odds of stating that they were likely to mentor in the next five years:

- 41 percent* of Indigenous respondents reported that they were likely to mentor compared to 22 percent of respondents who did not identify as Indigenous;
- 37 percent* of racialized respondents compared to 20 percent of White respondents;
- 42 percent* of recent immigrants (10 years or less) compared to 22 percent of Canadian-born and non-recent immigrant respondents;
- 42 percent* of respondents who identified as transgender compared to 22 percent of cisgender respondents;
- 36 percent* of respondents who had spent time in government care compared to 22 percent of respondents who did not have that experience.

A significantly higher proportion* of men (23.5 percent) compared to women (21.6 percent) indicated that they would be likely to mentor. Age was also associated with the likelihood of mentoring. Respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 were more likely* to indicate that they were likely to mentor than respondents between the ages of 50 and 59 and aged 60 and over (see figure 8). Relationship status, household income, education level, and engaging in volunteerism were also associated, to some varying degrees, with the likelihood of mentoring in the next five years (see table 1). Trends roughly show that the higher the income or the higher the education level, the greater the proportion of respondents indicating that they are likely to mentor.

Individuals who indicated that they would be likely to mentor a young person in the next five years were more likely to report a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their local communities. 70 percent of them indicated that they felt that they belonged compared to 59 percent of all respondents.

Figure 7 Likelihood of mentoring in the next 5 years for respondents not currently mentoring (n= 3,234)

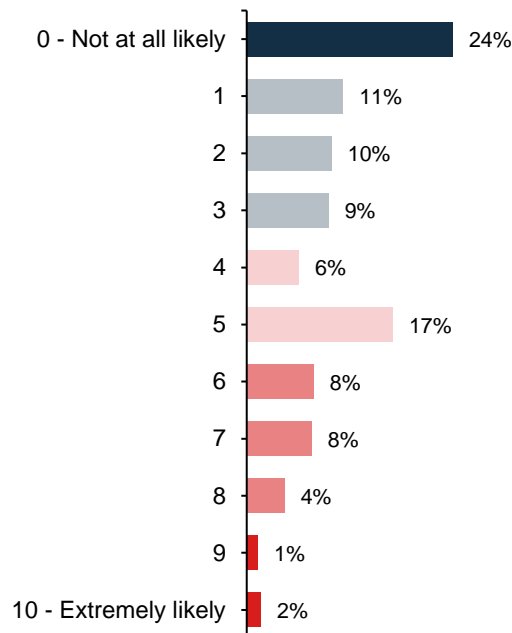
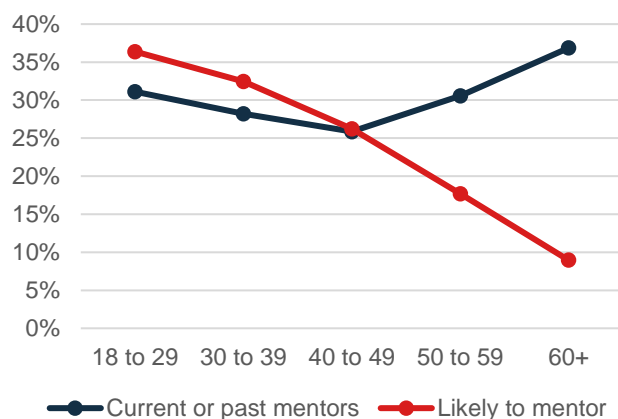


Figure 8 Mentoring experience and likelihood of mentoring in the next 5 years by age groups



It may be easier to persuade past mentors to resume their involvement. Only 19 percent of respondents with no mentoring experience reported that they were likely to mentor in the next five years compared to over one-third of respondents who had previously mentored.

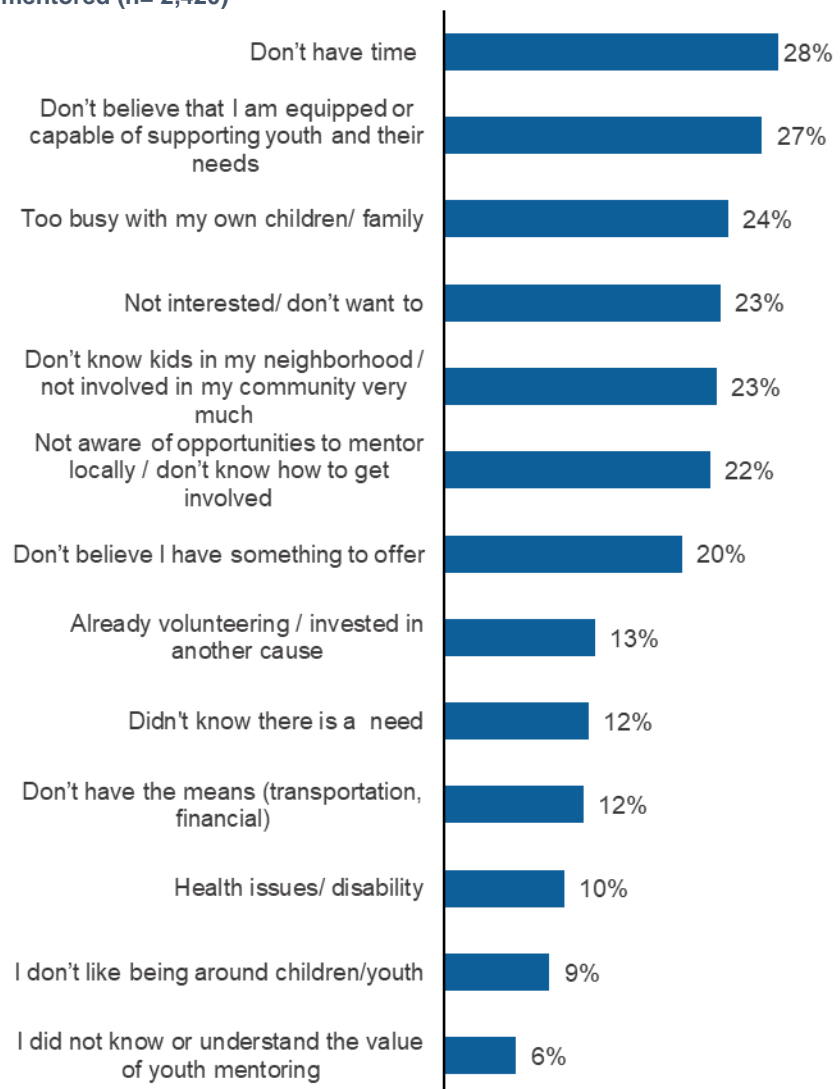
Yet not every adult in Canada is willing or able to mentor young people. A little under one-quarter of all respondents indicated that they were not at all likely to mentor a young person in the next five years. 23 percent of respondents with no mentoring experience stated that they were simply not interested in being a mentor and 9 percent stated that they did not like being around young people.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT KEEP ADULTS FROM MENTORING YOUNG PEOPLE?

The majority of adults who have not mentored a young person faced a variety of obstacles that prevented them doing so. For the most part, these barriers can be sorted into three main categories: lack of time, lack of awareness, and a belief that they lack the abilities to mentor young people (see Figure 9):

- 28 percent of adults who have never mentored said they do not have the time and 24 percent said that they are too busy with their own children;
- 27 percent indicated that they do not believe that they are equipped for or capable of supporting young people and their needs and 20 percent reported that they do not believe that they have something to offer;
- 22 percent reported that they are not aware of opportunities to mentor locally or do not know how to get involved and 12 percent said that they were not aware that there is a need.

Figure 9 Reasons for not mentoring among respondents who have never mentored (n= 2,420)



421 adults (17 percent) who have never mentored a young person stated that there were times when they would have wanted to be a mentor but did not have the opportunity to do so. Most often because they did not know how to find a young person to mentor (44 percent of adults with unfulfilled mentoring interests) or because, to their knowledge, there were no programs available in their community (37 percent).



HOW CAN WE PERSUADE MORE ADULTS TO BECOME MENTORS?

While overcoming the time barrier can be more challenging since mentoring can be a time-consuming commitment, public awareness campaigns may address the public's lack of awareness and often misplaced belief that they do not have the required skills to be a mentor or that they have nothing to offer. Interview participants highlighted how their own experiences showed them that a person does not need to be an “end result” or “have everything figured out” to be able to become a mentor. However, another participant emphasized the importance of mentors' personal healing journeys, especially among male mentors. He believed that a man cannot be an effective mentor to others until he himself has reached an important point in his personal growth since he could otherwise risk passing on problematic ideas such as emotional unavailability to his mentee. He further explained how undergoing this personal healing journey had played a great part in motivating him to become a mentor since he felt compelled to share with others.

“It’s an eye opener, you can help your community in this small way, you don’t need to have everything figured out, it’s enough to just be there.”

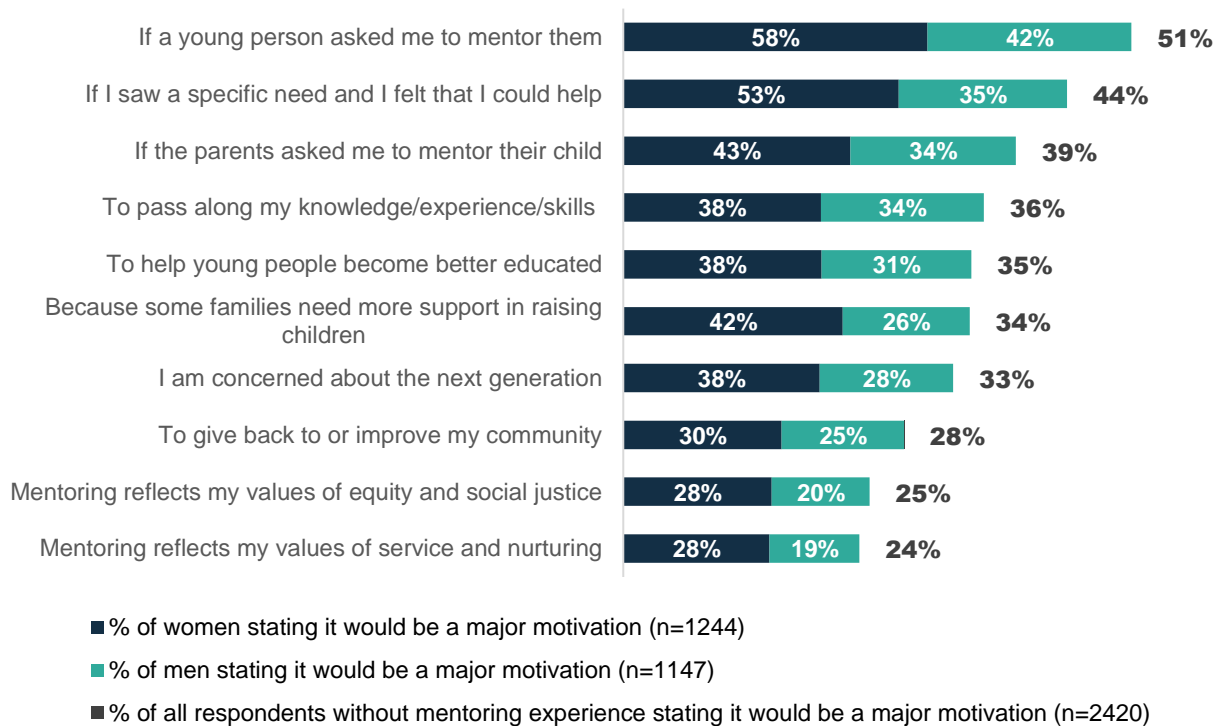
– Interview participant

“You don’t need to be an ‘end result’ as a role model – you can be someone in the midst of building your career, in early career stages – I was doubtful about that at first.”

– Interview participant

Individual requests or highlighting of specific needs may be effective ways of convincing adults who do not have mentoring experience to get involved (see Figure 10). Indeed, half of the survey respondents with no history of mentoring reported that a major reason why they might get involved would be if a young person asked them to mentor them. 39 percent reported that they could be convinced to mentor if a young person's parents or caregivers asked them directly. 44 percent reported that they could be motivated to mentor if they saw a specific need and felt that they could help. Women were even more likely to be convinced to mentor a young person for these reasons than men.

Figure 10 Major reasons for potentially mentoring among respondents with no mentoring experience⁵



Responding to individual requests or specific needs is a potentially more persuasive reason to get involved than more general motivations such as those linked to personal values. Although close to half of current mentors indicated that values were important motivators, only about one-quarter of respondents not currently mentoring said that a major reason why they could be convinced to get involved would be to give back to their communities, or because mentoring reflects their values of equity and social justice, of service and nurturing, or of their faith.

Almost nine out of ten respondents who may be more or less likely to mentor in the next five years – including current mentors who are likely to mentor another young person – would be willing to do so in an informal capacity. Only about one-third of individuals likely to mentor would be willing to participate in a formal mentoring program. Lack of awareness, lack of time, and lack of skills were commonly cited reasons why these respondents would not be willing to formally mentor a young person:

- 28 percent of them reported that they had simply never thought about mentoring in a formal mentoring program and 18 percent said that they did not know how to get involved;
- 24 percent said that they thought programs required too much time and 22 percent were concerned about inflexibility and their inability to meet the scheduling requirements of a program;
- 19 percent believed that they did not have the skills to mentor a young person in a program.

Nevertheless, word-of-mouth recruitment efforts may convince some individuals who had not considered becoming a formal mentor to get involved. Indeed, 22 percent of respondents without any mentoring experience said that they might be persuaded to mentor if someone they trust recommended a program or recommended mentoring to them. Interview participants also underlined the potential of word-of-mouth recruitment for mentoring programs. Several interviewees explained that they had encouraged their friends and family to mentor as a result of their own positive experiences. They mentioned that sharing their personal success stories was a compelling way of reaching prospective mentors and convincing them that they could make a difference in a young person's life.

Factors that could convince more adults to become mentors include flexibility as well as support. Survey respondents and interview participants showed great interest in a number of tools and resources that could help them develop their mentoring skills and make them feel equipped to support young people. Survey respondents who are more or less likely to become a mentor in the next five years (selecting 4 or higher on the 10-point likelihood scale) reported that flexibility to mentor at times that work for them (84 percent) or that the ability to conduct at least part of the mentoring relationship virtually (67 percent) could influence their decision to mentor. Two-thirds of respondents who may be likely to mentor also

Gender and Mentoring

Roughly the same proportion of women (31.1 percent) as men (30.4 percent) stated that they had experience as mentors (current or past). This slight difference is not statistically significant. Women were more likely to have had past experience as a formal mentor (34 percent) compared to men (28 percent).

Women who had mentored in the past were more likely to indicate that they were motivated to mentor because it reflected their values of service and nurturing (54 percent compared to 39 percent of male past mentors). They were also more likely to state that they enjoyed working with young people (55 percent of women compared to 41 percent of male past mentors).

Women with past mentoring experience were more likely to report that mentoring provided them with a sense of purpose (59 percent compared to 48 percent of men) and increased empathy and tolerance of others (53 percent compared to 41 percent). They were also more likely to report that mentoring provided them with new relationships and a greater sense of belonging (42 percent compared to 30 percent).

Among respondents with no history of mentoring, women were more likely to indicate that they could be motivated to mentor if a young person asked them directly (58 percent compared to 42 percent of men, if they saw a specific need and felt that they could help (53 percent compared to 35 percent of men), or because some families need more support to raise children (42 percent compared to 26 percent of men).

A higher proportion of male-identified respondents stated that they were likely to mentor in the next five years (23.5 percent) compared to female-identified respondents (21.6 percent)*. A greater proportion of women selected neutral or intermediate options (4 or 5 on the 10-point scale) compared to men. However, more women than men were willing to mentor through a mentoring program (36 percent compared to 32 percent).



reported that support from their employers, such as paid time off to mentor, could increase their likelihood of getting involved.

Resources and support were highly sought after. 80 percent of respondents likely to mentor in the next five years reported that support getting started as a mentor could incentivize them to step up. Easy access to resources on how to mentor a young person (78 percent) and information on the value and impact of mentoring (69 percent) could also motivate them get involved. Over 80 percent of survey respondents who may be likely to mentor indicated that each of the following resources would be helpful:

- Connections to other local resources, programs, and supports for the young person;
- Guidance on how to handle the ups and downs of the relationship;
- Guides on navigating difficult conversations;
- Activity ideas;
- Guidance on how to change the mentoring approach depending on the young person's age;
- Guidance on partnering with / managing relations with the family of the young person;
- Access to articles and information about new research on mentoring young people;
- Guides on navigating cultural differences or strengthening cultural competencies.

Adults' Engagement in Mentoring: Comparing Canada and the United States

A greater proportion of adults in the United States reported having experience as mentors to young people or being interested in becoming a mentor in the future compared to Canada.

	Canada (2020)	United States (2017)
Has mentored (past or currently)	31%	49%
Never mentored	69%	47%
Likely to mentor	23% (in the next five years)	59% (in the future)
Unlikely to mentor	22% (in the next five years)	11% (in the future)

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (USA) surveyed 1,700 adults in the United States in 2017 to measure their engagement in mentoring relationships outside their immediate families and their perceptions and opinions about mentoring and youth generally. MENTOR (USA) used broad definitions of mentoring to cast a broad net.

- **Formal mentoring (or structured mentoring)** was defined as “a program or organization whose main mission and focus is to connect adults and youth in meaningful relationships where the adult acts as a mentor. This would be a program for which one signed up for the purpose of becoming a mentor to one or more young person(s)”.
- **Informal mentoring** was defined as “a less structured or totally unstructured mentoring relationship that comes about naturally or as the result of your involvement with an organization such as a school or other institution that works with young people. This could include mentoring relationships that occur between an adult and young person who live in the same neighborhood, attend the same place of worship, are members of an extended family, and/or participants in an afterschool or youth program. This would be any situation where an adult and a youth are connected for reasons other than mentorship, but whereby a mentoring relationship is developed.”

These definitions differ slightly from the ones MENTOR Canada used in its survey. The definition of young people also differed: the Canadian survey defined young people as aged between 6 and 25 and the American survey as ages 6 to 24. The methods used to measure adults' likelihood of mentoring in the future also differed. The American survey asked respondents who were not currently mentoring if they would be willing to mentor young people in the future (yes or no). The Canadian survey asked respondents that were not currently mentoring if they were likely to mentor a young person in the next five years using a 10-point likelihood scale. Respondents who selected 6 and above were counted as “likely to mentor”. As a result, caution should be used when drawing direct comparisons between the proportions of adults who report mentoring or being interested in mentoring young people.

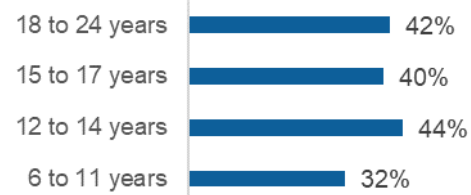
Source: Garringer, Michael and Benning, Chelsea (2018). *The Power of Relationships: How and Why Adults Step Up to Mentor the Nation's Youth*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership.



WHAT ARE ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS?

Many current and past mentors have spent several years mentoring young people. On average (median) current mentors had spent 7 years mentoring and past mentors 5 years. Some mentors were lifelong mentors: 38 percent of current and 21 percent of past mentors had spent over 10 years mentoring, usually mentoring a number of young people. While 20 percent of past mentors had mentored only one young person, 33 percent had mentored between 2 and 4 young people and 47 had mentored 5 or more young people. 87 percent of current mentors indicated that they were likely to mentor another young person in the future. Respondents with a history of mentoring also mentored young people of all ages, including children, adolescents, and young adults (see Figure 11).

Figure 11 Age of Mentored Youth (n= 814)



To get a better understanding of mentors' perceptions and experiences, survey respondents who were currently mentoring – or had done so within the last 12 months – provided details about the structure, purpose, and impact of their mentoring relationship.⁶

Mentors who were currently engaged in a mentoring relationship met with their mentees in a variety of locations including each others' homes (22 percent met in the mentor's home and 18 percent in the young person's home), in the general community (17 percent) and in recreational settings (13 percent). A few met at a workplace (15 percent) or at school, either during the school day (9 percent) or after school (10 percent). Mentors and mentees also connected by phone or text (23 percent) or virtually, through video chat, for example, (18 percent).

Mentors and mentees engaged in a variety of activities. Most commonly, these activities focused on providing emotional or social support (described as a major component of the relationship by 50 percent of current mentors) and setting and reaching goals (49 percent). Most mentors balanced fun with other growth-promoting activities. Indeed, fun was a major component of nearly half of current mentoring relationships while other activities centred around supporting life transitions, learning new skills, and discussions of interpersonal relationships with family, other adults, and peers.

Interview participants mentioned that they engaged in a wide variety of activities with their mentees: cooking and baking, arts and crafts, reading, outdoor activities and sports, dancing, music, playing video games, and practicing English as a second language. Some participants stated that it was important to try new things with their mentee, even participating in activities that pushed them outside of their own comfort zone so that they could set an example for their mentees. Mentors mentioned that they spent time talking with their mentees about spirituality or religion, education and career paths, school, relationships with friends and family, dating and relationships with significant others, and body image and health.

The activities in which mentors and mentees engaged were reflected in the ways in which current mentors who responded to the survey perceived they supported their mentees (see Figure 12). 70 percent felt that they were supporting the young person by simply having fun with them. A great number of mentors supported the young person by helping them acquire various skills, including life skills, career or job-related skills, leadership and advocacy skills, and/or academic or school-related skills.

Mentors also supported young people by discussing their relationships with their friends (58 percent) and their parents or caregivers (49 percent). Mentors helped their mentees connect to their communities and engage with the world around them. For example, mentors helped their mentees develop their sense of civic engagement or supported mentees to pursue social change. Some helped mentees connect to services and community supports, some attended community events with their mentees and helped mentees connect to culture.



Overall, current mentors felt that they had a significant influence on many aspects of their young mentees' lives. The most important area in which mentors felt that they had quite a bit or even a lot of influence was in boosting their mentees' confidence in their own abilities (71 percent of mentors felt that they had influenced their mentees in that area). 61 percent of current mentors felt that they had influenced their mentees' self-esteem and 52 percent felt that they had an impact on their mentees' ability to stand up for themselves. 61 percent felt that they had influenced their mentees' hope for the future and 53 percent believed that they had an impact on their mentees' ability to know where they wanted to go in their life.

Figure 12 Current mentors' perception of support offered to mentees



If anything, some mentors may have underestimated their influence on their mentees. As part of the **Mapping the Mentoring Gap** study, 1,148 young adults provided details about their most meaningful mentoring relationship growing up. They reported that their mentors had a significant influence on many areas of their lives at even greater rates (usually 5 to 10 percent higher) than the adults who are currently mentoring. Perhaps benefitting from hindsight, well over half of young adults who had been mentored indicated that their most meaningful mentor had a significant influence for each of these areas.⁷

HOW CAN PROGRAMS SUPPORT FORMAL MENTORS?

Interview participants with experience as formal mentors stressed the importance of mentors having a web of support to help them fulfil their mentoring roles. Several explained that they valued opportunities to come together as part of a broader mentorship community to learn from each other and build their self-confidence as mentors. For example, they were interested in peer support opportunities and conferences and workshops where they could exchange views and learn together. One interview participant explained that mentoring works best when mentors are not on their own and when they can reach out to other mentors who can help them address an issue or a challenge.

Interview participants also emphasized that program staff play an important role in supporting both the mentors and the mentees. They described regular contacts with staff as helpful but also stated that having support available on-call when needed can be critically important so that mentors are not left on their own in times of need. One interview participant described a positive relationship with the program staff: "I feel supported, I know I can call at any time. That's a big thing, a mentor needs to know they have back-up, they are not flying solo out there by themselves."

WHAT CHALLENGES DO MENTORS FACE?

Mentoring relationships can sometimes be challenging. Encouragingly, the proportion of mentors who experienced challenges was relatively low and no major challenge was experienced by more than a quarter of mentors (see figure 13). Many of these challenges emphasize the fact that mentoring relationships do not operate in isolation and that they are, in fact, part of a broader system of relationships, including relationships with families and program staff. These additional relationships can have a significant influence on the success of the mentoring relationship itself.⁸

Some of most common challenges included the severity or complexity of the needs of the mentee or of the mentee's family. Other mentors reported that the lack of support from some of their mentees' parents



or caregivers or a mentee's resistance or lack of engagement could be challenging. Interview participants, many of whom had experience mentoring through a formal program, echoed the survey findings about the challenges that could result from the complex needs of mentees or of the mentees' families.

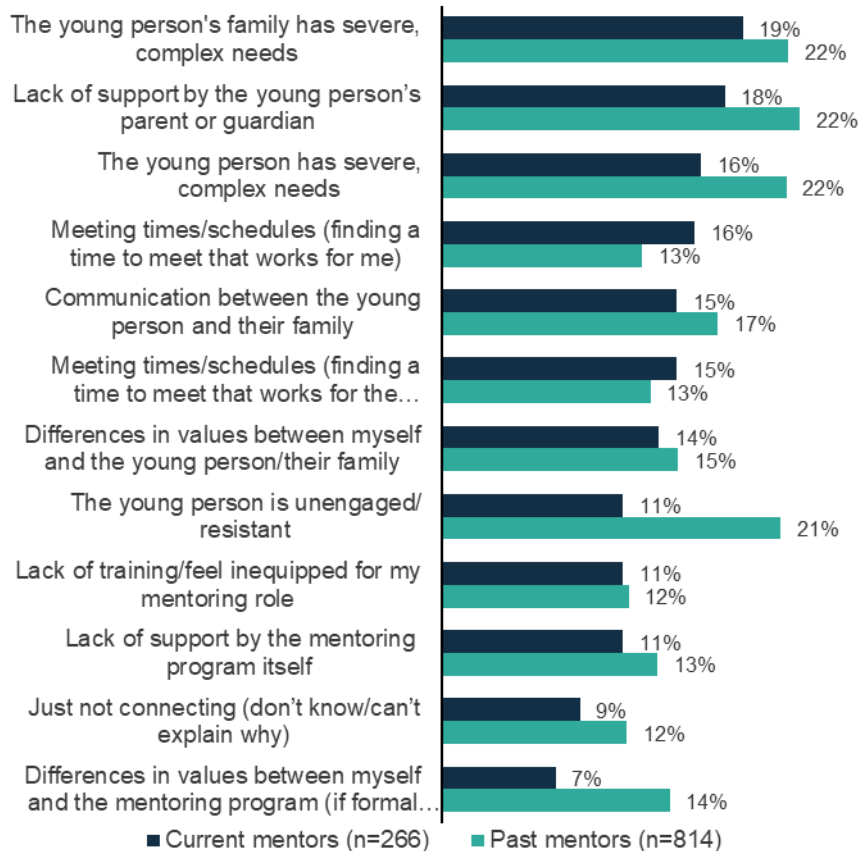
Other interviewees explained that trust-building could be a difficult process during which some mentees "tested them". One interview participant explained: "It took us a while to get comfortable, in the first couple of months he gave me some challenges and I could see him looking out of the corner of his eye, looking to see you know, am I going to stick around, punish him, do something to him?" Some commented on how establishing and maintaining boundaries could be challenging, especially in times of crisis.

A few survey respondents and two interview participants encountered challenges with mentoring programs which often had to do with a perceived lack of support by the program or the program staff. Two interview participants felt that the program was ill-equipped to support them when their mentees experienced crises, leaving it to the mentor to connect with other support services. Others also explained that staff turnover can be disruptive to their relationship with their mentees and with the program.

The issue of time surfaced both in the survey and in the interviews. Close to 15 percent of survey respondents with mentoring experience indicated that finding time to meet could be a challenge for both mentors and mentees. Findings from the interviews also showed that mentoring was seen as a significant time commitment, which could be challenging if a mentor or mentee had a busy schedule.

Encouragingly, the majority of adults who ended their involvement with mentoring did so because their relationships came to a natural end. About one in five past mentors stopped mentoring either because they were too busy with their own children or they did not have the time. Only a fraction of past mentors stopped mentoring because of challenges such as feeling overwhelmed or ill-equipped to deal with the young person's needs (7 percent) or because they had a negative experience (3 percent). Although the majority of past mentors said that little could have been done to persuade them to continue mentoring – since the relationship came to a natural end – a few indicated that having more flexibility or the ability to mentor virtually may have helped them to stay involved. Others reported that they may have been persuaded to continue their engagement if they had felt like they were making a difference or if they had access to more resources or support.

Figure 13 Challenges experienced while being a mentor



CONCLUSION

People from across Canada believe in the power of mentoring. They think it plays a crucial role in helping young people maximize their success on their journeys to adulthood. They agree that mentoring is an effective strategy to improve our communities and our society.

However, to close the mentoring gap, more adults will need to step up and mentor young people, both formally and informally. 54 percent of young adults who participated in the **Mapping the Gap** study recalled at least one time growing up when they wished they had a mentor but did not have one. The service providers who participated in our **Capturing the Landscape** study reinforced this need for more mentors: mentor recruitment was by far the most common challenge programs faced and more than half of participating organizations reported that they had young people waiting for a mentor. Overall, approximately 2,500 out of the 3,500 adults who participated in the **Raising the Profile of Mentoring** survey indicated that they were not likely to mentor a young person in the next five years.

So how can we persuade more adults to become mentors? The results from this study have highlighted a few potential avenues to increase the number of mentors:

1. Adults with mentoring experience are more likely to continue mentoring or to resume their involvement than adults without mentoring experience. 87 percent of current mentors think they will likely mentor at least one other young person in the future and 35 percent of past mentors stated that they were likely to mentor again. Conversely, over 80 percent of adults who have never mentored reported that they were unlikely to mentor in the next five years.
2. A significant percentage of adults who have never mentored a young person reported that they were not aware of the need for mentors, of the value of mentoring, or of opportunities to mentor in their communities. Misconceptions about mentoring also keep adults from stepping up to mentor youth. Over one-fifth of respondents who have never mentored do not believe that they have something to offer or the abilities to support a young person. Public education campaigns can help tackle the lack of awareness and help overcome some adults' lack of confidence in their abilities by explaining how it is possible to learn how to be a good mentor.
3. Some of the most compelling reasons why non-mentors may be convinced to become a mentor were responding to a specific need or being asked directly by a young person or a young person's parents. Newer approaches to mentoring such as youth-initiated and caregiver-initiated mentoring⁹ – in which young people and caregivers are empowered to identify adults in their environments who could act as a mentor and approach them to ask them to do so – may help increase the number of adults who serve as formal and informal mentors.

However, efforts to increase the number of adults who mentor are dependent on our ability to promote a culture of mentoring in our communities and our ability to provide potential mentors with the support and resources they need to feel equipped to meet young people's needs. Survey respondents and interview participants requested a variety of tools and resources to help build their mentoring skills and bolster their self-confidence. These resources are important not only for mentors who participate in formal programs but also for informal mentors.

Finally, our survey has shown that certain demographic groups that face systemic barriers and have been historically marginalized – including Indigenous peoples, people who identify as transgender, former youth in care, and people with a disability – are more likely to serve as mentors. It is important to acknowledge the contributions of these groups while being careful not to overburden them through mentor recruitment strategies.



IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Together, we can begin to address the gaps and barriers identified through the **Mapping the Mentoring Gap** study and increase young people's access to the support of mentors. MENTOR Canada worked with youth representatives and key stakeholders from the mentoring sector to co-create a set of calls to action based on the findings from the State of Mentoring Research Initiative.

Read the [State of Mentoring: Areas for Action](#).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

A total of 544 survey respondents identified as racialized and 568 respondents had immigrated to Canada. However, the proportion of racialized and immigrant respondents in our sample, 15.5 percent and 16.2 percent respectively, is smaller than the proportion reported in the national census (2016). We suspect that this is because these groups are harder to reach through online surveys.

Mentoring is a broad concept which can be interpreted in different ways. To promote a common understanding of the concept and its application, respondents were provided with definitions, including definitions of mentoring, informal mentoring, and formal mentoring. However, the comprehension questions included in the survey to measure respondents' understanding of the concepts showed that more than half of them may still have struggled to understand how these definitions could be applied concretely. This may have resulted in an inflated proportion of respondents who considered themselves mentors. For example, one respondent who self-identified as a mentor reported that they only mentored their own children which, according to our definition, does not qualify as mentoring.

Furthermore, this survey also measured perceptions rather than behaviours. Our insights about adults' engagement in mentoring is based on their perception of their roles as mentors. Some adults may consider themselves to be mentors, but their behaviours may not be aligned with the typical actions and behaviours that are usually part of what we consider to be mentoring relationships.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about *The State of Mentoring Research Initiative's* two other studies:

- [Mapping the Mentoring Gap](#): This study seeks to understand young adults' access to mentors and the barriers to accessing mentors they may have encountered during their childhood and adolescence. The study also explores young people's experiences of mentoring and the effects of having had access to a mentor on their current lives.
- [Capturing the Mentoring Landscape](#): This study seeks to better understand the prevalence, scope, structure, strengths and challenges of youth mentoring programs and services across Canada.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MENTOR Canada respectfully acknowledges that the lands upon which we operate are the traditional territories of the respective First Nations, Métis Nations, and Inuit who are the long-time stewards of these lands.

MENTOR Canada would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to *The State of Mentoring Research Initiative* and the *Raising the Profile of Mentoring* study:

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The Research Advisory Committee provided thoughtful guidance on the development of the survey questionnaires and analysis of the data. MENTOR Canada wishes to express gratitude to Adar Abdulkadir, Ashley Bach, Caitlin Baikie, Mark Cabaj, Julie Chacra, Dr. Gilbert Emond, Virginia Gluska, Dr. Simon Larose, and Dr. Renée Spencer.

Mentoring service providers across the country helped us recruit mentors to participate in our qualitative interviews. Suzie Gauthier and Patricia Bouchard from the *Association Grands Frères Grandes Soeurs du Québec* and Nicolas Greenfield from the *YMCA du Québec* helped recruit francophone interview participants.

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership played a critical role in our ability to execute this research project. A special thank you to Mike Garringer who generously shared his time and insights to help us improve upon the work that MENTOR (USA) had already undertaken.

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- Cathy Denyer, Beth Malcom, and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition.



APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

SURVEY

The online survey was administered between September and November 2020 to adults over 18 years of age living in Canada. Respondents were sampled to match the age and gender profile across all provinces of the Canadian census. In addition, oversampling was used to reach a greater number of people with Indigenous identity. Due to the overall similarity with the Canadian census sample, results were not weighted (see appendix B for sample descriptives)

Primarily descriptive statistics were employed to capture the distribution of responses. Results were also split according to whether respondents indicated that they were currently serving as mentors or had mentored young people in the past (current or past mentors). Additionally, all respondents shared their likelihood of mentoring a young person within the next five years on a 10-point scale. Respondents who indicated a 6 out of 10 or higher (somewhat likely to extremely likely) were coded as being 'likely to mentor'. Chi-squared tests were used to compare the distribution of both of these key indicators (i.e., current/ past mentors and likelihood of mentoring in the next 5 years) with a range of demographic and identity characteristics. Statistical significance from these tests was assessed at the 95 per cent level ($p < 0.05$). Statistical significance is indicated with an asterisk* throughout the report. For all other comparisons, differences between proportions were reviewed, but these differences may not necessarily be statistically significant.

INTERVIEWS

We recruited adults (18 years of age and older) with previous experience of either working or volunteering as a mentor for youth in a Canadian setting. SRDC distributed an email to contacts who had previously participated in the Canadian Survey of Youth Development and Mentoring Organization as part of the **Capturing the Mentoring Landscape** study to request their assistance in identifying mentors who might be interested in participating in a research interview. MENTOR Canada also assisted with recruitment – specifically for the Francophone interviews – by connecting with contacts in its existing network. Interested mentors were invited to contact an SRDC researcher directly for further information. When contacted by interested participants, SRDC researchers distributed an information letter and coordinated through email to schedule an interview.

Interviews were conducted using Zoom videoconferencing software. Sharing video was optional. Interviews were roughly 45 minutes in length and were recorded. Researchers followed a semi-structured interview guide, which was continually refined based on insights gathered during the initial interviews. A total of 16 interviews were conducted in English and two in French. Participants were offered a \$25 gift card from a retailer of choice as an honorarium.

We interviewed five men and 13 women. Several mentors were young adults currently in post-secondary education or in the early stages of their careers. Several were retirees or self-described 'empty-nesters'. Most participants lived in urban areas. Two participants lived in rural areas and had experienced mentoring in this context. Two participants were newcomers to Canada. Interview participants were not specifically asked about their cultural, ethnic, or religious identities, but several participants did describe these aspects of their identity over the course of the interview. Two participants were Indigenous, one participant was Muslim, and one participant self-identified as a person of colour. One participant indicated that she had a chronic health condition and another participant indicated that she had severe social anxiety and PTSD.

The mentors we interviewed had experiences providing mentoring in the following types of contexts and settings: faith-based mentoring, in-school mentoring, community-based mentoring, e-mentoring, mentoring for newcomer families, and mentoring through Indigenous-specific organizations and programs. Most participants had experience mentoring in a formal, structured program offered through a community-based agency. However, two participants specifically had experience both as formal and informal mentors.



Analysis of qualitative data was aligned with a general inductive approach based in grounded theory.¹⁰ Grounded theory allows themes to emerge inductively, grounded in data that is systematically collected and analyzed. An SRDC researcher created a summary table to condense raw data according to a series of overarching themes, which were focused according to the pre-established research objectives. The table included themes and subthemes, descriptions, and illustrative quotes from participants. The researcher then used this summary table as the basis for creating a written narrative account of the qualitative findings, presented here in this report.



APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Characteristic	No.	%	Characteristic	No.	%
Province or Territory			Province or Territory		
Alberta	418	11.9%	Nunavut	4	0.1%
British Columbia	471	13.5%	Ontario	1,370	39.1%
Manitoba	125	3.6%	Prince Edward Island	14	0.4%
Newfoundland & Labrador	55	1.6%	Quebec	737	21.1%
New Brunswick	67	1.9%	Saskatchewan	122	3.5%
Northwest Territories	2	0.1%	Yukon	3	0.1%
Nova Scotia	97	2.8%			
Characteristic	No.	%	Characteristic	No.	%
Age			In care		
18 to 29	469	13.4%	Spent any time before age 18, in care of govt. services	148	4.2%
30 to 39	808	23.1%	Relationship status		
40 to 49	688	19.7%	Never legally married	1,084	31.0%
50 to 59	599	17.1%	Legally married	1,545	44.1%
60+	936	26.7%	Separated, but legally married	80	2.3%
Gender Identity			Divorced	248	7.1%
Woman	1,806	51.6%	Widowed	128	3.7%
Man	1,648	47.1%	Common-law partner	415	11.9%
Non-binary	20	0.6%	Annual Household Income		
Two-Spirit or other cultural gender minority	6	0.2%	Less than \$25,000	325	9.3%
Indigenous Identity			\$25,000 to less than \$35,000	247	7.1%
First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit)	218	6.2%	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000	359	10.3%
Ethnocultural Identity			\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	585	16.7%
South Asian	100	2.9%	\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	583	16.7%
Chinese	205	5.9%	\$100,000 to less than \$125,000	385	11.0%
Black	77	2.2%	\$125,000 to less than \$150,000	260	7.4%
Filipino	36	1.0%	\$150,000 or more	306	8.7%
Latin American	33	0.9%	Education		
Arab	29	0.8%	Completed high school	3,348	95.7%
Southeast Asian	35	1.0%	Pursued further education	2,946	88.0%
West Asian	14	0.4%	Current employment		
Korean	17	0.5%	Full time study in education	196	5.6%
Japanese	23	0.7%	Part-time study in education	97	2.8%
White	2,640	75.4%	Part-time work	426	12.2%
Sexual Orientation			Full-time work	1,532	43.8%
Heterosexual	3,073	90.8%	Retired	822	23.5%
LGBTQ2S+	311	9.2%	Not employed outside the home	145	4.1%
Transgender, trans, or within the trans umbrella?			Unemployed - looking for work	176	5.0%



Characteristic	No.	%	Characteristic	No.	%
Yes	55	1.6%	Unemployed – not looking for work	130	3.7%
Immigrant status			Volunteering activities in last 12 months		
Recent immigrant (10 years or less)	114	3.3%	Volunteering my time	1,026	29.3%
Immigrant to Canada (within any time period)	568	16.2%	Monetary support	1,416	40.5%
Disability status			Donation of materials/ supplies/ other items	855	24.4%
Health condition affecting functional ability	1,197	34.2%	No volunteering in the past 12 months	1,485	42.4%
Diagnosis for disability or disorder	798	22.8%			



NOTES

¹ The results from the **Mapping the Mentoring Gap** study shows that 56 percent of young adults recalled having a mentor at some point between the ages of 6 to 18. The difference between the 56 percent of 2,672 respondents between the ages of 18 to 30 who recalled having a mentor from the **Mapping the Mentoring Gap** study and the 38 percent of 469 respondents between the ages of 18 to 29 from the **Raising the Profile of Mentoring** study who recalled having a mentor may be due to the latter study's smaller sample size. Additionally, while both studies used the same definition of mentoring, the **Raising the Profile** study only asked respondents if they recalled having a mentor 'while growing up' once whereas respondents to the **Mapping the Gap** study were asked the question twice: once for the period from 6 to 11 years and once for the period from 12 to 18 years. A composite measure was created to account for any respondent who had access to a mentor at some point between the ages of 6 to 18.

² 1 percent of respondents selected prefer not to answer or don't know to this question.

³ All characteristics had statistical association of unequal distribution (Chi-squared).

⁴ Cavell, T. A., Spencer, R., & McQuillin S. D.. (2021) Back to the Future: Mentoring as a Means and End in Promoting Child Mental Health. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 1-19.

⁵ The total number of all respondents includes 29 respondents who identified as non-binary, Two-Spirit, part of another cultural gender minority or who preferred not to provide a gender identity.

⁶ Respondents who mentored more than one young person were asked to focus on the relationship they deemed the most meaningful. However, if a respondent was currently mentoring a young person through a formal mentoring program, they were asked questions pertaining to that formal mentoring relationship. Again, if a respondent was mentoring more than one young person through a formal program, they were asked to select their most meaningful formal relationship.

⁷ The **Mapping the Mentoring Gap** survey respondents provided details about the mentoring relationship that they considered the "most meaningful". The mentors participating in the **Raising the Profile** survey may not all be "most meaningful mentors". As such, caution should be used when comparing the results on mentors' influence from both studies.

⁸ Spencer, R., Gowdy, G., Drew, L. A., McCormack, M. J., & Keller, T. E. (2020). It Takes a Village to Break Up a Match: A Systemic Analysis of Formal Youth Mentoring Relationship Endings. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 49, 97-120.

⁹ Weiler, L., Scafe, M., Spencer, R., & Cavell, T. (2020). Caregiver-Initiated Mentoring: Developing a Working Model to Mitigate Social Isolation. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 48(1), 6-17.

¹⁰ Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*: 2nd edition. SAGE Publishing. Thomas, D. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2).

