



Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

Broadening and Deepening Access to Quality Mentoring in Canada



Why mentoring matters

What barriers are preventing youth in Canada from accessing quality mentoring?

What is Mentor Canada currently doing to remedy these barriers?

How will Mentor Canada deepen its efforts to improve access to quality mentoring?

Who we are and what we do

Why mentoring matters

Whether or not we realize it, many of us have had or have been mentors. Mentors are caring adults who supported us in our lives or careers. Formal and informal mentors are crucial to the fiber of any society. Why is this the case?

Studies have shown that having a mentor helps young people to:

- remain in education longer
- refrain from criminal activity
- engage more with their communities

Young people say that having a mentor:

- increases their sense of belonging
- improves their sense of self-worth
- provides them with hope for the future
- has a positive impact on their mental health

From our 2020 survey of close to 3000 youth, those who were mentored reported:

- **Healthier mindsets**
79% of youth with a formal mentor reported good or excellent mental health
- **A greater sense of hope**
70% of youth said that their most meaningful mentor inspired optimism for the future
- **A stronger sense of belonging to their communities**
19% difference reported between mentored and unmentored youth



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Mentoring relationships ensure the continuation of:

- essential emotional support
- interpersonal connections
- stable relationships

Mentoring relationships can act as a critical lifeline and a connection to hope and the future. Young people need this, especially in times of uncertainty like a global pandemic when potential is equal while opportunity is not.

Mentoring amplifies everything — relationships, possibility, learning, connection, and the future.

15,000
youth are waiting for a mentor.



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38% of young adults surveyed reported facing barriers to mentorship during their adolescence.

Greater inequities and limited access to resources in the wake of COVID-19

Youth who are facing barriers to employment have been particularly adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are now in greater need of support. Those facing the highest barriers due to heightened systemic inequity include BIPOC youth, youth who are not yet in education, employment, or training (NEET), youth with disabilities, LGBTQIA2+ youth, and young women and girls. Accessing quality mentoring relationships can help level the playing field, supporting young people in navigating toward a bright future. It is unfair that some communities have fewer resources to foster mentoring than others. That is why we seek to make paths to meaningful mentorships more widely available.

Risk of further marginalization

Although mentoring can be a powerful tool for supporting young people through hard times, allowing them to realize and fulfil their potential, some mentors can inadvertently risk perpetuating social inequities. There is a risk that inequities may be exacerbated when mentors lack cultural or contextual competence and/or when they adopt a saviour complex. Using tools such as those developed by Mentor Canada, service providers can support mentors and mentees to renegotiate the mentor-mentee relationship and make mentorship a meaningful experience that builds confidence.

Difficulty accessing mentoring beyond high school

While high-school students often struggle to access mentors, there are even fewer opportunities for those who have already left high school to access a



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mentor. Young adults seeking to shape career paths frequently feel lost without guidance from some type of mentor. Once school/training is over, the process of accessing a mentor can be daunting for young adults. To their detriment, the young adult segment of the population may miss out on mentorship at this key phase in their lives.

These barriers can be broken down by:

- strengthening natural and informal mentoring relationships
- fostering networks of support in communities
- providing services to mentoring organizations & educational institutions

“Young people’s access to supportive relationships, including mentoring relationships, cannot be left to chance. As a result of the pandemic, this generation of youth is facing a crisis from which some may never recover. But quick action now can make a big difference.”

Stacey Dakin,
Managing Director, Mentor Canada

69%

of Indigenous youth who participated in our Mapping the Gap survey reported that there was a time growing up when they wanted a mentor but did not have one.

44%

of the 2,838 young adults surveyed as part of the State of Mentoring research initiative did not have access to a mentor growing up.



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What is Mentor Canada currently doing to remedy these barriers?

Mentor Canada plays a coordinating role in linking researchers, service providers, educational institutions, service recipients, funders, and volunteers to achieve real collective impact. In doing so, we can make it easier for all young people to gain access to meaningful mentorship.

Our work is focused on four key areas:

- research
- developing digital tools & technology
- partnership networks
- awareness building & outreach

What we seek to achieve

Three years into our development, we are now at a pivotal point when it comes to shaping and funding the ongoing work of Mentor Canada. That is why we are committing to a new vision and mission for the initiative. We are renewing our vow to enhance support in order to continue building the mentoring movement in Canada.

Our core values

A mix & match approach: in establishing a baseline for what meaningful, high-quality mentorship can look like, we shall not be prescriptive. Instead, we shall make the active ingredients readily available for successful formal and informal mentoring relationships that fit a wide range of communities and contexts.



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We recognize the need to give time and space for relationships to develop and for common ground to unfold. Starting with a focus on broad engagement and the lowering of barriers, we will make resources available where they are most needed.

All our strategic priorities will be approached through a lens of equity, diversity, inclusion, and include reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Mentor Canada has started its journey of reconciliation, and although we have a long way to go, we are committed to righting the wrongs of Canada's history through supporting mentoring for Indigenous Youth, many of whom are suffering from intergenerational trauma stemming from residential school systems and colonization. Mentoring is one solution, one action, that can help rebuild a better future for our Indigenous youth for the next seven generations. Recognizing natural supports as forms of mentorship and bolstering these supportive relationships can contribute to healing these wounds.

8,019

searches have been tracked so far by potential volunteers & youth seeking mentoring opportunities.

The Power of Mentoring Campaign engaged:

2,713

people across Canada,

1,650

youth,

1,063

private sector mentors.



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By listening closely to the voices, stories, and needs of all marginalized communities across the country, we can identify an array of principles that make use of valuable local knowledge and pave the path to quality mentoring relationships that fit a range of contexts. These principles can be combined flexibly according to the diverse needs of all people, whatever form the mentor-mentee relationship may take. In this way, we can expand the concept of mentoring and ensure that the benefits of mentoring can empower all communities across the country.

As we rebuild in the wake of the pandemic, the healing that comes from meaningful mentoring relationships will surely lead to stronger cohesion population-wide. However, when it comes to mentor-mentee relationships, one size does not fit all. While service providers and educational institutions play a key role, nurturing a mentoring mindset in communities goes beyond service provision.

We seek to engage in mutually reinforcing activities that encapsulate and promote diverse approaches to mentorship.



Knowledge Hub

[Explore key resources to support your work.](#)

2022 – 2025 Strategic Priorities

1 Influence & Inspire

We will influence key audiences and inspire them to get involved in mentoring by:

- Generating and distributing easy to understand & useful research
- Building content through storytelling to market, promote, and demystify mentorship
- Hosting and/or participating in events and activities that engage stakeholders in the mentoring movement in Canada and internationally
- Cultivating mentoring champions in Canada
- Mobilize people in Canada to embrace mentoring and act in a mentoring capacity

2 Convene & Connect

We will nurture the mentoring ecosystem by assembling key players in the sector by:

- Coordinating between organizations and initiatives that allows for discussions, sharing & planning
- Undertaking advocacy initiatives that invigorate positive policy change and commitment to mentoring across government and corporate sectors
- Develop and implement tools to collect, track, and package Canadian data that demonstrates the impacts of mentoring
- Determine relationship with mentoring alliances or initiatives that work in local, regional, provincial, national, international, cultural, and/or thematic contexts.
- Ensuring ongoing engagement with the Canadian Center for Mentoring Research

3 Uplift & Support

We will build capacity and provide data products by:

- Offering scaling and capacity building services to advance quality mentoring programs and strategies.
- Develop and launch a Quality Mentoring System (QMS) in Canada
- Open up digital tools and platforms to make them freely available to organizations and initiatives with mentorship mandates
- Provide ongoing support and software development of digital products
- Design and scale interactive resources and toolkits that allow for the development of in- the-field materials for delivering quality mentoring.
- Make research data readily available and accessible

4 Collaborate & Lead

We will solidify Mentor Canada's governance & operational structures by:

- Establishing an accountable governing structure that reflects the newly incorporated entity and pursue efforts to become a charitable organization
- Identifying potential sources of revenue and funding partners
- Developing and implementing a sustainable business model
- Creating policies to reflect organizational values of equity, diversity and inclusion
- Establishing the operational infrastructure needed to manage the organization



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Mentor Canada broadens and deepens access to quality mentoring for youth in Canada by amplifying a mentoring mindset from coast to coast to coast.

We crack open data on mentorship. We then use this data to create and open up access to impactful tools. These tools are used to strengthen the work of service providers and educational institutions across the country.

Equipped with leading-edge resources and bolstered by our capacity-building services, communities and organizations with mentoring strategies can expand their reach to help young people in Canada thrive.

Vision

In Canada, mentoring is accepted as a basic right to which every child and youth has access.

Mission

To enable mentoring relationships that encourage young people to reach their full potential through research, network building, and knowledge exchange.

Our ultimate goal

By our 25th anniversary in 2044, a commonly understood mentoring mindset in Canada will be established that enables people to realize that:

- mentorship takes many forms
- mentorship deserves to be nurtured
- every youth has a right to be mentored



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“Mobilizing communities to engage in mentorship is just the beginning. Our future sees us invigorating policy change, and, raising the profile of mentoring across governments and corporations. We will bridge the work carried out by service providers, education establishments, employers, and government organizations; working together to raise the bar for quality mentoring. Let’s empower every young person in Canada to fulfil their potential through meaningful mentorship”

Matthew Chater,
Beth Malcolm,
Liz O’Neil,
Tri-Chairs, Mentor Canada

Get in touch to start a conversation about how we can help build a mentoring movement together.

We are actively seeking to engage organizations from across Canada to work with us and promote the mentoring movement. Working together, we will build sector capacity to empower every young person to fulfill their potential.

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