

Mentoring Resource

Mentoring Models & Program Types



Mentoring Models

Instances of mentoring can occur through short-term and unstructured 'mentoring moments', or more structured, longer-term relationships.² Mentorship can be informal or formal.

Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring refers to mentoring relationships or moments that youth develop organically with adults in their environments or networks. Informal mentorship can include:

- **Informal mentors:** Mentoring relationships that young people develop with caring adults in their surroundings such as teachers, coaches, Elders, and community leaders.
- **Natural mentors:** Supportive relationships with family members, neighbours, friends.

Supportive adults can adopt a mentoring mindset in their interactions with young people to seek to understand them and their needs more deeply and to become partners in a young person's journey.

Formal Mentoring

Formal mentoring occurs in the context of an intentional, planned mentoring arrangement. Mentors can be adults or peers, usually at least two or three years older than the mentees. Peer mentoring has been shown to be effective under appropriate adult supervision.³ Mentoring programs can use various mentoring relationship types and models to achieve program goals. Common formal mentoring relationship types include:

- **One-to-one mentoring:** this highly personalized relationship type brings together one mentor and one mentee.
- **Group mentoring or team mentoring:** these relationships bring together one or more mentors working with a group of mentees. The ratio of mentors to mentees is usually kept relatively small (e.g. 1 mentor to 2-5 mentees) and rarely exceeds 1 mentor to 10 mentees. Programs using group or team mentoring models provide a context for mentees to develop mentoring relationships and to learn how to function as part of a group. Group mentoring fosters supportive interactions between mentors and mentees and amongst mentees themselves.

Youth mentoring is an umbrella term used to describe the involvement of children and adolescents in supportive relationships with non-parental adults or older peers.¹ These types of supportive relationships have been further defined based on their individual contexts. Children and youth can develop informal mentoring relationships organically with supportive adults and older peers in their surroundings. They can also develop formal mentoring relationships through structured programs which provides young people with mentors to achieve specific outcomes.

Meeting settings for formal mentoring relationships often include:

- Community-based: Mentors and mentees can meet anywhere in the community.
- School- or site-based: Schools can provide access to many young people in a controlled setting and allow access to additional educational, recreational, and developmental supports that can enhance the mentoring relationship.⁴ Other meeting locations can include mentors' workplaces, faith-based locations, or site-based locations (typically at a community agency such as a youth centre).⁵
- Technology-based (e-mentoring): Mentors and mentees rely on technology (e.g., phone, digital platforms, Internet-mediated communications) to meet remotely.

Some programs use a hybrid approach and allow mentors and mentees to meet across multiple settings, whether in-person or virtually, based on the program goals and the participants' needs and context. Mentoring programs should choose a relationship type and meeting settings that will encourage the creation of the conditions that will maximize mentees' ability of achieving the program goal(s).

For further information on mentoring models, program types, and choosing the best fit for your program, see the Ontario Mentoring Coalition's [Toolkit on Effective Mentoring for Youth Facing Barriers to Success](#).

“Mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development”⁶

Additional Tools and Resources

Alberta Mentoring Partnership: [Factsheet: About Mentoring and Common Definitions](#)

Mentor Canada: [Key Topic Overview: E-mentoring](#)

MENTOR: [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#)

MENTOR: [Becoming a Better Mentor](#)

The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA: [Everyday Mentoring Weekly Tips](#)

1 Cavell, T., Spencer, R., McQuillin, S. (2021) Back to the future: mentoring as a means and end in promoting child mental health. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*.

2 Connected Mentor (2014). The Connected Mentoring Framework.

3 Rhodes, J. (2022). Recent meta-analysis highlights the promise of cross-age peer mentoring. *Chronicle of Evidence-based mentoring*. <https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/recent-meta-analysis-highlights-the-promise-of-cross-age-peer-mentoring/>

4 National Mentoring Resource Centre (n.d.). School-based mentoring. <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/school-based-mentoring/>

5 MENTOR. (2008). Informational overview of types of mentoring programs.

6 MENTOR. (2015). Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring. 4th edition. <https://www.mentoring.org/resource/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring>



Mentor Canada broadens and deepens access to quality mentoring for youth in Canada through capacity building, tools and resources, research, network building and knowledge exchange.

mentoringcanada.ca
info@mentoringcanada.ca



The Ontario Mentoring Coalition (OMC) is a group of organizations and individuals who believe in the power of mentoring and are committed to ensuring that more children and youth have access to strong, effective mentoring.

ontariomentoringcoalition.ca
info@ontariomentoringcoalition.ca