

Mentoring Matters

Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Program of Studies Outcomes



The student will...

- R -4.9 Assess how to act as important role models for others
- L-4.7 Describe the impact of service contributions on self; e.g., increase in self-worth, confidence and understanding of others
- R -5.6 Investigate the benefits of fostering a variety of relationships throughout the life-cycle; e.g., cross-age relationships

Teacher Background

Mentoring is the act of providing support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role-modelling over time. It has a variety of forms including one-on-one, peer, and group mentoring. Formal and informal mentoring activities commonly occur in school environments with examples including reading buddies, tutoring, in school adult mentoring, teen mentoring, coaching, peer buddies and student clubs. Students may also interact with adults or other students in their schools and communities who act as informal mentors by providing friendship and support outside of a program.

Mentoring involves helping others, acting as a role model, and developing and fostering relationships. The activities in this lesson plan will help students understand the concept of mentoring and its positive impact on the people involved, specifically related to mental health and well-being. Students will develop a basic understanding of mentoring to support them in looking for mentors in their lives and providing mentorship to others. Student participation in a mentoring extension activity will provide opportunities for students to practice what they have learned. Teachers may choose to partner with a grade 8 class that may use the Junior High Mental Health *Mentoring Matters* lesson plan to prepare for this activity. Further resources to prepare students and teachers for mentoring activities can be found in the resources section of this lesson plan. Home, school and community partnerships are critical to the delivery of this program.

Objectives

Through the use of group activities and discussions, students will:

- Understand the term mentoring and examples of mentoring occurring in their school and community
- Understand how mentoring is a form of helping others by contributing time and self
- Assess how mentors act as important role models for mentees
- Investigate the benefits mentoring has on mental health and well-being

Materials

- Chart paper/ white board
- Markers
- Examples of mentoring relationships chosen from the 'Examples of Mentoring Relationships' resource
- 'Mentoring and My Mental Health' handout for each student
- Teacher/ Principal Partnership Letter

Activity 1: Mentoring Brainstorm

1. Prepare ahead of time one or more examples of mentoring relationships (refer to the *Examples of Mentoring Relationships* resource). You will be using these examples to highlight examples of mentoring relationships as well as characteristics of a mentor. You may choose to show a clip from a movie, read an excerpt from a story, show a youtube video advertising mentoring, and/ or invite a guest speaker.
2. Write down the word 'mentor' on the chart paper or white board. Ask students to help you explain this term with words, ideas and examples. Write down any key words or examples including ideas that do not fit with the term 'mentor'. You can go back and address these at the end of the activity to see if students might choose to take these off of the list.
3. Show students prepared examples of mentoring relationships. This provides opportunities for cross-curricular connections to English language arts.
4. Revisit the list and ask students to add to their explanation of the term mentor. Ask if there are any ideas or words that do not belong. Once the class has developed its own explanation, compare it to the definition below.

A mentor is a caring person who provides another person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time.

5. Brainstorm examples of mentoring with the students. Ask for examples of mentoring happening in their school as well as in their community.

Mentoring happens in formal programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters, teen mentoring, and reading buddies as well as in formal activities such as sports teams, youth groups, 4-H and more. Mentors also exist in informal ways such as friends of the family, neighbours or babysitters who have acted as an older, supportive friend to a younger person. There are many different types of formal mentoring including one-to-one mentoring, group or team mentoring, peer mentoring, online mentoring and more.

Activity 2: How Do Mentors Act?

1. Explain to the class that a mentor helps their mentee(s) by being a positive influence, giving their time, and acting like a role model. Revisit the definition of a 'mentor' from Activity 1 and ask students to pick out the key words and discuss their meaning (caring, support, advice, friendship, reinforcement, role modeling). Use the 'How Do Mentors Act?' handout for reference.
2. Encourage the students to think of individuals who have acted as mentors to them and why. While examples are being given, emphasize the positive qualities and characteristics these mentors possess.
3. Record as many qualities as possible on chart paper or white board. Here is a list of examples:

Accepting	Empathetic	Knowledgeable
Approachable	Encouraging	Non-judgemental
Assertive	Experienced	Open
Caring	Fair	Patient
Competent	Friendly	Positive
Committed	Funny	Respected by their peers
Confident	Good listener	Responsible
Consistent	Honest	Supportive
Creative	Kind	Trustworthy

4. Pause and think: Ask the class how these qualities in mentors impact them personally. How do they feel when they are with someone who is patient? What is it like being around a person who is positive? What is it like going to a person that is caring or knowledgeable for advice? Have them pair up with a partner or small group and share their answers.

Optional Activity

Incorporate a technology component by organizing the qualities of a mentor into a Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net>) or other organizational tool

Activity 3: Mentoring and My Mental Health

1. Explain that the act of helping others through mentoring has many positive effects on a both a mentor and a mentee's mental health and well-being. Some of these were described in Activity 2 including how we feel, act and think around people who act as mentors.

2. A mentee's mental health is positively enhanced by having the friendship and support of a mentor in the following ways:
 - Opportunities to share thoughts and feelings
 - Feel supported and heard
 - Better relationships with friends and family
 - Improved social skills
 - Better attendance at school
 - New friendships based on support, encouragement, motivation and a caring relationship
 - Higher self-esteem
 - Confidence
 - Greater academic motivation and achievement

3. Mentors also receive many positive mental health benefits from contributing their time, self and support to others including:
 - Higher self-esteem
 - Problem solving skills
 - Communication skills
 - Learn to understand others and show empathy
 - Social responsibility – taking care of the world around them
 - Greater sense of belonging at school
 - New friendships
 - Feel good about giving back and helping others

4. Provide each student with a *Mentoring and My Mental Health* handout. Have them fill out their name under 'Me'. Focusing on the left hand of the page, have students write the name(s) of a person who has acted as a mentor to them. Underneath the heading 'Benefits of being a mentee,' have them write some of the ways they and their mental health have benefited from this relationship. They should focus on how they feel, act and think as a result of this relationship. On the right hand side of the page, have them write the name(s) of a person they can act as a mentor toward. This may include other students, siblings, or children who have the same interests or extracurricular activities as them. Under the heading 'Benefits of being a mentor,' have them write ways that they could benefit as mentors, helpers or role models in these children's lives.

Extension Activity: Putting Mentoring into Practice

Arrange a mentoring opportunity with a class or group of elementary students. A letter template for teachers or principals is included to help you approach potential partners for your group mentoring activity. This letter can be adapted as an information letter for parents as well. Support elementary school staff in understanding the positive impact mentoring can have on participating students' mental health by providing them with the included Mental Health Matters poster on *Help* designed for elementary students. Students may be matched as mentors to a younger group of students, or they may be matched as mentees with an older group of students. One option is to pair with a grade 8 class completing the Junior High Mental Health Matters Mentoring lesson plan.

The duration of the activity should be determined at the outset and mentors and mentees should be made aware of how long the mentoring sessions will last (e.g. 3 sessions or one semester). Positive mentoring experiences have a defined beginning and end and participants should be given an opportunity to celebrate the match closure.

Other logistics that should be further discussed with the partnering teacher/ school liaison include:

- One-on-one or small group format
- Frequency (e.g. once a week)
- Date(s) and time
- Location for mentoring activities (ex. school library, gymnasium, or cafeteria; public community center; public library)
- Mode of transportation to the location
- Rule and policies for students
- Roles of each teacher (ex. providing materials, determining activities, supervising, assessing students, arranging physical space, etc.)

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership offers online mentor training (appropriate for junior high and high school students) as well as online mentee training (appropriate for elementary school students). Students can access the online training modules at www.moodle.albertamentors.ca. More information on the online mentee training can be found in the resource section.

Assessment Strategy

1. Teacher observations based on lesson plan objectives:
 - Understand the term mentoring and examples of mentoring occurring in their school and community
 - Understand how mentoring is a form of helping others by contributing time and self
 - Assess how mentors act as important role models for mentees
 - Investigate the benefits mentoring has on mental health and well-being

Are students engaged in discussion, participating and sharing ideas?

Are students able to express how mentoring relationships positively impact mental health by reflecting on thoughts, feelings and actions?

2. Student Journaling:

Students write a one page description of how you would act as a mentor to a peer or a younger student. What qualities and characteristics would you bring to the relationship? How would your mental health be affected by this experience? How would the mental health of your mentee be affected by this experience?
3. Write a thank you letter to a person who has acted as a mentor. Explain how their service contribution and this relationship have positively impacted your life and mental health.

Conclusion

Mentors are individuals who provide a supportive friendship for others. They help to guide and motivate, as well as act as role models for their mentees. Students in grades 4-6 can be provided with opportunities to act as both mentors and mentees. Both roles create positive benefits for their mental health and well-being including enhanced self-esteem, confidence, problem-solving skills, communication skills, connection to the school community and improved relationships with family and peers. This lesson provides a basic understanding of mentoring and an opportunity to reflect on the experience of helping others as a mentor and accepting the support of others as a mentee. Students will reflect on how mentors and role models act, the benefits of fostering a mentoring relationship with others, as well as the positive impact helping others can have on their mental health.

References

Alberta Mentoring Partnership www.albertamentors.ca

Guroian, V. (2008) Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University. Literature and the real meaning of mentorship. Found online at <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/61114.pdf>

Resources

Alberta Mentoring Partnership www.albertamentors.ca

Find resources and tools specifically designed for educators on developing a mentoring program, strength-based practice, mentor and mentee training, and mentoring opportunities in your community.

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Online Training for Mentors and Mentees
www.moodle.albertamentors.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters. Learning Centre.
<http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/en/home/learningmodules/default.aspx>

Mentoring Canada www.mentoringcanada.ca

Mentor www.mentoring.org

Examples of Mentoring Relationships

Movies

Karate Kid – Mr. Miyagi and Daniel
Cinderella – Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother
Star Wars – Yoda and Luke Skywalker
Harry Potter – Harry and Dumbledore

Books

The Odyssey *Greek Mythology* - Telemachus and Mentor
Charlotte's Web *E.B. White* – Charlotte and Wilbur
The Jungle Book *Rudyard Kipling* – Baloo, Bagheera, Kaa and Mowgli
Velveteen Rabbit *Margery Williams* – the Skin Horse and the Velveteen Rabbit
Harry Potter *J.K. Rowling* – Hagrid, Professor Dumbledore and Harry
The Hobbit *J.R.R. Tolkien* – Gandalf and Bilbo
Thank You, Mr. Falker *Patricia Polacco* – Trisha and Mr. Falker

Youtube Videos

Alberta Mentoring Partnership Youtube Channel
<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1jzKjk121I6JjmvwOpPQow>

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada Youtube Channel
<http://www.youtube.com/user/BBBSCanada>

Guest Speaker Examples

Volunteer Mentors from a local mentoring agency
Coaches
Local athletes, politicians or professionals with a mentoring experience impacting their success

How Do Mentors Act?

“A mentor is a caring person who provides another person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time.”

~Alberta Mentoring Partnership

Caring	A mentor cares about the mentee. They ask questions, listen and want to learn more about the person
Supportive	A mentor is there for the mentee. They encourage the mentee to be the best person they can be and are there for them through good times and challenging times
Gives Advice	A mentor does not tell their mentee what to do but encourages them to solve problems by brainstorming ideas, offering help and allowing them to choose what to do
Provides Friendship	This is very important! A mentor’s role is to be fun, offer friendship and build connection with the mentee
Provides Reinforcement	A mentee encourages or reinforces positive behaviors and attitudes by reminding their mentee of all the good things about themselves and their life
Constructive Role Modelling	A mentor acts in a responsible, healthy and positive manner. They act as someone who the mentee can look up to as a positive example

Mentoring and My Mental Health



Alberta Mentoring Partnership

<p>Benefits of being a mentee:</p>	<p>Benefits of being a mentor:</p>
<p>Someone Who Mentors Me:</p>	<p>Someone I Can Mentor:</p>
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Teacher/ Principal Partnership Letter

Date: _____

Dear _____ ,

My class of grade ____ students at _____

School is currently learning about the positive impact of mentoring on mental health through the Mental Health Matters poster series (www.education.alberta.ca/mentalhealthmatters). My students would like to partner with another class to practise what they are learning.

School mentoring is a widely used program across Alberta. Individual or groups of students are matched with younger students and meet in a supervised setting engaging in reading, homework, and game-related activities. Students are provided with basic training and come equipped with planned activities.

Mentoring activities promote positive mental health and well-being in both mentors and mentees.

Mentors experience enhanced self-esteem, develop competence in problem-solving, communication skills, understanding and empathy, and increase their sense of social responsibility. For mentees, there is an increase in self-esteem, better attendance at school, improved social skills and behaviour and the opportunity to build a friendship based on support, encouragement, motivation and laughter – all important elements of positive mental health!

Please let me know if your class is interested in partnering with my group of students and we can begin discussing the details.

Regards,



Mental Health matters



Help... others!

Show respect and concern for others.

The best way to become comfortable about mental health is to talk about it. Start the conversation today!

Need help? Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
www.education.alberta.ca/mentalhealthmatters





Alberta Mentoring Partnerships (AMP) Online Mentee Training

WHAT?

An online training resource designed to introduce the concept of mentoring to children.

Children are taken through 5 modules:

1. What is a mentor? What is a mentee?
2. Getting to know your mentor
3. Let's be safe and have good boundaries
4. My strengths
5. All about me

An adult mentor avatar guides children through the roles and characteristics of a mentor, examples of mentoring relationships, stages of a relationship, goal setting, match closure, child safety, boundaries, strengths, and a general description of mentoring programs. This tool is suitable for a variety of programs and organizations.

The tool highlights the importance of the mentee and mentor learning about each other. Children can build a story about themselves called 'All About Me.' This story includes information on the mentee's favourite things, goals for the mentoring relationship, and personal strengths.

WHY?

AMP's online mentee training offers easy-to-use, step-by-step training which improves the quality and outcomes of mentoring relationships by:

- providing mentees with an overall understanding of the mentoring process
- helping mentees understand the benefits of mentoring
- teaching mentees about their role in the mentoring relationship
- offering safety and boundary training



Helping mentees **get the most out of mentoring!**

WHEN?

The online mentee training module is a great way to introduce mentees to the mentoring process at the beginning of their match.

It can also be used:

- as an introductory activity with mentors
- at a later stage in the mentoring process as a reminder of the mentoring process and the importance of goal setting, boundaries, and recognizing their personal strengths
- to re-introduce mentee training after breaks (for example, after the summer for school mentoring programs)

WHERE?

Use it anywhere formal or informal mentoring relationships are being formed, including:

- group settings
- school settings
- one-on-one settings

Training takes about 45 minutes to complete



WHO?

- Children participating in community and school-based mentoring relationships with youth or adult mentors
- Parents & guardians who can receive the same information as mentees to answer questions and provide further support
- Mentoring coordinators, agency staff and/ or teachers responsible for training participants and monitoring the mentoring relationship

Training should be facilitated by someone older (for example, a mentor, parent, or teacher).

MENTEE

An individual who is mentored.

MENTOR

A caring individual who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time.



Mentee Training: **Logging In**

General Sign-Up

Go to <http://moodle.albertamentors.ca>

1. click *Create a New Account*
2. fill-in all of the required fields
 - if your organization does not appear in the drop-down list, select *Other Authorized Users* or contact your organization representative
3. click the link provided in the confirmation e-mail to complete your registration and access AMP's training course list
 - click on *Orientation for Mentees*

Other Notes

For large groups, you may send the first and last names of each participant to mentor.support@albertamentors.ca prior to your training session and an account will be created for each mentee.

- if your organization is not already included in the list of available organizations contact mentor.support@albertamentors.ca and ask to be added to the list
- prompt your mentee groups to sign up under your organization name – you may then track each mentees progress by logging in under your admin account, entering the *Orientation for Mentees* course and clicking on the user report

For Organization Representatives

Contact
mentor.support@albertamentors.ca
if you require
assistance
logging in.

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2

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Curriculum Connections

Specific Expectations	Grade	Subject
S.6 – develop age appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community	4, 5, 6	Skills and Processes
1.1 – discover and explore: express ideas and develop understanding	4, 5, 6	English Language Arts
2.1 – use strategies and cues: use prior knowledge	4, 5, 6	English Language Arts
2.2 – respond to texts: construct meaning from texts	4, 5, 6	English Language Arts
2.4 - create original text: generate ideas	4, 5, 6	English Language Arts
3.3 – organize, record and evaluate: organize information	4, 6	English Language Arts
5.1 – celebrate accomplishments and events	4, 5, 6	English Language Arts
C.4 2.2 – students will use organizational processes and tools to manage inquiry: organize information, using tools as a database, spreadsheet or electronic webbing	4, 5, 6	Information and Communication Technology