

Mentoring Resource

Developing a Theory of Change and Logic Model



Developing a Theory of Change

A Theory of Change illustrates the link between a mentoring program's activities and outcomes. A theory of change is a valuable tool for mapping program priorities, ensuring that program elements and approaches are aligned with your overall vision. It describes why the interventions or activities will be effective, showing how intermediate changes lead to the desired impact. The process typically starts with the desired impact, working backwards to identify the preconditions to achieve the program goals.

Theories of change and logic models are useful communication tools for planning and evaluating a program. They provide a summary description of what resources a mentoring program needs, what activities it proposes, and illustrate how program activities lead to its desired goals or outcomes. It may be useful for a program to develop both as they share a common purpose: understanding how a program creates change.

Common Elements ¹	Guiding Questions
Desired impact	What is the ultimate goal for program beneficiaries? What is the issue that your program addresses?
Intermediate outcomes	What are the intermediate (short or medium term) changes that program beneficiaries will experience which will lead to the desired impact?
Activities	What are the steps needed to bring about the desired impact? How do program elements lead to the desired impact?
Evidence	What evidence already exists that is relevant to your theory of change?
Enablers	What conditions or factors are necessary for the program to work?
Assumptions	What are the core beliefs that underpin the theory of change? What are you assuming is already in place and does not require an intervention for it to take place?

Developing a Logic Model

A Logic Model outlines various program components of a mentoring program, including inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, in a sequential manner. One of the limits of a logic model is that it does not show how activities are expected to produce outcomes as is the case with a theory of change.

Logic Model Components	Needs ²	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Questions to Consider	What needs does the program address?	What resources are needed to deliver the program?	What are the activities or interventions that will be carried out as part of the program? What is involved in the program life cycle?	What are the program results? (Outputs do not include program impact but rather program "products")	What are the short or medium term benefits of the program? What are the changes expected from participating in the program?	What are the long term impacts of the program?
Mentoring Program Context Examples	Positive role model Sense of belonging	Human Financial Material	Training and support Mentor-mentee activities Program evaluation	Development of resources: program curriculum, toolkits, trainings	Youth feel supported by their mentor Youth have a better knowledge of community	Increased community belonging Positive relationships with supportive adults

For further information on how to develop your program's theory of change or logic model, see the Ontario Mentoring Coalition's [Toolkit on Effective Mentoring for Youth Facing Barriers to Success](#).

Additional Tools and Resources

Canadian Women's Foundation, Girls Group Mentoring Toolkit: [Theory of Change](#) and [Logic Model](#)

MENTOR, [Getting Started with Program Evaluation: Building a Logic Model](#)

YouthREX, [Logic Models: Template and Toolkit](#)

National Mentoring Resource Center, [Example Logic Models and Theories of Change for Youth Mentoring](#)

1 NPC. (2014). Creating your theory of change. <https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Creating-your-theory-of-change1.pdf>

2 Alberta Mentoring Partnership. (n.d.). Creating a Quality Community-Based Mentoring Program. Key Steps to Develop a Program and Related Tools. p. 40. <https://albertamentors.ca/resources/request-creating-a-quality-community-based-mentoring-program/>



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.

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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.

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