



# The Mentoring Effect: Indigenous Youth





## The Mentoring Effect: Indigenous Youth

Mentor Canada's *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* is the first study to provide a detailed portrait of young people's mentoring experiences across Canada. In the winter of 2020, Mentor Canada surveyed 2,838 young adults and interviewed 19 young adults between the ages of 18 to 30 to learn more about how mentors supported them while they were growing up. In total, 304 survey respondents and two interview participants indicated that they belonged to an Indigenous group.

The study sheds light on the prevalence of informal mentoring relationships Indigenous children and youth developed with supportive adults in their surroundings and formal relationships developed through structured mentoring programs. It also highlights the mentoring gap, the number of Indigenous young adults who recalled a time growing up when they wanted a mentor but did not have one, and the barriers that prevented them from accessing mentorship. For the young people who did have mentors, the study explores the several ways in which mentorship supported their development and the positive influence mentors exerted.

The online survey intentionally included an oversampling of Indigenous respondents. Overall, 11% of the survey respondents identified as Indigenous, including 6% who identified as First Nations, 4% who identified as Métis, and 0.5% as Inuk or Inuit. Two interview participants identified as Indigenous, including one who identified as two-spirit. One-quarter (25%) and

Indigenous respondents indicated that they lived in rural and remote communities and 1% reported that they lived in the Territories (for more details about the Indigenous respondents' demographic characteristics, see Appendix A). For the analysis, respondents were recategorized as identifying as Indigenous or not identifying as Indigenous. Consequently, a limit of this report is that it does not account for regional or cultural variations that exist between respondents who identified as Indigenous.

This report outlines key findings from the *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* study for Indigenous young people about the following questions:

- How is mentoring defined in Indigenous cultures?
- What proportion of young people recall having access to mentorship growing up?
- What influence do mentoring relationships have on young people's educational, professional, and personal journeys?
- What barriers prevent young people from accessing mentorship?

The report concludes with actions that governments, philanthropists, schools, mentoring programs, and individuals and communities can take to close the mentoring gap and increase Indigenous young people's access to meaningful mentorship opportunities.

# Mentorship and positive youth development in Indigenous cultures

Although the terms mentorship or mentoring are not necessarily employed in Indigenous cultures, their principles are congruent with several Indigenous values, including intergenerational knowledge transmission, relational and experiential ways of learning, and communal approaches to support children’s positive development.<sup>1</sup> As Derek Rope, educator and youth program designer explains, “I think mentorship is the transferring of knowledge through a shared experience. I believe that in Indigenous cultures in North America it was simply the foundation of how we were taught and how we lived. It didn’t have a name and the concept never needed to be defined.”<sup>2</sup>

Decolonized and indigenized mentoring approaches that respect and affirm cultural integrity, promote miyo (goodness, generosity, and sharing), and are based on reciprocity and non-hierarchical relationships are well aligned with the Circle of Courage positive youth development framework developed by Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern. The Circle of Courage framework attends to the four basic human needs of significance, competence, power, and virtue and illustrates how traditional ways of raising Indigenous children supported resilience in the face of challenges and adversity. It consists of four interrelated dimensions: belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity (see figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

“I really started learning about the native way of knowing and doing as well [...]. And mentorship is huge. Like, that’s such an important way to knowledge transmission, and intergenerational transmission as well.”

Interview participant,  
Mapping the Mentoring Gap (2020)

“It’s about teaching them like by hand instead of from the books, like from pure experience versus just reading it off a piece of paper. It’s more of a hands-on or the nitty gritty experience... I don’t know how to do it, I can ask them to show me how... Kids need to learn different ways to grasp knowledge, not just reading a book.”

Interview participant,  
Mapping the Mentoring Gap (2020)

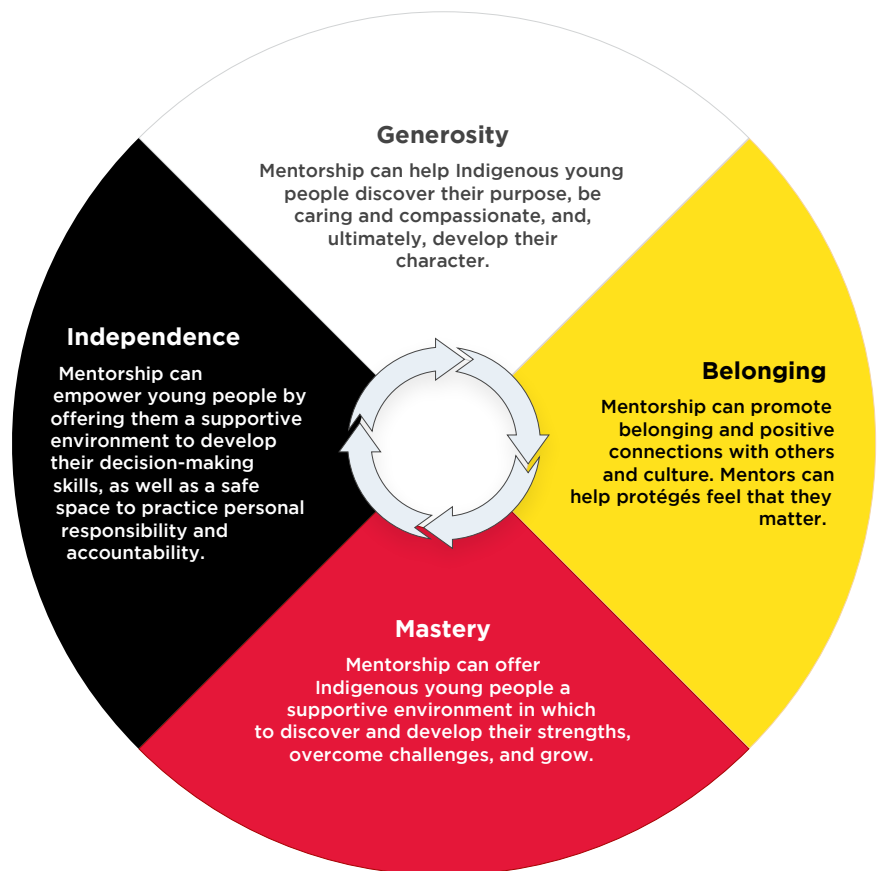


Figure 1. Circle of Courage and Mentorship

Mentors can play many roles and help Indigenous young people learn through modelling, practice, and ceremonies and rituals (see figure 2). Mentors support young people’s positive development by being role models, teaching values, and providing feedback to ultimately empower Indigenous young people to discover who they are and make their own decisions.

Because of its holistic nature, mentorship is compatible with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Mentoring relationships using a wholistic approach can support wellness by attending to the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being) and by supporting relational ways of being and knowing at the individual, familial, communal, and societal level (see figure 3).<sup>4</sup> Culturally-relevant and strength-based mentoring relationships that focus on building Indigenous young people’s gifts and assets and include protégés as active participants in the relationship can support positive identity development, cultural resurgence, and help Indigenous young people navigate two worlds.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 2. Power of Five: Mentor Roles

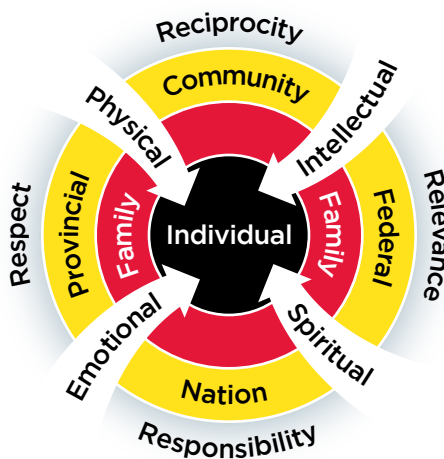


Figure 3. Indigenous Wholistic Framework

Because it resonates with Indigenous values, several consultations of Indigenous youth recommend mentorship as a means to support Indigenous young people’s success. Mentorship is put forward as a way to support their transition to post-secondary education and to employment, to promote cultural connectedness, to open doors and provide opportunities, and to build their capacity and empower them to be equal partners in their own self-determination.<sup>6</sup>

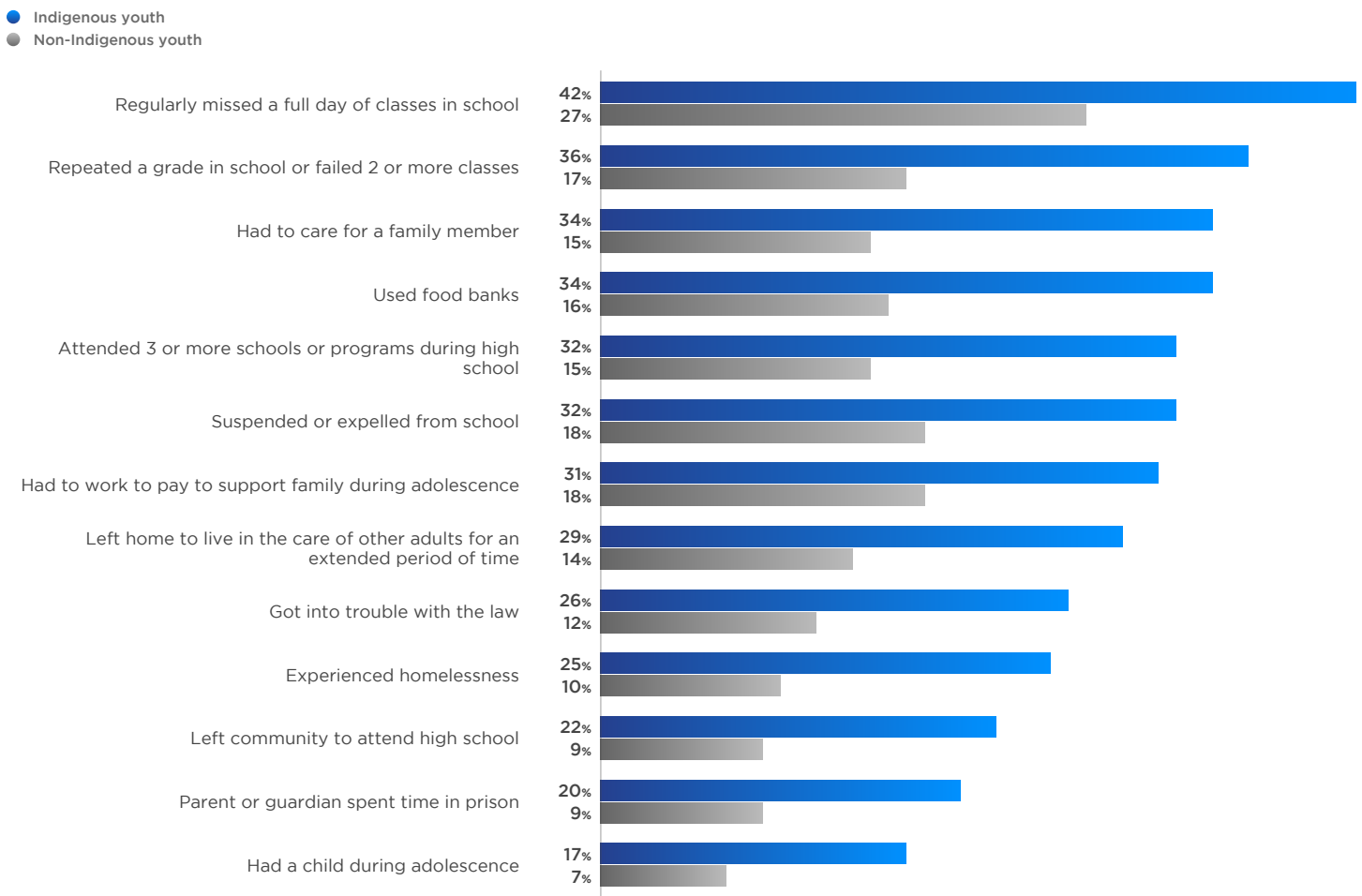
Various mentoring programs have been shown to promote positive health and well-being outcomes such as mental health, resilience, healthy relationships, and healthy eating and physical activity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children and youth.<sup>7</sup> Mentoring programs offered in the mainstream education system can lead to increased well-being (positive mental health and cultural identity) and enhanced healthy relationship skills if they adopt culturally-relevant and strength-based approaches.<sup>8</sup> Mentoring programs that engage Indigenous community members can promote cultural continuity which is defined as “intergenerational cultural connectedness, which is maintained through intact families and the engagement of elders, who pass traditions to subsequent generations”. Cultural continuity is a protective factor against negative health outcomes.<sup>9</sup>

Supportive relationships with adults foster young people’s positive development and can offer significant psychological protection in the face of adverse life

circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Formal mentoring relationships created through a program and naturally occurring mentoring relationships young people develop with supportive adults and peers in their environment can play an important role in offsetting some of the environmental and individual risk factors Indigenous children and youth face in Canada. Systemic issues impacting Indigenous peoples result in a greater prevalence of risk factors for Indigenous youth. Over two-thirds (71%) of Indigenous respondents reported having faced at least two risk factors during their teen years compared to 39% of all survey respondents, 60% faced three or more risk factors (see figure 4). Many of the adverse experiences Indigenous young people faced growing up had bearings on their academic trajectories.

Awareness of how systemic inequities negatively impact Indigenous children and youth’s healthy development is critical. Individual challenges are frequently the manifestation of stresses caused by the systemic issues created by colonialism such as poverty and intergenerational trauma. For example, identity erosion has been linked to a greater risk for stress-related disorders.<sup>11</sup> Acknowledging the distinction between the stressors caused by systemic injustices and the manifestations of these stressors in individual challenges (e.g., behavioural issues, school disengagement) is important to avoid blaming Indigenous young people and to recognize how these challenges are part of larger systemic inequities.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4. Prevalence of risk factors during adolescence among Indigenous respondents compared to non-Indigenous respondents**



Mentoring relationships encourage Indigenous young people’s positive development and promote resilience, but too many Indigenous young people face obstacles accessing mentors. Indeed, 61% of Indigenous respondents could recall a time growing up when they wished they had a mentor but did not have one. Early intervention to help more Indigenous young people access quality mentorship opportunities when they want them the most is critical.





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## What is the effect of mentoring for Indigenous youth?

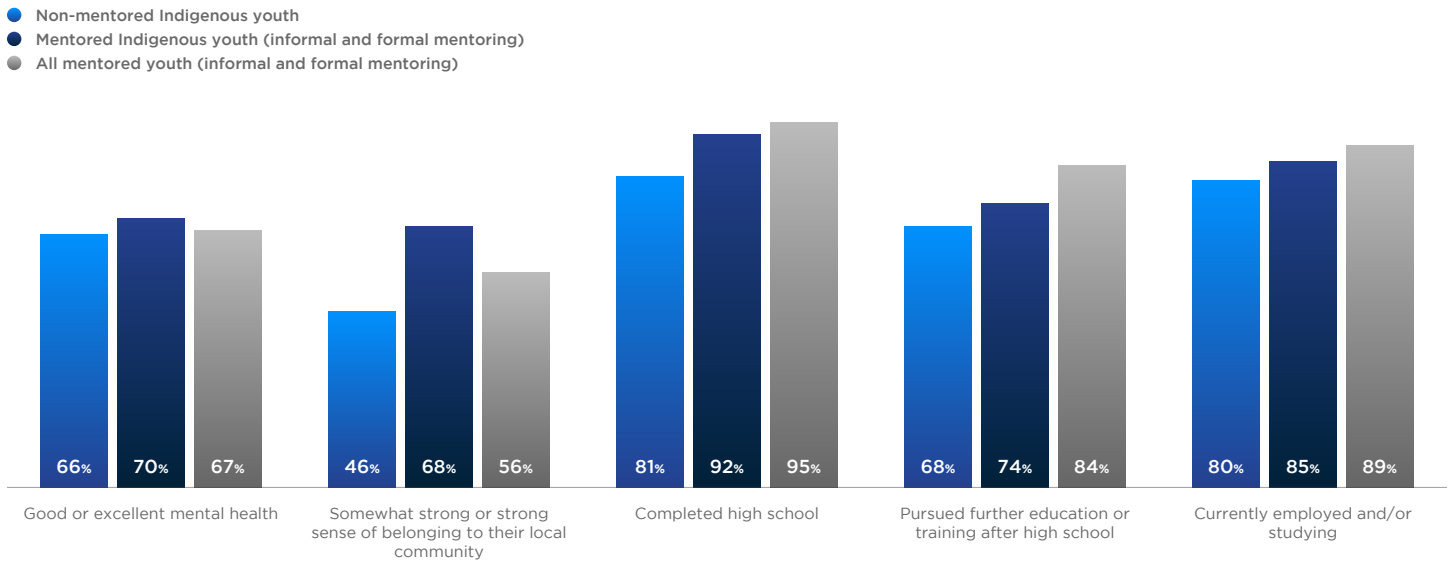
Two-thirds (66%) of Indigenous respondents had at least one mentor at some point between the ages of 6 to 18 compared to 56% of all respondents. Indigenous respondents were statistically more likely to have been mentored than non-Indigenous respondents. Several Indigenous young people developed natural mentoring relationships with adults in their environments. They reported that their most meaningful mentors were often teachers or other members of school staff, family friends and adult relatives from their extended family, elders or aunties, and spiritual leaders. Some Indigenous youth also indicated that their most meaningful mentor was a youth worker, a volunteer (e.g., a big brother or big sister), a social or case worker, or a foster parent. Compared to all survey respondents, a smaller proportion of Indigenous youth reported that their most meaningful mentor was a member of school staff, and a higher proportion reported that their mentors were spiritual leaders, youth workers, volunteers, or foster parents.

Indigenous youth were over twice as likely to have been formally mentored through a structured mentoring program

compared to non-Indigenous youth: roughly 30% of Indigenous youth had at least one formal mentor. A greater proportion of Indigenous youth also reported that their most meaningful mentor during their teenage years was a formal mentor compared to non-Indigenous youth: 35% compared to 18%.

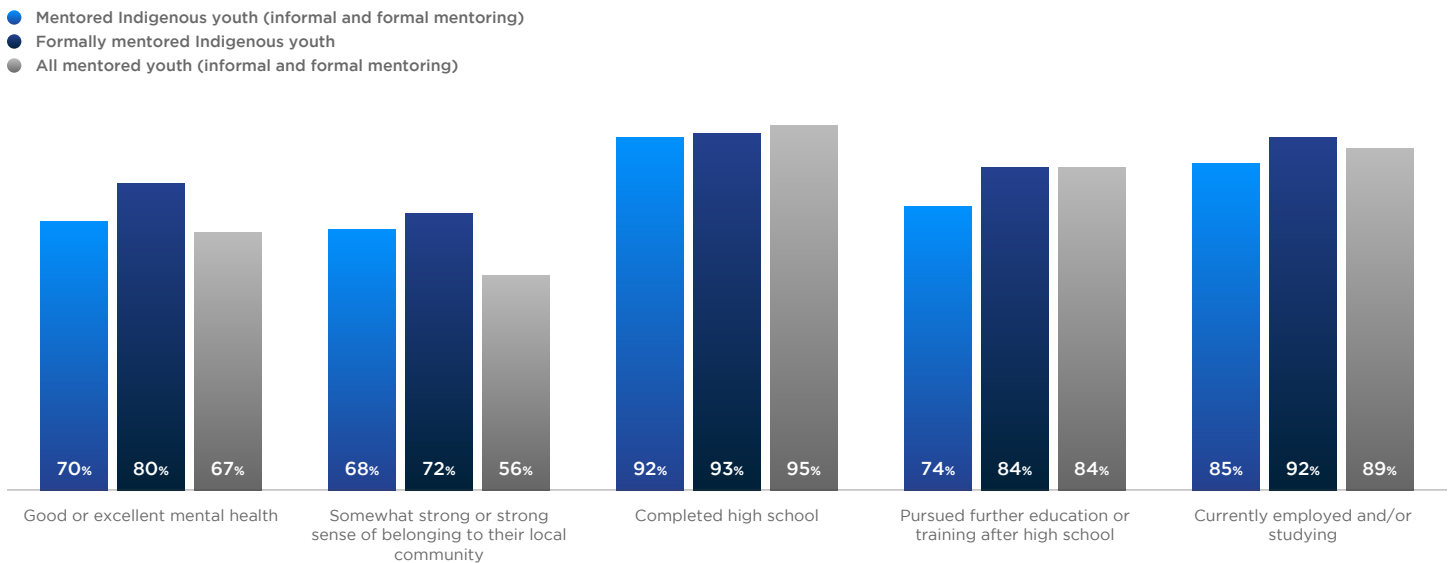
The *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* study determined that survey respondents who were mentored growing up were statistically more likely to report several positive outcomes related to mental health, belonging, social capital, education, and career as young adults compared to their peers who did not have access to mentorship.<sup>13</sup> Indigenous youth who were mentored growing up reported positive outcomes in greater proportions than their peers who were not mentored (see figure 5). Importantly, Indigenous young adults who had access to mentorship at some point during their childhood or adolescence reported much higher rates of belonging and higher rates of high school completion.

**Figure 5. Outcomes for young adults based on access to mentoring**



Indigenous respondents who had access to formal mentoring programs reported positive outcomes in even greater proportions (see figure 6). In fact, Indigenous young adults who had access to formal mentors growing up reported positive educational and employment outcomes in proportions similar to that of all survey respondents who had access to mentorship. This finding shows that mentoring could be one effective strategy to help address the educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 6. Outcomes for young adults based on access to various types of mentoring**

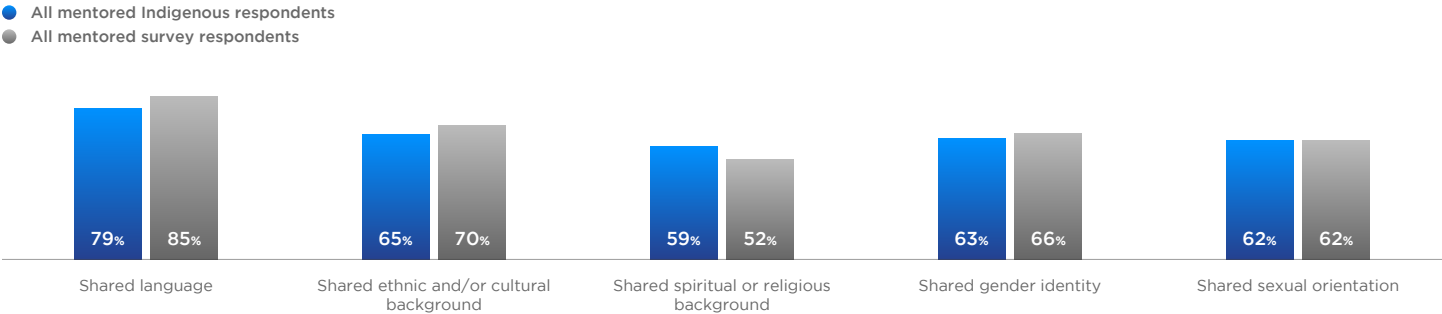




# How do mentors support Indigenous teens?

Just under half (47%) of Indigenous respondents had at least one mentor between the ages of 12 to 18 compared to 41% of all respondents. Not every Indigenous young person’s most meaningful mentor shared their cultural background: close to one-third of most meaningful mentoring relationships were cross-cultural relationships (see figure 7).

**Figure 7. Similarities with the most meaningful mentor**



Some interview participants indicated that relationships with mentors who share their Indigenous background can play an important role to promote reconciliation and the revitalization of Indigenous ways of life. However, interview participants cautioned against assuming that Indigenous children and youth want or need an Indigenous mentor simply because of their background. They noted that cross-cultural mentoring relationships can also be important. One interview participant explained that she would not have wanted to participate in a mentoring program specifically for Indigenous youth when she was younger: “For me personally, I had a really complicated identity issue growing up. [...] Like the sixties scoop, the goal of that was to like make native kids grow up not identifying as native. [...] [I would look at other cultures] I’d be like, Oh, I’m super interested in hearing about their culture, their perspective, their experiences, like everything. And I think if I’d had that identity as a native person, which I do now. Right. And now when I speak to people like, hey, you know, I would have said, sure. Yeah. And I see my native students doing that. Yeah. But at that age, it was complicated. And like the extent to which you, I guess, valued or related or whatever were drawn in that direction was different.”



Indigenous mentors and mentees highlighted how learning about Indigenous culture such as knowledge of the land could benefit non-Indigenous young people as well. One Indigenous mentor interviewed as part of the *Raising the Profile of Mentoring* study thought all mentoring should incorporate Indigenous teachings and should be universal and normalized for all.

Indigenous respondents who were mentored during their adolescence reported that their most meaningful mentor exerted a significant influence on several areas linked to their mental health and resilience:

- 70% reported that their most meaningful mentor influenced their hope and optimism for the future.
- 65% indicated that their mentor influenced their confidence in their abilities.
- 65% influenced their sense of pride and self-esteem.
- 65% influenced their ability to know where they wanted to go in life.

By helping Indigenous youth feel confident, proud, and hopeful, and by helping them find a sense of purpose, many mentors played a critical role in strengthening the foundation for Indigenous youth's healthy development.

Mentors provided other forms of emotional and practical support. Indeed, Indigenous respondents reported that their most meaningful mentor often helped them manage relationships, build connections, and learn about their culture. Mentors also supported their educational and professional trajectories and helped them navigate the transition to adulthood.

Over two-thirds (69%) of Indigenous respondents who were mentored during their teen years reported that their most meaningful mentoring relationship focused on providing them with social and emotional support. Mentors helped youth develop and manage interpersonal relationships:

- 53% of Indigenous youth who were mentored during their adolescence talked about their relationships with their friends with their most meaningful mentor.
- 55% discussed their relationships with their parents or other adults with their mentor.

Furthermore, 64% of mentored Indigenous youth reported that their mentor had a significant influence on the development of their social and relationship skills and 60% reported that their mentor influenced the development of their leadership skills.

Mentors helped youth build connections with others and with their culture. A greater proportion of Indigenous youth reported that their relationship with their most meaningful mentor focused on providing them with spiritual or cultural support (33%) than all survey respondents (27%). Mentors helped build bridges:

- 54% of mentored Indigenous youth connected to services and supports with the help of their most meaningful mentor.
- 51% took part in community events or offerings with their mentor.
- 48% connected to their culture with their mentor's help.

**“I would say on the land programming, I would say like I really advocate right now. I've gotten this shift in my understanding. I think there's a serious lacking or just limiting things in a way. It's not just in education, it's in a lot of our public systems where society runs it. It's like kind of tired to just call it colonial, right, but that's what it is. And I think that if we integrated Indigenous ways of teaching and learning and understanding, it would fill a lot of those gaps.”**

**Interview participant,  
Mapping the Mentoring Gap (2020)**

**“It's really important that we share our culture with ourselves, right? [...] We don't all want us to be like making dream catchers, but there's still aspects of the whole overall worldview that we can get from it. So even if it's not like if I don't get [a mentor] who's my nation or my ancestors' locality, I can still make stuff out of it. Right. And we'll be sharing our culture with ourselves in a good way, which is important, especially in like the era of reconciliation...”**

**Interview participant,  
Mapping the Mentoring Gap (2020)**

Mentors influenced Indigenous youth's school engagement and academic success in significant ways. Over half (57%) of mentored Indigenous youth reported that their most meaningful mentoring relationship during their teen years focused on providing them with academic support. Almost two-thirds (62%) of mentored Indigenous youth reported that their most meaningful mentor had a significant influence on their interest in staying in school and just over half (51%) reported that their mentor's influence pushed them to get involved in school activities. Mentors helped young people develop skills, provided practical support, and helped motivate Indigenous teenagers:

- 45% of mentored Indigenous youth acquired academic or school-related skills with the support of their most meaningful mentor.
- 35% stayed in or went back to school with their mentor's support.
- 28% applied to trade school, college, or university and 25% found or applied for funding for post-secondary education or training with their mentor's help.
- 27% adapted to a new school with their mentor's support.

Many mentors supported Indigenous youth's transition to employment:

- 51% of mentored Indigenous youth acquired job-related skills with the support of their most meaningful mentor.
- 32% reported that their most meaningful mentor helped shape their job or career aspirations.
- 30% reported that their mentor helped them get their first job.

Mentoring relationships can be an important source of support for young people on their journey toward adulthood:

- 54% of mentored Indigenous youth acquired life skills such as cooking or handling money with the support of their most meaningful mentor.
- 30% got their driver's licence with the help of their mentor.
- 28% established their independence from their parents or guardians with their mentor's help;
- 25% adapted to a new community with their mentor's support.

Acquiring essential skills, receiving helpful advice, and feeling supported are important ways in which Indigenous young people benefited from mentoring experiences. Yet, it is important to not underestimate the place that fun plays in positive mentoring relationships. Fun and play can help address power imbalances between mentors and protégés, help build trust and feelings of safety, help young people experiment and learn about themselves and the world around them, and provide an outlet when young people are facing challenges.<sup>15</sup> Over half of the Indigenous respondents who were mentored during their adolescence reported that spending time having fun with their mentor was an important way in which they felt supported.

Altogether, the experiences shared by Indigenous respondents highlight how mentoring relationships are often unique. Because of its wholistic and flexible nature, mentorship can adapt and respond to each young person's needs and goals and play an important role to support their positive development.



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## What prevents Indigenous children and youth from accessing mentors?

Although Indigenous youth were statistically more likely than non-Indigenous youth to have had at least one mentor at some point between the ages of 6 to 18, a greater proportion of Indigenous young adults than all survey respondents reported that their needs in terms of access to mentorship during their childhood and adolescence were not met. Indeed, over half (61%) of Indigenous respondents could recall a time between the ages of 6 to 18 when they wished they had a mentor but did not have one compared to 54% of all respondents.

Approximately 46% of Indigenous youth reported facing barriers accessing mentors during their adolescence. The top barriers they encountered were:

- Not knowing how to find a mentor.
- Not understanding what mentoring was or the value of having a mentor.
- Not having access to a mentoring program.
- Not thinking that the programs that were available to them were relevant to their lives.





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## Closing the mentoring gap for Indigenous youth

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called upon governments, communities, and individuals to address the inequities Indigenous people across Canada face. As a result of structural inequities, many Indigenous young people report a greater prevalence of risk factors. Although mentoring alone cannot redress this situation, it can play an important role by encouraging Indigenous young people's positive development and resilience. Mentors can support young people's educational and professional engagement and success, and bolster feelings of belonging and positive mental health. Mentorship aligns well with traditional Indigenous values and with the Circle of Courage positive youth development framework: supportive mentoring relationships can help Indigenous young people establish belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity, which can ultimately support youth thriving.

However, the *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* study shows that Indigenous young people's mentorship needs are complex and access to a single mentor is unlikely to address all these needs. Closing the mentoring gap means working together to ensure that every Indigenous young person who wishes to have access to mentorship can access the right mentors capable of responding to their unique goals or needs, and do so at the right time.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that mentoring can cause harm when it is used to promote assimilation to Eurocentric norms and ignores or disrespects Indigenous perspectives. Mentoring can be harmful when mentors or programs hold a deficit view of Indigenous youth and their communities and are motivated to "fix" or "save" them.<sup>16</sup> In fact, 8% of Indigenous respondents who were mentored during their teen years reported that their experience was either neutral or negative compared to 5% of all respondents. Ensuring that mentorship opportunities are strength-based, dignity-based, and relevant for Indigenous children and youth is one way of increasing the quality of their mentoring experiences. Practices that can help decolonize and indigenize mentorship include respect for cultural integrity and avoiding pan-Indigenization, reciprocal and non-hierarchical relationships which recognize that youth have gifts and something to contribute, and exploring mentors' and mentees' motivations for entering into a relationship to identify problematic intentions.<sup>17</sup> Other practices that can support the implementation of quality mentoring programs include the inclusion of Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers, instilling a sense of ownership among those responsible for program delivery, establishing open communications to support the creation of trusting relationships among all stakeholders, and ensuring adequate program resources.<sup>18</sup>

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## Calls to Action

Communities, schools, mentoring programs, and policymakers must work together to address the barriers Indigenous youth face accessing mentors and increase the quality of mentoring opportunities.

### Government and philanthropists:

- Invest in quality mentoring programs for Indigenous children and youth, especially grassroots programs designed specifically by and for Indigenous young people.
- Support capacity building to enable communities to develop community-owned mentoring initiatives (e.g., supporting skills development for grant writing or evaluation).
- Support the development of training and tools to increase the ability of programs and mentors to work towards reconciliation and offer culturally-relevant experiences to Indigenous young people.
- Invest in program research and evaluation that use a participatory approach to make sure that the voices of the communities served are centred and valued.

### Mentoring programs:

Many mainstream mentoring programs serve Indigenous young people, but they do not always have the necessary resources and practices in place to ensure a positive experience for Indigenous protégés. During the interviews conducted as part of the *State of Mentoring* research initiative, a non-Indigenous mentor paired with an Indigenous young person noted that they had not received cross-cultural training and that the program had largely ignored culture. To promote inclusive and safe experiences for Indigenous mentors and mentees, mainstream mentoring programs can draw upon the 4Rs framework: respecting Indigenous knowledge, responsible relationships, reciprocity, and relevance.<sup>19</sup>

- Avoid pan-Indigenization and respect and honour cultural integrity. There is great diversity among Indigenous peoples across Canada and Indigenous people may identify in several different ways based on their location, history, culture, and language.
- Partner with local Indigenous communities to provide cultural humility and empathy training to non-Indigenous mentors working with Indigenous young people, including on the history and legacy of residential schools and anti-Indigenous racism.
- Invest time and effort into building and sustaining relationships with local Indigenous communities. Involve community members in the design, delivery, and evaluation of mentoring programs intended to benefit Indigenous young people. For example, partner with Indigenous community members to develop activities that integrate Indigenous teachings to promote cultural continuity or help develop evaluation metrics relevant to Indigenous communities.
- Provide Indigenous youth voice and choice about whether they prefer an Indigenous mentor or a cross-cultural mentoring relationship.
- Consider developing peer-mentoring programs which can provide benefits for Indigenous mentees as well as mentors.<sup>20</sup>

### Schools:

Partner with Indigenous communities to bring culturally-relevant mentoring opportunities to Indigenous students in schools to support, among other things, Indigenous students' school engagement.



[Considerations for Mentoring Indigenous Children and Youth](#)

Alberta Mentoring Partnership

## Communities:

Supporting more caring adults in Indigenous communities to step up and mentor young people around them can help remove the barriers to mentorship young people face. Informal mentors such as teachers, elders and aunts, and extended family relatives can play an important role in supporting young people's positive development.

According to Mentor Canada's *Raising the Profile of Mentoring* study, Indigenous respondents were statistically more likely to have mentored a young person compared to non-Indigenous respondents. Over half of the Indigenous respondents (57%) reported that they had mentored at least one young person compared to only 29% of non-Indigenous respondents. Indigenous respondents were also more likely to indicate that they would probably mentor a young person in the next five years: 41% compared to 22% of non-Indigenous respondents. The *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* study also showed that Indigenous youth who benefited from the support of a mentor understand the value of mentorship and are committed to paying it forward. Over three-quarters (77%) of Indigenous youth who had a mentor growing up are interested in becoming mentors in the future and half of them have already mentored another young person.

However, it is important to acknowledge that Indigenous people can face barriers to becoming mentors and that the commitment required by formal mentoring programs may be challenging for some. One interview participant explained: "Indigenous people have inherited an intergenerational trauma. They're struggling to get through everyday and they don't have the time to take on these mentorship roles in a formal context. Now with those commitments, they talk about 'Indian time' a lot... And I've come to understand what we call 'Indian time' isn't just about being unplanned, but it's about, things happen when they're supposed to. We lose a little bit of spiritual integration in there...Flexibility or understanding, I guess, would be really important in mentorship, in areas that are really the most important areas that I think where we need mentors are the areas where it's hard for those people who have that experience that we want to meet those kind of time constraints and commitments in a structured way that they have to be able to respond when you try and impose this structure on it. Like recognizing that people still have something to offer."

Empowering young people to feel comfortable approaching supportive adults in their surroundings can also help close the mentoring gap. Indeed, many adults could be persuaded to mentor a young person if they were asked directly according to the *Raising the Profile of Mentoring* study.<sup>21</sup>

The findings from the *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* study show that mentorship can be a useful tool to support Indigenous young people's spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being. Mentors can offer wholistic and flexible support and be true partners for young people on their journeys towards healthy adulthood. Together, we can address the barriers that prevent Indigenous children and youth from accessing the mentorship opportunities they seek.



RESOURCE

[Finding your Next Mentor: A Resource Guide for Indigenous Youth](#)

Mentor Canada



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## About Mentor Canada

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. *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* is one of three studies conducted by Mentor Canada as part of the State of Mentoring Research Initiative. Between January and March 2020, we surveyed 2,838 young adults aged 18-30 about their mentoring experiences growing up and their current lives. Learn more about Mentor Canada and our research at [MentoringCanada.ca](https://mentoringcanada.ca).

In partnership with:



## Ever Active Schools and the Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program (IYMP)

Ever Active Schools (EAS) is a registered national charity designed to create and support healthy school communities. EAS engages and supports schools through a Comprehensive School Health framework, which addresses health and education goals to improve the social outcomes of children and youth in Alberta. Alongside IYMP communities and partners, EAS supports the work of IYMP. Learn more about EAS at [everactive.org](http://everactive.org).

IYMP is an after-school healthy living program. It is delivered by Indigenous high school students for elementary school children with the support of a Young Adult Health Leader (YAHL) chosen by the community. Co-developed with Indigenous youth, educators, and researchers, IYMP promotes well-being, resiliency, and overall positive mental health, including Mino-Bimaadiziwin/Mino-Pimâtisiwin ("living in a good way"). It is grounded theoretically in teachings of Indigenous scholars Drs. Brokenleg (Circle of Courage) and Kirkness (The Four R's). The core components of IYMP are: (1) healthy eating, (2) physical activity, and (3) relationship building and mentorship. Learn more about [IYMP](#).

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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. Learn more about SRDC at [srdc.org](http://srdc.org).



## Appendix A. Demographic characteristics of respondents who identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuk

### Region

Atlantic	7%
Quebec	27%
Ontario	30%
Prairies	25%
British Columbia	9%
Territories	1%

### Community type

Urban or Suburban	75%
Rural or Remote	25%

### Disability status

No disability	44%
Functional disability	56%
Diagnosed disability	33% <sup>22</sup>

### Occupation

Employed and/or studying	83%
Not employed or studying	17%

### Gender identity

Man	54%
Woman	37%
Two-Spirit or other gender identity	9%

### Transgender identity

Transgender	12%
Cisgender	88%

### Sexual orientation

Heterosexual	70%
Sexual minority	30%

### High school completion

Completed	86%
Not completed	12%

### Pursued further education or training after high school

Pursued further training or education	71%
Did not pursue further training or education	29%



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- 22 Only respondents who indicated that they had a functional disability (a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduced the amount or kind of activity they could perform) provided an answer to the question about receiving a professional disability diagnosis, the estimated 33% of Indigenous respondents with a diagnosed disability was calculated by dividing the number of respondents who answered indicated they had a diagnosed disability (n=89) by the total number of respondents who answered the question about a whether or not they had a functional disability (n=273).