

Quality Mentoring Digest

ISSUE 2, JANUARY 2024



The Quality Mentoring Digest offers a summary of the latest mentoring insights, resources, and strategies to help you advance your knowledge and skills. The digest focuses on insights from Mentor Canada's national Community of Practice.

Insights from our Community of Practice

Key Insight

Connecting before correcting

This insight arose during our second Professional Reading Group, where we read and discussed an academic article titled: "Pathways by which case managers' match support influences youth mentoring outcomes: Testing the systemic model of youth mentoring," which was written by Dr. Michael Karcher and colleagues. A key result of this study was the importance of adopting a developmental approach to relationships with others (i.e., emphasizing relationship development before pursuing goals). As such, a large part of our conversation focused on the importance of developing close and trusting relationships with others before initiating a focus on more goal-oriented activities (i.e., connecting before correcting). Members of the reading group also felt that this approach to relationships applied to many

Key Insight

Highlighting programs and practices for supporting youth with disabilities

Several insights were discussed and shared during our second Themed Showcase and Networking event, which focused on "Supporting youth with disabilities through mentorship." During this event, we were joined by four mentoring organizations that are currently supporting youth with disabilities in Canada through mentorship. During their presentations, each organization shared how they structure their programs to deliver high-quality mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities. This was a pertinent event as our research indicates there is a large **mentorship gap** for youth with disabilities in Canada. For example, according to our [Mapping the Mentoring Gap](#) research study, 40% of respondents with a diagnosed disability did not have a single mentor between the ages of 6-18, while 72% recalled a time when they wanted a mentor but did



"levels" of mentoring (i.e., relationships between mentors and mentees and relationships between staff and mentors) and contexts (i.e., not only with children and youth but also in more professional mentoring environments with adults). In part, the reading group felt as though this approach to relationships was at the very heart of mentoring and helped distinguish the field from tutoring and other purely skill-based interventions. It is important to note that we also recognized and discussed the critical importance of more goal-oriented mentoring programs that use structured activities as opportunities to develop relationships. Please contact Ben Dantzer at ben.dantzer@mentoringcanada.ca if you'd like to read a complete summary of our conversation during this Professional Reading Group.

not have access to one. This event helped us bring further awareness to this mentorship gap for youth with disabilities and celebrate four Canadian organizations that are working effectively to address this challenge. Click to watch the event and learn how each program is providing access to high-quality mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities in Canada.



[Click to watch the event and learn how each program is providing access to high-quality mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities in Canada.](#)

Key Insight

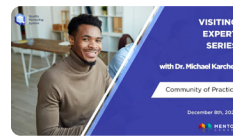
Highlighting effective practices for peer mentoring in the 21st century

Three insights arose during our second Visiting Expert Series with Dr. Michael Karcher, which focused on “Peer mentoring in the 21st century.” During this event, Dr. Karcher explored some of the evidence-informed practices for developing and maintaining effective peer mentoring programs and relationships. Dr. Karcher outlined three evidence-informed practices during his presentation:

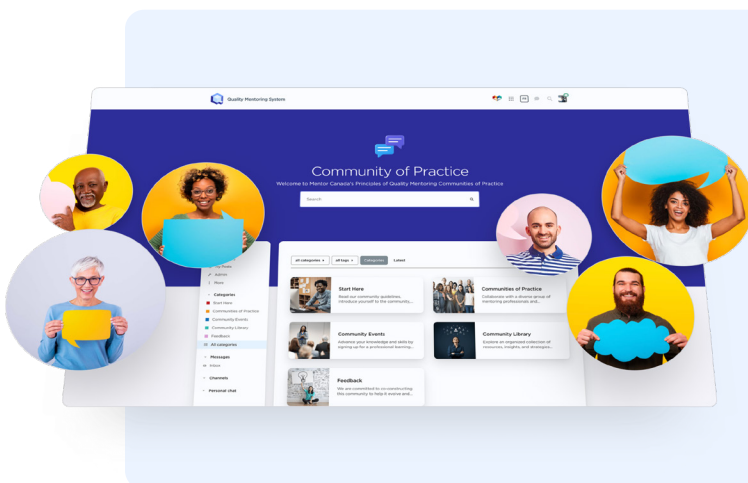
- **Affirming voice and choice:** Based on their research, Dr. Karcher introduced and discussed an effective “meet-and-greet” method for affirming mentor and mentee voice and choice during the matching process. Briefly, this is accomplished by inviting participants to meet at least 5 new people (either in-person or virtually) and find something unique about each of them. After mingling with other mentors or mentees, participants are invited to write down the names of 2-3 people they enjoyed meeting and want to get to know further. Participants do not rank-order their choices, but simply report who they might want to spend more time with. After conducting this meet-n-greet event, programs can utilize this information to inform their matching procedures in a way that affirms mentor and mentee voice and choice.
- **Repairing mentoring relationships:** Next, Dr. Karcher introduced the 3-2-1 Activity, which can be used to help mentors and mentees reflect on their time together and repair their relationships if there has been a rupture. In this activity, mentors and mentees are invited to share 3 positive things about their time together, 2 things that

didn’t work so well, and 1 thing they will do differently next time to improve their relationship. According to Dr. Karcher, this activity can help mentors and mentees reflect on their mentoring relationships and make adjustments, if necessary, to ensure the relationship is progressing well and helping to meeting the needs of both parties. Mentoring programs can also collect this information as part of their monitoring and support (and evaluation) practices.

- **Dropping the prop:** To conclude their presentation, Dr. Karcher discussed the importance of training peer mentors to “drop the prop.” Explaining this, Dr. Karcher discussed how part of the role of a peer mentor is to understand when to shift away from the program curriculum or planned activity (i.e., drop the prop), to focus on deepening their relationship with their mentee by responding to their unique needs in that moment. By training mentors to respond more flexibly to their mentee’s needs and interests, rather than following a strict adherence to the program curriculum or planned activities, Dr. Karcher discussed how peer mentoring programs can encourage the development of more effective and satisfying mentoring relationships.



[Click to watch the full recording of Dr. Karcher's Visiting Expert Series presentation.](#)



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