



Agenda At A Glance

Workshop Descriptions & Schedule

Nov 13 | 10:00AM:

Select your preferred workshop on the registration site

1. **Mentor Me Equal: Inclusive Mentorship for Systemic Change**

Heather Ancliffe, *Mentor Canada* and **Jennifer Petrela**, *Mentorat Quebec*

One of the most effective ways to level the playing field is mentoring. Research demonstrates that when implemented correctly, inclusive mentoring is one of the most effective ways to change the workplace ecosystem. That is why Mentor Canada and Mentorat Québec developed a new initiative supported by Women and Gender Equality Canada to address employment barriers faced by women and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Mentor Canada and Mentorat Québec are creating a bilingual toolkit and a training for mentors that employers, professional associations, unions, and other organizations can use to design and implement an inclusive mentorship program that addresses systemic barriers faced by women and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals across Canada, particularly in male-dominated sectors. Participants to this session will get a sneak peek into the toolkit and training for mentors which will be released in January 2026.

Heather Ancliffe's penchant for collaboration, proficiency in English and French, and passion for community have helped her foster strong relationships throughout the non-profit sector. Her Montreal upbringing and global travels have not only instilled in her a love of arts and culture but also a lifelong dedication to equality and human rights—amply nurtured through roles at the Foundation for Genocide Education, The Townshippers' Association, and now, Mentor Canada. At Mentor Canada, Heather works closely with organizations, community leaders, changemakers, and stakeholders to develop and improve mentoring initiatives to address employment barriers, and the mentoring gap facing youth and equity-deserving populations across Canada.

Jennifer Petrela is the executive director of Mentorat Québec and an expert in inclusive mentorship. A first-generation Canadian, she has studied and worked across four continents and speaks multiple languages. Jennifer holds degrees in history, environmental health, and population health. Her career spans roles with international labour unions, global development banks, and the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, where she led content and mentorship. She regularly advises organizations in Canada and Europe on mentorship strategy and training.

2. **Exploring the Career Development & Mentorship Needs of Young South Asian and Racialized Women**

Herleen Arora, *The South Asian Women's Collective* and **Natasha Sidi**, *Accelerate Her Future*

The South Asian Women's Collective (SAWC) is a social impact organization that is building a Canada wide network to support the social and economic mobility of South Asian women. Over the past few years, the collective has been leading research on the career development and employment needs of young South Asian women and designing career development/mentorship programming to fill critical gaps left by mainstream educational institutions and workplaces. In this session, SAWC will share insights from their research findings and showcase mentorship programming and resources they have been co-designing with the South Asian community.

Natasha Sidi is the Operations & UX Lead at Accelerate Her Future (AHF), where she helps build inclusive spaces for Indigenous, Black, and racialized women in business and STEM. With 15+ years of experience in education, design, and social impact, she brings a human-centered approach to UX and mentorship. As lead facilitator of AHF's Fellowship Circle, she has supported over 300 participants and earned a 97% satisfaction score. Natasha holds degrees in Education and Commerce from York University and a postgrad certificate in Interactive Media from Sheridan. Originally from Tanzania, she's even survived two elephant charges.



3. **Expanding Opportunities for Informal Mentorship with Young Adults through Workforce Development**

Dr. Grace Gowdy, *Education Northwest*

This hands-on workshop will focus on expanding opportunity for informal mentoring, specifically for young adults 18 to 30 engaged in workforce development. The workshop will start with basic information on the importance of informal mentoring. We will then work through a series of breakout groups to identify policies and infrastructure that support and hinder informal mentoring in these spaces, as well as practice and/or policy innovations to support these important relationships. Attendees will leave with next-step recommendations for applying this line of work to their own practice.

Dr. Grace Gowdy's research focuses on understanding and improving the lives of young people and their families through a lens of social justice and social capital. She focuses on relationships that young people have with informal mentors (e.g., employers, neighbors, coaches, teachers), who has access to those relationships, and how to improve both access to and quality of those relationships. Grace is most passionate about better understanding and improving the lives of young people from minoritized and otherwise marginalized backgrounds. She believes in the power of youth autonomy to identify and seek out mentorship that is best for them, and believes in the collective power of these relationships within minoritized and otherwise marginalized communities.

4. **Comment le mentorat devient-il possible avec des adolescents réfractaires à la relation ?**

Gabriel Brillant-Poirier

(French session – Live English interpretation provided) La relation significative entre un jeune mentoré et un mentor est primordiale au succès du mentorat. Comment un mentor construit-il cette relation significative lorsqu'il est jumelé avec un adolescent réticent à développer un lien ? Soutenu par l'expérience professionnelle des présentateurs, cet atelier invitera à réfléchir la question en trois temps : 1) Quelles sont les assises théoriques de la relation d'aide et du mentorat avec des adolescents réfractaires à la relation ? 2) Quels sont les défis rencontrés avec ces jeunes ? 3) Quelles sont les pistes que met en lumière notre expertise collective pour répondre à ces défis ?

The relationship between a youth mentee and a mentor is paramount to the success of mentoring. How does a mentor build a meaningful relationship when paired with an adolescent who is reluctant to develop a bond? Drawing on the professional experience of the presenters, this workshop will explore this topic in three parts: 1) What are the theoretical foundations of helping and mentoring reluctant adolescents? 2) What are the challenges encountered when mentoring youth? 3) How can our collective expertise help us meet these challenges?

Gabriel Brillant-Poirier est intervenant psychosocial et détient un baccalauréat en psychologie. Il se passionne pour la santé mentale, l'éducation et notre rapport à la nature. Depuis 2017, il travaille au sein d'organismes lasalliens – le Centre Notre-Dame de la Rouge et le Centre Lasallien de Montréal – dont la mission est de soutenir le développement global des jeunes les plus vulnérables. Ces expériences ont nourri chez lui une approche empathique, humanisante et non pathologisante de l'accompagnement. Il s'intéresse particulièrement aux conditions relationnelles qui permettent à des adolescents en rupture de lien ou réticents à l'aide de retrouver un sentiment de sécurité intérieure. Inspiré par une vision intégrative de la personne, Gabriel conçoit des espaces éducatifs et thérapeutiques favorisant l'émergence d'une relation plus stable, bienveillante et cohérente à soi-même – un processus de guérison intérieure qui ouvre également la voie à un lien plus vivant, respectueux et responsable envers les autres et le monde naturel.



5. **Paired For Success: Balancing Professional and Personal Interests in Mentoring**

Tasha Stansbury, Level Justice

Based on Level Justice's Blazing Trails Mentorship Program, this workshop is designed to help both mentors and mentorship program facilitators create strong mentorship pairings. The workshop will guide attendees through the process of striking a balance between personal and professional priorities in mentorship, and explore how these factors are relevant at the survey design, matching, and mentorship stages. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on their personal mentorship style, the priorities and goals of their mentorship programs, and how to use their personal strengths to foster confidence and lasting relationships with mentees.

Tasha Stansbury (she/they) is a queer, neurodivergent lawyer and educator based in Ottawa. Of mixed Armenian-Lebanese and European ancestry, Tasha brings an equity-focused lens to her work across family, immigration, housing, and criminal law. She holds degrees in Equity Studies (U of T), Law (JD, Windsor), and an LL.M. (Ottawa), and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in law. Tasha is a dedicated community volunteer and sits on the boards of the Canadian Association of Food Law and Policy and Ottawa Valley Roller Derby. In her free time, she enjoys roller derby, sci-fi novels, and adventures with her dog, Ciri.

6. **Online Mentoring for British Columbia's Rural Youth – Lessons Learned**

Dr. Juliet Oshiro, University of British Columbia

This workshop offers tips and strategies for bringing online mentoring to rural youth. We will cover all things rural, including how to overcome capacity and connectivity challenges, and how to address cultural differences between rural youth and urban mentors. We will also discuss online mentoring best practices, including strategies to address privacy, safety and security concerns when working with youth, as well as ways to promote mentor/mentee engagement, and build genuine connections. Attendees will discuss their experiences, challenges, and ideas for leveraging their strengths and finding solutions in these contexts.

Juliet Oshiro's background is in science outreach; during and after completing her PhD in biology she created and worked on various science education initiatives. Along the way, she participated in several mentoring programs as both a mentor and mentee, and these positive experiences led her to join the eMentoring team in 2019.

7. **Nurturing Our Spirit, Strengthening Our Future: A Holistic Journey for Indigenous Youth**

Dr. Teena Starlight, Ever Active Schools.

This immersive workshop, guided by an Indigenous theoretical framework grounded in holistic well-being and interconnectedness, is designed to empower Indigenous youth to embrace their cultural identity, foster resilience, and cultivate lifelong health. IYMP (Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program) offers a dynamic blend of cultural teachings, practical life skills, healthy eating and active living. A vital component of this workshop is promoting physical and mental health. We will engage in fun and accessible physical activities that connect us to the land and each other, highlighting the importance of movement for overall well-being.

Dr. Teena Starlight comes to us with an extensive list of experiences such as being an educator for Calgary Board of Education, Kainai Board of Education, Tsuut'ina Department of Education and Professor at Mount Royal University. She worked as a teacher, vice principal, and curriculum coordinator. Teena is an active participant in the culture and traditions of the Tsuut'ina and Kainai people having taught students and colleagues about Tsuut'ina and Kainai culture and traditions. Teena completed her Education Doctorate in Learning Sciences with Werklund University in 2024. Dr Teena Starlight is the Indigenous Youth Mentorship National Director.



Nov 13 | 11:30AM:

Select your preferred workshop on the registration site

1. **Chosen Connections: Examining the Benefits and Challenges of Youth-Initiated Mentoring**

Dr. Ben Dantzer, Mentor Canada

During this workshop, Dr. Ben Dantzer will discuss key findings from his recent dissertation on Youth-Initiated Mentoring (YIM). YIM is an innovative mentoring model that invites mentees to recruit their own mentors from their existing social networks. Dr. Dantzer will provide a concise overview of the existing research on YIM, highlight the key findings and lessons learned from his Canadian-based study, and discuss the important practical implications for researchers and mentoring professionals going forward. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of YIM, including the advantages, challenges, and considerations of implementing the mentoring model in their own contexts.

Ben Dantzer, as a Ph.D researcher, brings deep expertise in quality mentoring relationships and programming. He authored the literature review that helped shape Mentor Canada's Quality Mentoring System (QMS) and leads learning sessions that equip staff and volunteer mentors to build strong, effective relationships. Ben holds an Honours B.A. in Psychology from Western University and earned both his M.A. and Ph.D. in Human Development, Learning, and Culture from UBC, specializing in cross-age peer and youth-initiated mentoring. His ability to translate research into practice with respect and care is central to Mentor Canada's mission.

2. **Mentoring as a Catalyst for Youth Employment: Insights & Action**

Mentor Canada, the Social Research Demonstration Corporation and the Students Commission Canada.

How can mentoring be better integrated into the youth employment ecosystem to drive better outcomes for youth? In this interactive session, Mentor Canada, the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), and the Students Commission of Canada (SCC) will introduce Mentoring as a Catalyst for Youth Employment, a national initiative supported by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy. Participants will explore early insights generated through Sensemaking, a collaborative process used to surface trends, challenges, and opportunities across the youth employment ecosystem to generate actionable insights that can drive innovative mentorship solutions. This workshop is an opportunity to engage with emerging findings, share your perspective, and help shape the next phase of this cross-sector initiative with partners from community organizations, post-secondary institutions, government agencies, private sector, and more!



3. **Tailoring Your Evaluation Strategy to Best Demonstrate Mentor Program Impacts**

Dr. Heather Taussig, *University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work and University of Colorado Kempe Centre*

This workshop will focus on strategies for maximizing the impact of your mentoring program and evaluation techniques to help showcase outcomes. Using the evidence-based Fostering Healthy Futures mentoring program as a case study, this workshop will review strategies for developing: 1) realistic target outcomes given your program design, 2) measurement timeframes appropriate for those outcomes; 3) well-aligned evaluation design and measurement strategies; and 4) best practices based on research. This workshop is geared towards those interested in developing or refining their program evaluation strategies to best demonstrate program impacts.

Dr. Heather Taussig is a professor with joint appointments at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work and the University of Colorado's Kempe Center. Her research focuses on designing and testing prevention programming for young people with child welfare involvement. Dr. Taussig developed and directs the Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF) program, a mentoring and skills training program that was tested through three rigorous randomized controlled trials and is now listed on several evidence-based registries. Since 2002, in partnership with community-based agencies, FHF has served over 1,000 children, adolescents, and their families, and trained 450 undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students. Dr. Taussig's prevention and policy-relevant research has received over \$10 million in federal, state, and foundation funding. Dr. Taussig's honors include receiving the Outstanding Young Professional in the Field of Child Abuse and Neglect award from the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; an appointment to Colorado's Task Force on Foster Care by Governor Ritter; and receiving a 2021 Fulbright Scholar Award.

4. **Nurturing Potential: Supporting Black Youth with Refugee Backgrounds to Succeed**

Stacey Wilson-Forsberg, *Wilfrid Laurier University*.

This proposed workshop will deliver promising practices in developing training/workshops to mentor and empower communities of Black (primarily African and Muslim) youth with overlapping deprivations of Anti-Blackness and Islamophobia. The workshop will assist participants to design and create opportunities for the youth to interact with community organizations, universities, teachers and school administrators, police services, and other community supports over extended periods of time. Through these interventions we endeavor to help these vulnerable youth to become more confident in their identities, capabilities, sense of belonging and their unique contributions to Canadian society.

Stacey Wilson-Forsberg is a Professor in the Human Rights Program at Wilfrid Laurier University. She is also the current program chair of Human Rights and coordinator of graduate programming at the Balsillie School for International Affairs and associate director of the Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa. Outside of university, she is an active board member of Future for Africa Canada. Stacey has been conducting community-engaged research with refugee youth since 2008. Her most recent projects include peer mentoring for pathways to postsecondary education and developing culturally appropriate peer-led conflict resolution models for youth with refugee backgrounds from the Horn of Africa. She also works with local community-based organizations to empower African mothers with refugee backgrounds to engage with their children's schools.



5. **Indigenous Mentorship in Practice: Insights and Applications**

Elaine Atay, Ph.D. *Candidate, University of Calgary* and **Dr. Adam Murry, University of Calgary**

This session presents insights and reflections on mentoring Indigenous peoples. We will discuss an Indigenous mentorship model that has undergone initial empirical examination and provide attendees the opportunity to reflect and engage with the model. Additional points for engaging in culturally responsive mentorship practices will be outlined for further consideration. We invite both Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors and practitioners to participate in this session.

Elaine J. Atay is a Ph.D. Candidate in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and a sessional instructor at the University of Calgary. Supported by Killam Trusts, UCalgary's Eyes High Strategy, and SSHRC, her research focuses on Indigenous mentorship, organizational training, leadership, and DEI. Her dissertation, supervised by Dr. Adam Murry, explores the implementation of Indigenous mentorship in organizational settings. Atay is active on UCalgary's Psychology DEI Committee and consults on DEI training and evaluation. Dr. Adam T. Murry is an Associate Professor in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at UCalgary and leads the Indigenous Organizations and Communities Research Lab. He co-leads the IPHCPR and NEIHR networks and researches Indigenous mentorship, employment, education, mental health, and sustainability. Dr. Murry has published widely and consults across academic, non-profit, and Tribal sectors.

Adam Murry is an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary, leading the Indigenous Organizations and Communities Development Research Lab. His research focuses on Indigenous employment, mentorship, and education, including the mentoring of FNMI scholars in health research.

6. **Needs Based Mentoring in Schools**

Dr. Alison Cloth, University of British Columbia.

An overview of Needs Based Mentoring (NBM), the elements of which can be embedded into any mentoring practice and, review and practice basic skills from Motivational Interviewing. NBM contains 5 core elements, each with components that assist school (and community) mentors in their approach to youth development. NBM elements are: 1) Engagement, developing a trusting, attuned relationship; 2) Assessment, assessing aspects of the relationship and collaboration towards goals; 3) Structure, identifying and prioritizing skill development and goals; 4) Teaching, providing instruction, modeling and scaffolding skill development; and 5) Advocacy, assisting with access to needed resources. NBM seeks to empower school professionals to construct a healthier, supportive school environments for vulnerable youth.

Ali Cloth, PhD is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (masters in Risk & Prevention with Adolescents) and the University of Texas at Austin (doctorate in Educational Psychology). Ali then did a two year postdoctoral fellowship at the Golisano Children's Hospital in Rochester, New York, and received interdisciplinary training in Leadership Education in Adolescent Health. Ali's research is focused on school engagement; training and coaching school counsellors to use Motivational Interviewing, and facilitating school adult-youth mentoring utilizing the one-on-one mentoring approach she developed called Needs Based Mentoring (NBM). She is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers.



7. **From Roadblocks to Resiliency: How Strength-Based Mentorship Reframes Relationships, Communities and Self-Concept**

Jill Mallett, *Calgary Youth Justice Society*

Mentorship isn't about fixing a person—it's about creating space for self-awareness and strengthening what is already working for a mentee. In *From Roadblocks to Resiliency*, explore practical, evidence-based strategies that shift from traditional, correctional focus to one that builds connection, resilience, and self-concept. Experience the tools we give our program participants, ones centered on strengths, values, and personal growth. Discover a model that fuels long term impact and the ripple effect this approach has on individuals, organizations, and communities. Come ready to reflect, connect, and reimagine what mentorship can look like.

Jill Mallett is a passionate educator and program designer with over a decade of experience supporting youth facing significant barriers. Specializing in mentorship and strengths-based practice, Jill creates initiatives that build self-awareness, resilience, and purpose. Her mentor training focuses on connection, reflection, and empowerment—helping both mentors and mentees discover their strengths and thrive within their communities. Amanda Lottermoser is the Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Lead at Calgary Youth Justice Society, shaping how mentors are trained and supported. With experience in schools, group homes, and as a CYJS Program Coordinator, Amanda brings deep insight into the challenges youth face. She's driven by the power of strengths-based mentorship to shift narratives and foster connection—for youth and mentors alike.

Nov 13 | 2:00PM:

Select your preferred workshop on the registration site

1. **Unlocking Doors: Mentoring to Strengthen Skills and Support Career Pathways for Racialized Young Adults**

Dr. Veronique Church-Duplesis, *Mentor Canada* and **Dr. Jennifer Rae**, *the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation*.

This workshop will take an in-depth look at the key findings from a national applied research study with over 1,500 racialized youth conducted by SRDC and Mentor Canada in the fall of 2024. The study examined how natural and program mentors enhance skills and foster career development among racialized young adults. The workshop will explore three areas: 1) how BIPOC young people define success, their strengths and assets, and their educational and professional experiences; 2) what constitutes meaningful and impactful mentoring in early adulthood; and 3) how mentors help BIPOC young people navigate systems and institutions that are not always welcoming. The session will conclude with recommendations for mentoring programs, employers, and education providers to help them design impactful mentoring opportunities for BIPOC youth.

Véronique Church-Duplesis leads research that sheds light on the realities, barriers, and benefits of mentoring in Canada, helping bridge the gap between research and practice. She co-founded the Canadian Centre for Mentoring Research to connect academics and practitioners. With a background in gender norms, violence prevention, and teen relationships, she brings a unique lens to her work on mentoring as a powerful tool for positive connection. Véronique holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto and an M.A. from the Université de Montréal.



2. **Understanding the Significance of Staff in Successful Mentoring Relationships**

Dr. Tom Keller, *Portland State University* and **Renée Spencer**, *Boston University*

Mentoring program staff, although vital to the success of mentoring relationships they create and support, rarely receive sufficient attention. After sharing a systemic model highlighting multiple ways staff may influence program participants, this workshop presents findings from several studies that focus on how staff contribute to mentoring relationship outcomes. Beyond demonstrating the importance of staff, this research prompts consideration of program practices and organizational infrastructure that can support staff. The workshop will include discussion of implications for elevating the role of staff in mentoring research and practice.

Thomas E. Keller, PhD, is the Duncan and Cindy Campbell Professor for Children, Youth, and Families in the School of Social Work at Portland State University and Director of the PhD Program in Social Work and Social Research. He also is the Director of the Summer Institute on Youth Mentoring. His research interests include the development and influence of youth mentoring relationships, social networks in mentoring interventions, evaluation of program innovations and enhancements, and the influence of program staff and infrastructure.

Renée Spencer, EdD, LICSW is Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the Boston University School of Social Work. Her work focuses on distinguishing factors that facilitate the growth and development of mentoring relationships and those that contribute to them going awry. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare and serves on the National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board.

3. **Strength In Numbers: How an Athlete Mentorship Program is Influencing the Long-Term Behavior Changes Needed to Stop Violence, Hate, Social Injustice, and Discrimination Before it Starts**

Colleen Pirie, *Be the Voice*

Be the VOICE is one of the most successful Athlete Mentorship programs engaging men and boys across the country, with 121 athlete ambassadors, representing 14 unique sports (including the NHL, CFL, NLL, NBA G League, WHL & various USports) through schools and community organizations. The session will: 1) Explore how the VOICE champions change, working to advance gender equity and equality, promote healthy relationship competencies, and the intersections of racism, heterosexism, oppression, power, and privilege. 2) Engage participants in an abbreviated VOICE session so they can experience our work for themselves, gain knowledge to support implementing similar programming, and provide a roadmap of best practices. 3) Explore the current state of social issues, and how athletes and sporting organizations can amplify and influence change.

Colleen Pirie, MPH, is a dynamic speaker and public health leader in the movement working to end gender-based violence. As Founder and CEO of Be the VOICE, she harnesses the cultural power of sport to shift social norms and build safer communities. A former athlete and expert in engaging men and boys in prevention, Colleen has shaped national policy and practice across sport, education, and public health. Her high-impact presentations—delivered across Canada and on global stages including the UN—highlight her clear message: sport is more than a game – it's a powerful platform for cultural transformation.



4. **Neurodivergent Youth : What Neuro-affirming Mentorship Looks Like**

Michelle Dittmer, *Canadian Gap Year Society*

With greater awareness comes an opportunity to serve our youth better. The world has traditionally been built to accommodate neurotypical brains which has led neurodivergent folks to burnout, feeling like they don't belong and struggling to fit into a mold. Join us to deepen your understanding of autism, ADHD, AuDHD, bipolar, anxiety, dyslexia, Tourette's, and many others, and the role that mentors can play in supporting these neurotypes. We will look at characteristics of neurodivergent mentees, best practices for supporting them and the importance of representation and supporting neurodivergent mentors.

Michelle is first and foremost an educator and youth advocate. She believes youth hold a super power in innovative thinking, provide incredible value to society and it is our collective responsibility to listen, make space and empower youth voice in all areas. Michelle has taught grades 4 through college, developed international service-learning programs, nurtured educational partnerships with school boards from coast to coast, and developed youth policy. She has a finger on the pulse of the needs of young people, through her work as a youth coach and founder and ED of the non-profit Canadian Gap Year Association. Through thousands of conversations, she knows firsthand the realities of growing up in 2025 and the impact on mental health, financial situations, career pathways and evolving skill sets.

5. **LIER – Leaders Initiés En Résilience : Une Trousse d'Accompagnement pour éveiller la résilience et le leadership des jeunes au Québec**

Dr. Lillia Hitache, *L'escale Youth Centre*

(French session- Live English interpretation provided) La Trousse LIER (Leaders Initiés En Résilience) est un outil innovant d'accompagnement psychosocial conçu pour soutenir les jeunes et les OBNL jeunesse, notamment ceux issus de communautés racisées ou marginalisées. L'atelier propose une expérience interactive où les participants découvriront des outils concrets visant à stimuler la résilience, la confiance et le leadership des jeunes. À travers des mises en situation, des échanges et des méthodes d'animation, les participants repartiront avec des stratégies mobilisables dans leurs milieux indépendants.

The LIER Toolkit (Leaders Initiés En Résilience) is an innovative psychosocial coaching tool designed to support young people and youth-serving non-profit organizations, particularly those from racialized or marginalized communities. The workshop offers an interactive experience where participants will discover concrete tools designed to boost young people's resilience, confidence, and leadership. Through role-playing, discussion, and facilitated activities, participants will come away with strategies that can be mobilized in their own settings.

Dr. Lillia Hitache est chercheure, enseignante et entrepreneure sociale. Docteure en économie managériale, elle s'investit depuis plus de 15 ans dans le développement des jeunes, l'entrepreneuriat féminin et le travail communautaire. Chercheuse scientifique depuis 2011, elle a publié des articles sur le rôle des institutions dans le développement de l'entrepreneuriat féminin, notamment chez les jeunes femmes potentiellement entrepreneures (voir publications). Enseignante universitaire depuis 2009, elle a pris en charge plus de 15 modules, dirigé de nombreux travaux de recherche et encadré des étudiants aux cycles supérieurs. Depuis 2023, elle est aussi formatrice professionnelle en lancement d'entreprise à l'EMICA, où elle accompagne des groupes d'adultes, dont plusieurs nouveaux arrivants, dans leur parcours entrepreneurial – comme Myriam Kamako, fondatrice de Vertueuse Inc.. Active dans le milieu communautaire québécois depuis 2020, elle collabore avec plusieurs OBNL, dont le Centre des jeunes l'Escale, le Centre Lasallien, Héberjeune, Bon Courage, ECAC et la Table de quartier de Parc-Extension. Elle coordonne actuellement le projet LIER – Leaders Initiés En Résilience – à Montréal-Nord, un programme de mentorat jeunesse intégrant des dimensions psychosociales, éducatives et communautaires. Son parcours international l'a menée au Maroc, en France (CNAM Paris), en Turquie et au Canada, où elle contribue activement à l'épanouissement des jeunes et des communautés.



6. **The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action**

Cyril Cromwell, *YouthREX (Youth Research & Evaluation Exchange)*

This workshop presents The Kit for Centering Black Youth Wellbeing, an online hub for anti-Black racism learning, action and community engagement, developed by Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) for practitioners supporting youth. The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action centres critical self-reflexivity to connect understandings of anti-Black racism to anti-Black racism action. Each card features a scenario on one side and four reflection prompts on the other. We will use the Call-In-Cards to foster dialogue and share strategies to support participants to commit to action at the individual, program and community levels.

Cyril Cromwell (he/him) is the Director of Research & Evaluation at Youth Research & Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX). He is a social justice advocate and community educator. At YouthREX, Cyril supports professional development and learning opportunities for Ontario youth workers, as well as evaluation supports and community-engaged research. As a proponent of Social Justice, Cyril has led professional development and media art projects across the Greater Toronto Area and abroad for over a decade in community centres, schools, open custody detention centres, and in his photography studio. As a community educator, Cyril is interested in amplifying the voices of young people and youth workers in research and policy to reduce the gap that often exists between well-meaning theory and critical practice.

7. **The Future of Mentoring: Sustainable Structures & AI Integration**

Raeana Samuel, *Technovation*

Join us to explore a dynamic "layered approach" to volunteering that builds program sustainability while empowering your team. Dive into Technovation's application of this approach and it's amplified impact globally. Discover how AI can streamline management & admin work allowing mentors to focus on building youth's social capital and critical thinking, and get hands-on with activities to build a mentor schedule using GenAI & guide youth's to safe and conscious use of AI. This session is packed with practical strategies to strengthen your volunteer initiatives & guide youth in navigating the exciting world of AI safely and effectively!

Raeana Samuel, as the Volunteer Program Manager at Technovation, works on the strategy behind building the digital community where volunteers engage with each other as they support Technovation Girls. Raeana received her B.Sc specializing in Biology and Chemistry from the University of Waterloo. Prior to joining Technovation, she worked in community outreach and gender equity at the University of Waterloo, where she was the Outreach Coordinator for the Women in Computer Science Committee and Chapter Ambassador for the Technovation Girls Waterloo chapter. She moved to focus more on workforce development at Shopify as a Social Impact Manager connecting employees to meaningful opportunities to engage with youth exploring careers in technology and entrepreneurship. When she isn't building community, you can find Raeana trying her hand at a new crochet project, volunteering with the local food bank or adding to her growing recipe book collection.



Nov 14 | 9:30AM:

Select your preferred workshop on the registration site

1. **What is Quality Mentoring? Exploring Canadian and International Approaches**
Mentor Canada

This workshop examines Canadian and international approaches to quality mentoring. Quality mentoring programs are critical for protecting participant safety, bolstering impact, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The workshop will define quality mentoring, distinguish between best-practices and principles, and explore how to develop and sustain high-quality mentoring programs by using Mentor Canada's innovative Quality Mentoring System (QMS). This workshop will also introduce a groundbreaking set of international principles to inform and lead the global conversation on quality mentoring, developed by an international consortium of mentoring organizations. Through reflection and discussion, participants will gain ideas and strategies for designing high-quality mentoring programs or improving the quality of their existing mentoring initiatives.

2. **2.6-years of Inclusive Mentorship: The Discoveries Mentorat Quebec's**
Mentorship Accelerator

Jennifer Petrela, Mentorat Quebec

In 2019, Mentorat Québec launched the Mentorship Accelerator, a program to develop tools and create programs and tools in inclusive mentorship. Six years later, we inventory the results: which interventions users found most useful, what tools were left behind, what outcomes surprised us, and what is left to be done.

Jennifer Petrela is the executive director of Mentorat Québec and an expert in inclusive mentorship. A first-generation Canadian, she has studied and worked across four continents and speaks multiple languages. Jennifer holds degrees in history, environmental health, and population health. Her career spans roles with international labour unions, global development banks, and the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, where she led content and mentorship. She regularly advises organizations in Canada and Europe on mentorship strategy and training.



3. **Share Your Time, Change a Life: EMBER's Innovative Mentoring Program for NEET Youth**

Lynne Tapper, *EMBERS Canada*

In 2025, EMBERS designed an innovative new program to provide youth furthest from employment, education, and training with wrap-around supports that include a careful intake procedure, a personal training plan, custom material supports and mentoring from volunteers in the Vancouver area. This workshop will present early results for the mentoring component of the program and will solicit workshop participants for their feedback and ideas for next steps.

Lynne Tapper is the director of training and partnerships development at EMBERS, an award-winning social enterprise that creates employment opportunities by providing people with training, jobs, and support. Responsible for all aspects of workforce development and youth programming, Lynne develops business and community partnerships, ensuring equality, diversity, inclusion and well-being in early careers development, apprenticeships and on-the-job learning. Prior to joining EMBERS, Lynne was a scriptwriter and managing director of a British organization where she delivered specialized training in emotional intelligence, communications, equality and diversity, performance, change management and personal development. Lynne holds a master's of education in adult learning and global change from the University of British Columbia.

4. **Exploring Retrospective Connectedness and Webs of Support with Mentors: Training Tools and Mentoring Activities**

Dr. Michael Karcher, *University of Texas at San Antonio and*

Dr. Jonathan Zaff, *Northeastern University*

This workshop introduces two specific assessment tools, the Web of Support and the Connectedness Profile interview, designed for mentors to use with their mentees. These activities aim to build stronger mentor-mentee relationships by fostering empathy and revealing shared experiences. They provide mentors with valuable insights into a mentee's support systems, engagement patterns, and future aspirations. The session will demonstrate practical applications of these tools, illustrating an online format and a multi-meeting approach, ultimately equipping mentors to better understand and guide the youth they serve. Participants will also have the opportunity to experience the Connectedness Profile interview retrospectively themselves.

Michael J. Karcher, Ed.D., Ph.D., is a Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He earned doctorates in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University (1997) and in Counseling Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin (1999). His research focuses on school-based and cross-age peer mentoring, adolescent connectedness, and pair counseling. He authored the Cross-age Mentoring Program (CAMP) and conducted one of the first large-scale school-based mentoring studies—SMILE (2003–2006), funded by the William T. Grant Foundation—which examined adult–youth mentoring effects on Latino youth. With David L. DuBois, he co-edited the Handbook of Youth Mentoring (2005, 2013), and with Michael Nakkula, Play, Talk, Learn: Promising Practices in Youth Mentoring (2010). He has served on editorial boards for five national journals and on advisory boards for BBBSA, MENTOR, the Christian Association of Youth Mentoring, Boy with a Ball, and Mentors, Inc.

Jonathan Zaff, PhD, is a professor of Applied Psychology at Northeastern University and a developmental psychologist whose research centers on creating conditions that help all youth thrive, particularly those from historically oppressed backgrounds. His work—grounded in positive youth development—has been widely published, presented, and used by youth-serving organizations. His projects include research on high school non-completers, civic engagement, and how social supports (a "web of support") influence youth outcomes. Before Northeastern, he founded the CERES Institute at Boston University and served as founding executive director of the Center for Promise. He also began his career at Child Trends and later launched a youth policy organization.



5. **Green Jobs, Green Experts, Green Futures: Empowering Youth Through Workplace Exploration**

Ainslee MacMillan, *The Gaia Project*

In 2022, The Gaia Project (TGP) launched the Green Experts program to connect students with employers in the green sector through immersive micro-internships and classroom engagements. This session will showcase the program's impact, sharing insights on effective community and industry engagement in mentorship. With over 50 employers, 120 Green Experts, and 5,000+ student participants, we'll explore how mentoring fosters youth career readiness and how employers can play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce.

Ainslee MacMillan is an environmental educator and Program Manager at The Gaia Project in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Since 2019, she has worked to empower students through accessible, action-oriented climate education. With a BSc in Environment and Natural Resources from the University of New Brunswick, Ainslee combines academic insight with a passion for youth engagement, helping students discover their role in building a resilient, sustainable future.

6. **From Awareness to Connection: Growing Attunement Skills in Youth Mentoring Through Training Partnerships**

Dr. Julia Pryce, *Loyola University*

This workshop will focus on results from the pilot dissemination of an asynchronous Mentoring FAN training focused on developing attunement skills among mentors and staff. After defining attunement and explaining its theoretical and empirical background, we will share sample content of the asynchronous training, as well as data on those who have completed the training and its impact on their practice. For the second part, we will work with attendees to identify ways to support attunement in their programs. Discussion will also explore how to support agencies in training needs to develop core skills among mentors and staff.

Julia Pryce is a Professor of Social Work and Director of Mission Integration at Loyola University Chicago. Her research focuses on how non-parental adults—like mentors and caseworkers—support youth through mentoring and child welfare. She studies micro-skills such as attunement, recently developing the Mentor Attunement Scale (Pryce & Deane, 2024). Informed by her clinical work, her qualitative research explores the strengths of supportive adults and the roles of empathy, culture, and income in youth relationships. Her work also includes school-based mentoring, global innovations, and social justice in social work education.



7. **Mentoring Relationship Quality a Canadian Context**

Dr. Christina Rinaldi, *University of Alberta*

Dr. Christina Rinaldi will share findings from a recent Canadian study on program practices related to mentoring relationship quality (MRQ). The key to success in mentoring matches is the quality of relationships, yet the ways in which we assess “quality” has not been clearly documented, due to a lack of unified approaches to fostering mentorship relationship quality. The study conceptualized MRQ as composed of action oriented processes that are more goal oriented, and relational characteristics which are underlying emotional traits associated with a mentoring relationship. Findings will help to build the capacity of school and community mentoring service providers to assess and improve the relationship quality of their matches.

Christina Rinaldi, Ph.D., is a Professor in the College of Social Sciences & Humanities at the University of Alberta and the Scientific Director for the Canadian Center for Mentoring Research. Dr. Rinaldi’s research focuses on the role of key relationships (parents, mentors, peers, teachers) in supporting the healthy development and the mental health and wellbeing of children and youth. Dr. Rinaldi is interested in how parents support successful mentoring experiences, and how mentoring is an important way to foster positive outcomes for youth via high quality relationships with caring adults. A common thread across all of her research has been the drive to enhance youth development and wellbeing through social connection.

Nov 14 | 10:50AM:

Select your preferred workshop on the registration site

1. **Reframing Disability: Challenging Biases and Elevating Mentorship to Build Inclusive Workplaces**

Ben Dantzer, *Mentor Canada* and **Amy Grant**, *Canadian Association for Supported Employment: MentorAbility*

This session examines the historical treatment of people with disabilities and how persistent stereotypes and media representations continue to shape societal and employer attitudes. These biases often lead to misconceptions about ability, contributing to exclusion from mentorship, career exploration, and employment opportunities. Through reflection and discussion, participants will gain strategies to challenge ableism and foster more inclusive mentoring and workplace practices. The session will also introduce two online trainings—developed by Mentor Canada and CASE—as tools to support inclusive career mentoring for youth with disabilities. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to advance accessibility and equity through mentoring.

Ben Dantzer, as a Ph.D. researcher, brings deep expertise in quality mentoring relationships and programming. He authored the literature review that helped shape Mentor Canada’s Quality Mentoring System (QMS) and leads learning sessions that equip staff and volunteer mentors to build strong, effective relationships. Ben holds an Honours B.A. in Psychology from Western University and earned both his M.A. and Ph.D. in Human Development, Learning, and Culture from UBC, specializing in cross-age peer and youth-initiated mentoring. His ability to translate research into practice with respect and care is central to Mentor Canada’s mission.

Amy Grant (she/her) is originally from Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) and now lives in Kjiptuk (Halifax). As the MentorAbility Coordinator for Nova Scotia, she connects professionals with job seekers with disabilities through inclusive mentorship. With a background in communications, accessibility consulting, curriculum design, and facilitation, Amy recently completed a Master of Public Relations at Mount Saint Vincent University, where she focused on accessibility in postsecondary education. A person with disabilities herself, her lived experience informs her work and advocacy. She speaks regularly on disability inclusion and believes in the power of storytelling to drive systemic change.



2. **The Power of Partnership: Mapping, Creating and Mobilizing Mentoring Networks**

Sarah Chan and Pam Mellon, *The Alberta Mentoring Partnership.*

Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP) resources mentoring through its 266 partners across the province. With practical examples from their own work, AMP will highlight processes taken for successful collaborations and help participants consider how they might expand and enhance their own networks to greater effect. Participants will be guided through mapping their networks for effective engagement. AMP's view of successful collaboration includes respectful teamwork to achieve collective goals; Leveraging the abilities and capacity of partners to bring projects to life; Advocating for each other; Sharing opportunities to strengthen mentoring.

Sarah Chan, M.A. Sarah Chan is a musician, teacher, writer, publisher, small business owner, and social advocate. She is the Engagement & Operations Lead at Alberta Mentoring Partnership. Sarah Co-Chaired United Way's campaign cabinet from 2016–2018. As a social advocate with a deep understanding of Edmonton's charitable sector, she currently sits as a director on the Telus Community Giving Board of Northern Alberta. In 2015 Sarah was named a Top 40 Under 40 by Edify Magazine. She is the recipient of a philanthropy award in Community Enrichment from the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2020 and, received another award for her contributions to philanthropy through education, in 2024.

Pamela Mellon MSc is the Mentoring in Schools Specialist at Alberta Mentoring Partnership. Prior to working with AMP, Pamela worked with the Community-University Partnership (CUP) at the University of Alberta on their All in for Youth project that provides wraparound support for 8 schools in Edmonton. Pamela completed her Master of Science in Health Promotion and Socio-behavioural Sciences at the University of Alberta, School of Public Health in 2023, where she wrote her thesis on students, parents and teachers perspectives on the school's role in promoting sleep. Prior to moving to Edmonton for her Master's, Pamela worked with Alberta Health Services to support Fort McMurray schools and community following the 2016 wildfire.

3. **I "Wish [I] Knew Why": The Voice of Youth in Match Endings**

Dr. Renée Spencer, Boston University and Dr. Tom Keller, Portland State University.

Much greater attention is paid to making new matches than to closing relationships that have run their course or are not working out. But research and practice experience has shown that how matches end matters. In this workshop we will present findings from a longitudinal study of community-based mentoring relationship development and duration about how matches end and how the program participants experienced these endings, with a particular emphasis on youth's experiences, and the implications for program practices

Renée Spencer, EdD, LICSW is Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the Boston University School of Social Work. Her work focuses on distinguishing factors that facilitate the growth and development of mentoring relationships and those that contribute to them going awry. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare and serves on the National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board.

Thomas E. Keller, PhD, is the Duncan and Cindy Campbell Professor for Children, Youth, and Families in the School of Social Work at Portland State University and the Director of the Summer Institute on Youth Mentoring and the PSU Center for Internship, Mentoring & Research. His research interests include the development and influence of youth mentoring relationships, social networks in mentoring interventions, evaluation of program innovations and enhancements, the influence of program staff and infrastructure.



4. **Indigenous Innovation in Mentorship: The Role of Student Advisory Groups in Advancing Equity and Engagement**

Colby Delorme (Cistêmâw Napio), ICD.D, Influence Mentoring Society

Explore how Influence Mentoring Society's Indigenous-informed Student Advisory Group (SAG) model brings innovation and excellence to mentorship. This engaging session will highlight the SAG's contributions to improving recruitment, enhancing program quality, and elevating Indigenous youth voices. Through stories, dialogue, and participatory activities, attendees will understand how SAGs benefit organizations, advisers, and youth alike. This workshop blends experiential learning and Indigenous approaches to mentorship, offering attendees tools to incorporate youth-led structures in their own programs.

Colby Delorme is the Chairperson and Co-Founder of Influence Mentoring Society and President of Imagination Group Inc.. A proud Métis entrepreneur and advocate for Indigenous self-determination, Colby brings decades of leadership experience in Indigenous governance, education, and entrepreneurship. He leads national projects grounded in reconciliation and systems change. Colby has spoken at numerous summits on Indigenous mentorship, is the 2022 recipient of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, and is the 2025 Indspire Award Recipient – Business and Commerce. Co-presenters: Vanessa Brown, Director of Operations and Mentorship at IMS, leads SAG facilitation and program coordination. Student Advisor(s) from the IMS SAG will join to share first-hand insights and guide interactive dialogue with participants.

5. **Scaling Success: Culturally Responsive Mentorship for Black and Immigrant Youth in Canada**

Dr. Cecilia Bukutu, Concordia University of Edmonton

This interactive session explores how the Mentorship and Resilience Project (MRP) uses bond and bridge mentorship frameworks to support resilience, social capital, and success among Black and immigrant youth. Participants will learn to adapt culturally responsive strategies to strengthen programs in schools, nonprofits, and communities. The session will focus on how mentorship can support future readiness by building practical life skills, career awareness, and post-secondary pathway planning. Attendees will gain tools for supporting diverse underserved youth through skill development, well-being, and confident transitions into adulthood.

Dr. Cecilia Bukutu is a Professor of Public Health at Concordia University of Edmonton and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. An epidemiologist, her work centers on environmental public health and the social determinants of health, with a focus on children and youth. Committed to health equity, she leads community-engaged research that amplifies youth voices in program and policy development. Dr. Bukutu has led several tri-agency and government-funded initiatives, including the Speak Science Simply Program and the MRP. Her award-winning work addresses systemic barriers and promotes youth empowerment, resilience, and skill-building.



6. **Trauma-Informed Mentorship: Tools to Facilitate Trauma Healing in Youth**

Olga Korcheva, *Youth Airdrie*

This interactive session offers an introduction to trauma for mentors with little or no prior exposure. Participants will gain foundational knowledge of what trauma is, how it manifests in children and youth, and what signs to look for. Through guided reflection and interactive discussion, mentors will learn how to recognize where a youth may be in their healing journey and how to respond with compassionate, trauma-informed attunement. The session empowers mentors to foster safe, supportive relationships that can facilitate healing.

Olga Korcheva is a Ukrainian immigrant who moved to Canada 25 years ago. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and a Master's degree in History. Olga has extensive volunteer experience supporting newcomers to Canada, including individuals from war-torn regions. Her trauma-informed approach is rooted in both lived experience and her study of various healing modalities, including Somatic Experiencing and Internal Family Systems (IFS). Olga brings a grounded, compassionate perspective to mentorship, creating emotionally safe environments for youth to feel seen, supported, and empowered.

7. **Rise Together: Learning, Leading, Lifting: Mentorship as a Tool**

Cassandra Morcilla, *Kabangka Canada*

This interactive, youth-led workshop uplifts the voices, wisdom, and experiences of diverse, underrepresented youth. Together, we'll explore mentorship as a tool for building leadership, community, and meaningful relationships rooted in care, trust, and mutual growth. Guided by Kabangka's culturally responsive approach, participants will reflect on their strengths, share stories, and learn grassroots strategies to build mentorship networks that honour identity and lived experience—while exploring what it means to be the mentor they once needed, and how stepping into that role can create lasting impact for themselves and the next generation.

Cassandra Morcilla is a Law Licensing Candidate in Ontario and the incoming Chair of Mentorship at Kabangka Canada, a grassroots organization supporting Filipino youth and intergenerational leadership. Grounded in equity and social justice, she draws on her experience as a first-generation professional to develop culturally responsive, community-centered mentorship frameworks. Cassandra is passionate about the intersection of law and community and uses her legal training to advocate for systemic change. She's excited to join this conference and connect with others committed to inclusive mentorship and empowered youth leadership.