

# Peer Mentoring Guide

for family support practitioners



# PEER MENTORING GUIDE FOR FAMILY SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS

Produced for the project Family Resource Centres: Community Settings that Support Social Inclusion

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Also available: *Peer Mentoring Guide for family support volunteers*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>How to Plan Peer Mentoring</b>	10
Identify the goals of Peer Mentoring and determine the fit with the organization’s mandate	11
Define the roles of the key players	14
Define the relationships between key players	15
<b>How to Implement Peer Mentoring</b>	16
Promote Peer Mentoring	17
Recruit Peer Mentors	19
Build the mentoring relationship	21
Manage challenges in the mentoring relationship	26
<b>How to Evaluate Peer Mentoring</b>	30
Evaluation tools	31
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: Guiding Principles of Family Support	32
Appendix 2: Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors	33
Appendix 3: Role of the Peer Mentor	34
Appendix 4: Sample Program Outline for Staff of the Organization and for Community Partners	35
Appendix 5: Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure	36
Appendix 6: Sample Peer Mentoring Poster	37
Appendix 7: Sample Press Release	38
Appendix 8: Sample Participation Agreement between Peer Mentors and Organizations	39
Appendix 9: Sample Form for Setting Personal Goals	40
Appendix 10: Sample Peer Mentoring Check-in Form	41
Appendix 11: Sample Planned Schedule	42
Appendix 12: Certificate of Recognition	44
Appendix 13: Mentoring Best Practices for the Coach	45
Appendix 14: Sample Peer Mentor Survey	46
Appendix 15: Sample Mentoring Coach Survey	47

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Neither this project nor this guide would exist without the hard work of the staff and volunteers of the 20 project sites. Their learnings and insights are woven through the body of this guide.

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### Manitoba

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## INTRODUCTION

The **Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada)** is a bilingual, not-for-profit national association of family resource agencies located in all provinces and territories. Since its founding in 1975, FRP Canada has helped build a cohesive family support sector with a common identity, principles and purpose. Each year, more than 500 community-based organizations use FRP Canada resource materials in their work with hundreds of thousands of families with young children across the country.

FRP Canada's activities include:

- National projects that conduct research and produce resources for the field
- Regional professional development events
- Development of advocacy tools (many available for download at [www.frp.ca](http://www.frp.ca))
- An electronic newsletter for members, entitled *Play and Parenting*
- A national conference every two years
- A directory of family resource programs in Canada.

### About this project and this guide

The project *Family Resource Centres: Community Settings that Support Social Inclusion* aimed to reach out to new Canadian families – immigrants who have lived in Canada for three or more years. Many new Canadian families face challenges that can hinder integration and lead to feelings of being marginalized and socially detached. To overcome these challenges, staff members and volunteers at 20 FRP Canada member agencies engaged isolated new Canadian families in activities designed to build bridges and support understanding among cultures.

The goal of this project was to enhance the integration of new Canadian families by encouraging meaningful and positive participation in community activities such as family resource programs. The 20 project sites also provided learning and volunteer opportunities, for new Canadian participants, including mentorship of other new Canadian families.

This guide outlines the principles and guidelines for coordinating Peer Mentoring activities in the family support sector. It includes learnings from the project sites based on the Peer Mentoring activity in this project. FRP Canada hopes that these messages and stories will help family-serving organizations across Canada as they engage in similar activities. The companion resource, the *Peer Mentoring Guide for family support volunteers*, is intended to be a tool to introduce new Peer Mentors to the mentoring activity.



Since family support practitioners tend to be women, this guide uses the female gender as its default.



## Definition of terms used in this Guide

### **Immigrant**

Someone born outside of Canada, but now living in Canada. Includes refugees.

### **Immigrant family**

All or some family members born outside of Canada, but now living in Canada. Includes refugees.

### **Newcomer**

An immigrant who has been in Canada for less than three years.

### **New Canadian**

An immigrant who has been in Canada for three years or more.

### **Mentor**

A person who provides mentorship. In the model described in this guide, the program staff member who offers direct mentorship to the volunteer is called the **Coach**. In turn, this volunteer is a **Mentor** to the families she connects with.

### **Mentee**

The person who receives mentorship.

### **Peer Mentor**

The volunteer who receives mentorship from the Coach. The Peer Mentor is the Coach's mentee.

### **Participant families**

The families who participate in community programs.

## About Mentoring

The word “mentor” comes from the Greek epic *The Odyssey*. The character Odysseus had a close friend named Mentor who cared for his son for ten years while he travelled. Mentor, who was the goddess Athena in disguise, embodied male and female qualities such as being nurturing, supportive, protective, as well as aggressive, assertive, and risk-taking. Mentor acted in the role of parent, teacher, friend, guide and protector to Odysseus’s son.

Today mentoring means that an experienced person (the mentor) helps another person (the mentee) to achieve goals and develop skills. Working as a team, they use conversation and other learning activities to create a strong connection over time.

There are many kinds of mentoring relationships, ranging from formal to informal. A **formal mentoring relationship** is intentional – the partners in the relationship ask for or offer the mentoring. They decide on goals and they create a plan to define their work together.

Many agencies offer facilitated mentoring programs, where mentoring relationships occur within a structured and defined framework and involve a third party. Often these programs have a specific goal such as helping participants develop their careers. For example, ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies) ([alliescanada.ca](http://alliescanada.ca)) supports efforts in Canadian cities to improve the job prospects of skilled immigrants. The *National Mentoring Initiative* creates a connection between a skilled immigrant and a Canadian professional working in the same or a similar occupation.

TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council) offers an online step-by-step *Mentoring Toolkit* ([triec.mentoringsoftware.com/](http://triec.mentoringsoftware.com/)) which includes cultural competency tools for mentoring immigrants.

An **informal mentoring relationship** can occur spontaneously. Often people receive advice and support from someone who is more experienced, without asking the other person to be a formal mentor. Informal mentoring may also happen between a supervisor and worker, or between **peers** (people who may be friends, co-workers or volunteers in the same place). Informal mentoring thrives in the family support sector.

The material in the section “About Mentoring” was adapted with permission Center for Health Leadership & Practice (2002) *Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Mentors*. Oakland, CA: Center for Health Leadership & Practice, Public Health Institute. The story about “Mentor” was quoted from Joan Jeruchim and Pat Shapiro (1992) *Women, Mentors, and Success*. New York: Jawcett Columbine.

## Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship that provides benefits to both the mentor and the mentee.

### What are the benefits for both mentor and mentee?

- More opportunities to meet new people and build relationships
- A chance to share experiences and build knowledge and skills
- Recognition and respect for one's knowledge and experience
- Access to a person who will listen and respond to questions and ideas
- Sense of achievement and satisfaction from helping others and giving back to the community
- Better self-awareness and self-image, and ability to reflect on one's own personal development
- Enhanced communication, interpersonal, problem-solving and listening skills

### What added benefits does the mentor gain?

- Development of leadership skills and coaching abilities
- Greater job satisfaction and sense of value in the workplace
- Insight into other cultures, the migration and settlement experience, and issues facing immigrant families (in cases where the mentee is from an immigrant family)

### What added benefits does the mentee gain?

- Motivation and acceptance of responsibility for their own learning and the resultant feeling of empowerment
- More opportunities to share own culture (when the mentee is from an immigrant family)

"The experience allowed me to try out materials in the Mentoring Guide and actually experience building a mentoring model in the community. I believe this model is very valuable to all involved as was evident by the popularity of the program. I enhanced my skills in connecting individuals, recognizing their skills, providing some training, building their self esteem and then watching them successfully take off."

– Peer mentoring coach, Winnipeg, MB



## About the Peer Mentoring Activity

Peer Mentoring was a volunteer-based activity that occurred in the second year (2011-2012) of FRP Canada's project, *Family Resource Centres: Community Settings that Support Social Inclusion* (referred to in this document as "the Social Inclusion project" or "the project".)

The activity involved Community Engagement Coordinators – program staff members responsible for reaching out to and engaging isolated new Canadian families in activities at their organizations. Each project site offered people from new Canadian families the chance to become Peer Mentors. In turn, the new Peer Mentors received coaching from Community Engagement Coordinators to engage and mentor other new Canadian families in their communities.

Peer Mentors received both informal and formal training to prepare them for their new leadership role. Specifically, they:

- Were offered the chance to job shadow with the Coach (Community Engagement Coordinator) and other staff to observe ways to nurture community partnerships
- Learned about a strengths-based approach to service delivery and about other resources in their communities
- Became familiar with the organizational culture and requirements of staff and volunteers, such as keeping time sheets and writing brief reports
- Were introduced to computer software used in their mentor organizations
- Learned to plan, coordinate, promote, and facilitate community engagement activities
- Were coached, supported, and welcomed as part of the organization.

Peer Mentors were able to enhance their knowledge of community services and programs and share their talents and expertise. They added to their résumés by gaining work experience in community-based environments, developing their transferrable skills, and accessing on-the-job training, which often involved job shadowing and networking opportunities.

At the personal level, the benefits were many. The mix of skills, knowledge and attitudes that the Peer Mentors gained – bolstered by the support of new friends and colleagues – helped them move to the next stage of adapting to the new country. For some, this included finding paid work in the not-for-profit sector or elsewhere.



# HOW TO PLAN PEER MENTORING



**Identify the goals of Peer Mentoring and determine its fit with the organization's mandate**

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**Define the roles of the key players**

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**Define the relationships between the key players**

**Photographs (top to bottom)**

1 & 2 - Social Inclusion project sites national meeting

3 - Reproduced with permission from Closer To Home Community Services, Calgary, AB

## Identify the goals of Peer Mentoring and determine the fit with the organization's mandate

The goal of Peer Mentoring in this project was twofold:

- To provide opportunities for new Canadians to acquire the practical knowledge and skills needed for community work, and
- To support active volunteers who mentor others who are marginalized in their communities.

Based on where a centre is located and the resources it has, Peer Mentoring can be incorporated into a family resource centre in several ways. Here are some examples of what happened at the Social Inclusion project sites.

- **General example of Peer Mentoring**

The training opportunities offered by Peer Mentoring encouraged an existing volunteer to take on a Peer Mentor role. A Peer Mentor team was soon formed at the centre. The Peer Mentors received training and the chance to do job shadowing to prepare them for their new roles. The Peer Mentors did research and then prepared information kits about the programs and services in the community. They printed their own informal business cards, and used them during their outreach activities. They also facilitated parent-child groups in languages other than English. One Peer Mentor organized a community event to raise funds, while another volunteered at the family drop-in and helped with outreach when the summer drop-in occurred in a neighbourhood park.

- **Informal Peer Mentoring**

While many program participants agreed to take the lead around specific activities, some did not wish to take on a formal Peer Mentor role. One informal Peer Mentor organized picnics for the community as well as a field trip for families involved with the centre. Another informal Peer Mentor created and managed a Facebook page for the centre, and designed posters for programs.

- **Peer Mentoring within an existing program**

One organization ran a store selling low-cost used clothing and household items. This was one of the first places where Peer Mentors volunteered. They were able to speak to people who were shopping in the store and provide them with information about the centre's programs and services.

- **Peer Mentoring within a specialized activity**

In response to requests from participants, a six-session *Accent Reduction* program was conducted by a Peer Mentor (a Speech Language Pathologist) to help participants communicate more clearly. The focus was on improving their use of Canadian English. It dealt with pronunciation, sentence structure, and proper grammar. The Peer Mentor helped participants to feel at ease as they shared their concerns about speaking the new language. Both adults and children learned and laughed together at these sessions.

- **Peer Mentoring in partnership with another program**

Peer Mentors were part of the four-day *Nobody's Perfect*<sup>1</sup> facilitator training program. They then co-facilitated *Nobody's Perfect* groups with experienced facilitators. One of the Peer Mentors, who was a trained midwife, also took on a key role in a peer breastfeeding support program.

At another centre, the organization sponsored Peer Mentors to take the *Peer Health Worker* training offered by a local municipality; and they became backup Peer Health Workers.

Peer Mentors at another organization were part of three days of training focused on the *Families Together*<sup>2</sup> family literacy program. The training topics were: the family learning approach, adult literacy and adult education principles, program facilitation, and activities and ideas to support and encourage home language development within families. These Peer Mentors then co-facilitated the program at the centre.

- **Peer Mentoring in partnership with a community partner**

A Peer Mentor was placed with a community kitchen to help organize a *Good Food Box* – a program that many community members used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at bulk prices. In another instance, a Peer Mentor was responsible for a *Little Sous Chef* program at the community kitchen. The focus was on cooking for families with young children. The goal was to promote a range of healthy food for the whole family using ingredients found in the local farmer's market. The Peer Mentor ran the program using recipes from her country of origin.

- **Peer Mentoring that leads to a new program or program site**

Five new Canadian participants and one Canadian-born participant worked to form a *Strong Neighbourhoods* group. They decided that they wanted to focus on family activities in their community. They secured the space to start a *Mom-and-Tots* program that was planned and run by parents living in the neighbourhood. The Peer Mentors outlined the goals and desired outcomes for the program, and secured resources in the community. For example, they contacted recreational centres to ask for discounts for community activities. They found participants for the new program and organized activities such as a swim day and an outing.

A Peer Mentor co-facilitated an information session about the centre's programs at a community partner's ESL classes. As a result, the ESL families went on a field trip, by bus, to tour the centre. A showcase drop-in was arranged with the help of volunteer families. The family resource centre learned that most parents attended ESL classes in the morning, when most of the centre's parent-child drop-ins took place. In response to this, the centre set up an afternoon drop-in, and new families were able to attend.

- **Peer Mentoring as a form of recognition**

The Coach (family support practitioner) at one centre referred to the centre's Peer Mentor as their "rock" – someone who was always there when help was needed. The centre ran a summer camp for children, and this Peer Mentor arrived early to meet and greet parents as they arrived with their children. Thanks to her encouragement, several parents began to participate in the centre's programs for the first time. The title of Peer Mentor gave the centre a way to show its appreciation to this important volunteer.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nobody's Perfect* is a parenting program for parents of children from birth to age five.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/parent/nobody-personne/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/parent/nobody-personne/index-eng.php)

<sup>2</sup> [www.bookmates.ca/node/83](http://www.bookmates.ca/node/83)

- **Peer Mentoring that builds community networks**

A family support practitioner took groups of volunteers to help out at community events, some of which were organized by certain cultural groups and some by the wider community. This built new links among diverse groups in the community. Over time, this kind of work led to the development of a core group of Peer Mentors that helped attract participants who had not been keen on volunteering. They became more involved in their community. In fact, the network building was such a success that new families approached the centre to offer volunteering, and cultural associations approached them when they needed volunteers.

- **Peer Mentoring as student placement**

At the social work program at the local community college, a family support practitioner gave a presentation about Peer Mentoring to the teachers and students. She handed out flyers about Peer Mentoring and described the programs offered at the centre. The practitioner noted that recruiting Peer Mentors from the social work program was effective because the students, who already had background knowledge of the social services field, seemed quite willing to volunteer in the community.

## Define the roles of the key players

This guide defines two distinct roles within Peer Mentoring: the role of the family support practitioner (Coach) and the role of the Peer Mentor.

### Role of the Family Support Practitioner (Coach)

- Promote Peer Mentoring within the community
- Identify and recruit volunteers (preferably parents) who have the qualities, skills, and desire to become Peer Mentors
- Offer orientation to the Peer Mentors (such as the *Guiding Principles of Family Support*, policies and procedures of the centre, program goals, etc.)
- Take care of administrative forms as required by the organization's volunteer policies (informal references, criminal record check, volunteer forms and contracts, etc.)
- Provide ongoing direction, guidance, training and support to the Peer Mentors (includes personal goal setting, outreach strategies, and relationship building)
- Introduce the Peer Mentors to the programs and services offered by the organization
- Introduce the Peer Mentors to community partners and to information about community programs and services
- Provide job shadowing opportunities for the Peer Mentors
- Meet with Peer Mentors for regular check-in sessions and problem solving.

### Role of the Peer Mentor (Mentor to participant families)

Reporting to the Coach, the Peer Mentor reaches out to isolated families in the community and provides mentoring to help them be part of community life. The responsibilities and activities of a Peer Mentor are defined by each centre's policies.

Some of the activities done by the Peer Mentor may include:

- Welcoming families and telling them about the centre's programs and services
- Chatting with families at the centre and encouraging them to be part of regular activities
- Sharing information with families about community services and resources
- Reaching out to families that may be isolated within the nearby community
- Giving staff updates about the questions, concerns and needs heard from families
- Helping with program activities as needed (by making phone calls, setting up workshop rooms, making snacks, designing posters, helping with event planning, etc.)



#### See

[Appendix 1: Guiding Principles of Family Support](#)

[Appendix 2: Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors](#)

[Appendix 3: Role of the Peer Mentor](#)

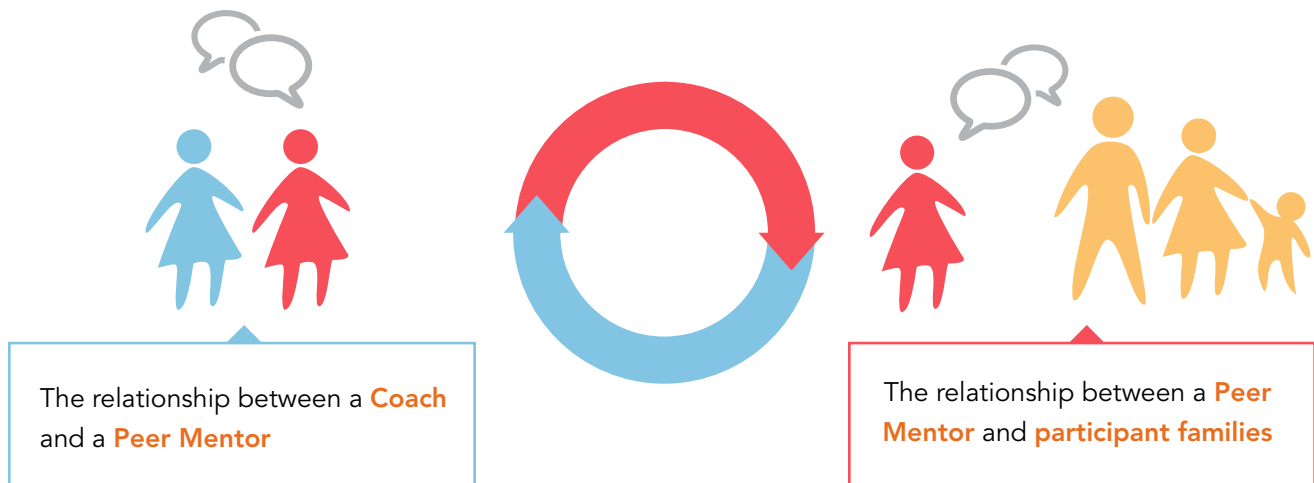
The material in the section "Define the roles of the key players" was adapted with permission from materials developed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., BC.

## Define the relationships between key players

Peer Mentoring involves three key players:

- The Peer Mentor
- The family support practitioner working one-on-one with the Peer Mentor
- The families who participate in the centre's programs

Peer Mentoring is built on two mentoring relationships, which interact with each other:



### The Family Support Practitioner-Peer Mentor Relationship

This relationship may be either formal or informal, depending upon needs and the situation at the centre. The Family Support Practitioner's role is to act as a **Coach** to the Peer Mentor and provide her with opportunities to acquire and develop the skills, practical knowledge and leadership capacities needed for community work. This relationship will involve:

- Orientation and training
- Personal goal setting
- Job shadowing
- Support and feedback

### The Peer Mentor-Participant Families Relationship

This relationship between the Peer Mentor and participant families with whom they connect is an informal one. The main feature of this relationship is that Peer Mentors have experience and knowledge that they are willing to share and that could help the Mentee families. This informal mentoring will focus on:

- Fostering a caring and supportive relationship with participant families
- Encouraging families to engage in community programs and services
- Helping to create opportunities for families to share their skills and experiences.

# HOW TO IMPLEMENT PEER MENTORING



## Promote Peer Mentoring



## Recruit Peer Mentors



## Build the mentoring relationship



## Manage challenges in the mentoring relationship

Photographs reproduced with permission from (top to bottom)

1 - Projet Communautaire de Pierrefonds, Montreal, QC

2 - Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre, Kitchener, ON

3 - Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, Vancouver, BC

4 - Saanich Neighbourhood Place, Victoria, BC



## Promote Peer Mentoring

The centre's Peer Mentoring promotional activities may have one or more of the following aims:

- To create awareness of Peer Mentoring within the organization (especially in the case of large organizations such as multi-service agencies)
- To gain support from the community served
- To gain support from community partners
- To promote the organization and its programs and services
- To recruit Peer Mentors.

A promotional activity that targets one goal will often work to satisfy many goals at the same time. Here are some promotional activities to consider, while keeping within your organization's guidelines:

- **Use promotional brochures.** Design a simple brochure or poster. Print copies that you will give to program participants. See [Appendix 5: Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure](#) and [Appendix 6: Sample Peer Mentoring Poster](#).
- **Collaborate with community partner organizations.** Meet with them to explain Peer Mentoring. Share copies of your promotional brochures. Suggest that they display these on a bulletin board and give them to their participant families. Provide them with the Role of the Peer Mentor sheet (see sample in Appendix 3), so they understand the scope of the mentoring program. (See "Your responsibilities and duties" under the section "The benefits, rights and responsibilities of being a Peer Mentor" on page 8 of the *Peer Mentoring Guide for family support volunteers*, for ideas.) If it would be helpful, you can involve the Peer Mentor in meetings and activities that your centre conducts with partner organizations.
- **Prepare a program outline sheet.** It could include a brief description of Peer Mentoring with talking points to help promote it. Give a copy of the sheet to staff members and community partners who might be contacted by the media for more information. See [Appendix 4: Sample Program Outline for Staff of the Organization and for Community Partners](#).
- **Create a relationship with the press.**
  - › Identify the reporters for your local radio and television news stations, and newspapers, both daily and weekly, who cover community events and projects. Introduce yourself and your Peer Mentoring activity to them, and send them an information package. Include a list of staff or participants who are available for comment, and the names of people they can interview. Invite them to attend a mentoring activity or watch one of your experienced mentors in action.
  - › Prepare a press release for the launch of your Peer Mentoring activity. See [Appendix 7: Sample Press Release](#). Fax or email it to your local media, to the attention of both the city/assignment desk and the paper's reporters. Follow up with a telephone call to ask if they plan to attend and to provide details.

- › Host volunteer recognition events such as a Peer Mentor Appreciation Day and invite the media. Be aware of photo opportunities and invite a camera crew or photographer from the local media to capture the moment. Make sure that participants have signed consent forms to have their pictures taken and used for promotions.
- › Encourage Peer Mentors and program participants to write letters to the editor about Peer Mentoring and its value to them. This could spark the interest of a feature writer who may follow up with an in-depth article.
- **Find champions.** Recruit a high-profile Board member or other person in the community who supports your Peer Mentoring activity. Invite these champions to attend events sponsored by the centre, especially to volunteer recognition events.



**See**

[Appendix 3: Role of the Peer Mentor](#)

[Appendix 4: Sample Program Outline for Staff of the Organization and for Community Partners](#)

[Appendix 5: Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure](#)

[Appendix 6: Sample Peer Mentoring Poster](#)

[Appendix 7: Sample Press Release](#)

The material in the section “Promote Peer Mentoring” was adapted from Bureau of Family & Community Outreach, Florida Department of Education, FL, USA. *Faith-Based Mentoring Toolkit*.

## Recruit Peer Mentors

You may recruit Peer Mentors through:

- Personal contact. Approach current volunteers or program participants that may have the right kinds of skills. This is an approach much favoured by practitioners, since they have already had a chance to observe the candidates and gauge their suitability. This includes referrals from other staff members.
- Promotional brochures and posters. See [Appendix 5: Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure](#) and [Appendix 6: Sample Peer Mentoring Poster](#)
- Referrals from community partners
- Student placements (See the example of “Peer Mentoring as a student placement” on Page 13)
- Information sessions on Peer Mentoring. For example, as part of its plan to recruit Peer Mentors, one organization set up a goal-setting session for participants who had shown an interest in Peer Mentoring. The family support practitioner explained the details of mentoring and the skills needed to qualify as a Peer Mentor. The potential Peer Mentors stated their goals and what they expected from mentoring. One-on-one interviews helped both sides address sensitive questions.

### Tips for identifying appropriate participants

Experience from family support organizations shows that certain characteristics of Peer Mentors prove successful for both the Mentors and the centre involved.



- ... ready for a challenge?
- ... familiar with the programs, staff and families, or willing to learn about them?
- ... experienced with or interested in working with families from other cultures or languages?
- ... non-judgmental and respectful of others?
- ... friendly and someone who enjoys people?
- ... able to respect personal boundaries?
- ... able to encourage and support others?
- ... patient and flexible?
- ... ready for a positive separation from her own child (so she can attend the training sessions)?
- ... organized and reliable?
- ... aware of her own limits?
- ... planning to be available for the agreed-upon time period?
- ... helpful and cooperative?
- ... knowledgeable or interested in learning about resources in the community?

To see a sample job description for the Peer Mentor, go to [Appendix 2](#).

Some of the following questions might be worth asking when seeking a Peer Mentor. Is the person:

You may sometimes have interested people who you do not consider to be a good fit as Peer Mentors. Here are some ways to handle such a situation:

- Encourage them to try volunteering within the organization. If they start with tasks that require less time and commitment, this may give help them decide what best suits their interests and the time they have to give. It also gives you a chance to observe their skills and commitment.
- Partner them with an experienced Peer Mentor who can guide them and be a role model.



**See**

[Appendix 2: Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors](#)

[Appendix 5: Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure](#)

[Appendix 6: Sample Peer Mentoring Poster](#)

The material in the section “Tips for identifying appropriate participants” was adapted with permission from the training materials developed for the *Parent Connector Program* by the Five Family Place Partnership, Vancouver, BC.

## Build the mentoring relationship

The relationship between the Peer Mentor and the Coach will determine the success of Peer Mentoring. The organization must be aware that this relationship requires a commitment of staff time and resources. Co-operation from colleagues is essential, since it is a team effort. You also need to have a replacement (succession) plan in place, in case the Coach has to assume other duties.

### First contact

Building the relationship begins as soon as someone in your group makes first contact with a potential Peer Mentor. You can provide general information about Peer Mentoring (such as goals and benefits) in a face-to-face meeting. If there is more than one potential Peer Mentor, you might want to set up a group information session. Its goal would be to review the steps involved in working as a Peer Mentor.

Once you have identified a potential Peer Mentor, an informal interview may help determine their fit with the mentoring. It could include a discussion about:

- The person's background, experiences, interests and skills
- A clear description of the Peer Mentor role
- A clear description of the time commitment required from the person (including job shadowing and mentoring activities)
- Screening that applies to all volunteers at the family resource centre (criminal record check, etc.)

### Orientation and Training

Once a candidate is confirmed as a Peer Mentor, you will need to provide an orientation that allows them to know more about the organization and their role within it. The Coach is responsible for the Peer Mentor's orientation.

Orientation and training can:

- Be done in a series of meetings to avoid overwhelming the new person
- Happen one-on-one or in groups
- Take place in sessions that include other types of volunteers.

The following areas may be covered during the orientation:

- Overview of the organization and the Peer Mentoring
  - › Explain the organization's mission, values and mandate, policies and procedures, and its health and safety regulations.
  - › Give a tour of the centre and introduce the Peer Mentor to the staff, programs and services.
  - › Describe the centre's community partners and the services available to families.
  - › Provide a copy of the *Peer Mentoring Guide for family support volunteers*. This guide contains examples to illustrate the *Guiding Principles of Family Support* (See [Appendix 1](#)).
- Filling out required forms – personal contact details, Peer Mentoring Participation Agreement, etc. (See [Appendix 8: Sample Participation Agreement between Peer Mentors and Organizations](#)).
- Review of Coach and Peer Mentor roles. (See "Define the roles" and "Define the relationships" on pages 14-15 and [Appendix 2: Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors](#)).

- Goal setting for the Peer Mentor, a plan of action to achieve those goals, and types of support available. (See [Appendix 9: Sample Form for Setting Personal Goals](#)).
- Setting up a communication plan (how often and when phone calls, e-mails or meetings will occur).

### Tips to make orientation sessions effective

- Provide details that matter as early in the orientation process as you can.
- Repeat information; people often need to hear the same thing more than once and in different ways.
- Give Peer Mentors plenty of opportunity to ask questions.
- Provide the most important information in writing, always using clear, simple language.
- Direct Peer Mentors to resources and supports that they can use, such as books or manuals and relevant websites.
- Review the written materials you provide to Peer Mentors with the Peer Mentors; make sure they understand when and how to use them.

The orientation and training activities could fit into a structured plan to support and supervise the Peer Mentor. See [Appendix 11: Sample Planned Schedule](#).

### Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a vital part of Peer Mentoring in family support. Activities you may want to include in the job shadowing process are:

- Taking the Peer Mentor to outreach activities and talking about ways to connect with families
- Taking the Peer Mentor to agency staff meetings and to meetings with community partners
- Assigning tasks to the Peer Mentor such as:
  - › Completing program log books/sheets (if your centre uses them)
  - › Maintaining statistics and forms, such as participant sign-in sheets
  - › Designing promotional material such as flyers
  - › Working together to organize and deliver a community engagement activity
  - › Preparing information about the organization's programs and services for a community open house or other event
  - › Suggesting ways to connect with families
  - › Being part of outreach activities.



#### See

[Appendix 1: Guiding Principles of Family Support](#)

[Appendix 2: Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors](#)

[Appendix 8: Sample Participation Agreement between Peer Mentors and Organizations](#)

[Appendix 9: Sample Form for Setting Personal Goals](#)

[Appendix 11: Sample Planned Schedule](#)

## Ongoing support

It is the Coach's responsibility to support and encourage Peer Mentors. You need to have regular meetings as planned, in order to:

- Review activities since the last meeting
- Share experiences and lessons learned
- Brainstorm about challenges and provide advice, as needed
- Review progress that relates to the Peer Mentor's goals
- Explore new ideas and new ways to connect with families
- Discuss upcoming activities and other plans
- Complete reporting requirements.

Constructive feedback is a critical part of the mentoring relationship. These statements reflect a respectful approach to providing feedback:

"I have a few ideas that might help..."

"I liked the way you..."

"Have you considered...?"

"May I show you another way of doing it?"



See

Appendix 10: Sample Peer Mentoring Check-in Form

The examples for providing constructive feedback were adapted from Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2009) *Mentoring and Essential Skills*. Retrieved on January 14, 2012 from [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/pdfs/training\\_supports/mentoring.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/pdfs/training_supports/mentoring.pdf)

## Define boundaries

It is good to define boundaries at the start of the mentoring relationship. Boundaries provide structure to the relationship. They help both the Coach and the Peer Mentor to understand the limits of the relationship.

Poor boundaries in a mentoring relationship can result in:

- Unclear or unrealistic expectations of each other
- Worry and discomfort on both sides
- Development of one-sided relationships – with no give and take
- Inability to say “No” to or disagree with one another
- A Coach feeling overloaded and overwhelmed, or taken advantage of
- A Peer Mentor feeling overloaded or overwhelmed, or taken advantage of
- Not following policies and principles set by the centre or by the mentoring plan.

The Coach can set the tone by being clear about boundaries during goal-setting with the Peer Mentor. During check-in sessions, both the Coach and Peer Mentor have a chance to check if both feel comfortable with the boundaries they have set.

Here are some questions to think about as you define boundaries:

- What are the organization’s policies in relation to the Peer Mentor’s role? (For example, policies may not allow any volunteers to speak on behalf of, or represent, the organization outside the centre. This will affect the nature of the Peer Mentor’s outreach to families.)
- What are the organization’s goals for Peer Mentoring?
- What is the Coach’s role in Peer Mentoring?
- How much time can the Coach commit to Peer Mentoring and to each Peer Mentor?
- What tasks would the organization like the Peer Mentor to do?
- What kind of support can the Coach provide to the Peer Mentor?

### Setting boundaries between professional and personal life between the Coach and the Peer Mentor



Some Coaches find it a challenge to explain to Peer Mentors that they are a Coach and not a personal friend. Peer Mentors may ask their Coach for a personal favour such as a ride. They may invite the Coach to their home for a meal. If the Coach accepts one invitation, it may lead to another and the situation could become uncomfortable. It is the Coach’s responsibility to be clear about the roles of both parties, to keep the lines of communication open, and to follow the organization’s policies.

The material in the section “Define boundaries” was adapted with permission from Michigan State University Extension (2012) *Ready to Go: A Mentor Training Toolkit*.



## Show appreciation

There are many ways to recognize and thank Peer Mentors. Here are some to consider:

- Provide a certificate of appreciation or a certificate that honours the Peer Mentor for completing a certain time with the organization. This can empower the Peer Mentor in many ways. It may add to their portfolio for finding a job. It might hold special value – especially if it is the first one the Peer Mentor has received in Canada. The template in [Appendix 12](#) can be printed on certificate paper.
- Provide Peer Mentors with chances for professional development, such as a training session.
- Acknowledge the work, talents and skills of the Peer Mentor in regular one-on-one meetings, and let them know how much you value their work.
- Include Peer Mentors in staff events, where appropriate.
- Say “thank you” often.
- Present the Peer Mentor with a card signed by all staff.
- Hold a small party for Peer Mentors and their families.
- Write a thank you letter signed by senior staff such as the Executive Director.
- Post a message on the organization’s public bulletin board, website or newsletter saluting Peer Mentors.
- Post announcements of [National Volunteer Week](#)<sup>3</sup> in the organization’s newsletter, website and bulletin boards.
- Share success stories with the local media.
- Nominate the organization’s top mentor for an award during local volunteer celebrations.
- Celebrate! Hold a graduation event to honour the Peer Mentors at the end of the mentoring.
- Where appropriate, maintain contact with the Peer Mentors after the mentoring activity has ended.

Volunteer Canada’s website has a page of helpful hints for [personalizing volunteer recognition](#)<sup>4</sup>.



See

[Appendix 12: Certificate of Recognition](#)

“Business cards, which were developed for the peer mentors, helped them make connections. Peer mentors were also given personalized binders and name tags, as well as access to computers with their own username and password.”

– Peer Mentoring Coach, Vancouver, BC

The material in the section “Show appreciation” was adapted from Volunteer Canada (2004) *Volunteer Connections: Family Volunteering – Making it Official*.

<sup>3</sup> [volunteer.ca/nvw](http://volunteer.ca/nvw)

<sup>4</sup> [volunteer.ca/topics-and-resources/recognition/helpful-hints](http://volunteer.ca/topics-and-resources/recognition/helpful-hints)

## Manage challenges in the mentoring relationship

The prime rules for mentoring relationships are to make the other person feel valued and at ease, and to provide them with the knowledge they need to fulfill their role. In general, this means showing empathy, understanding, flexibility, and appreciation, within the boundaries of professionalism.

Despite people's best efforts, challenges may arise in the mentoring relationship. Here are examples of challenges other Coaches and Peer Mentors have faced and resolved.

- **Time and energy.** The most common challenge involves finding enough time to do all you planned to do during your first meeting. Some Coaches may find that some Peer Mentors do not call them when they cannot arrive on time, or that they arrive later than or leave before the agreed-upon time.

Suggestions:

- › Think small rather than large, especially at the start. Promise only what both of you can deliver.
  - › Explain the Peer Mentor role and its impact on the whole team and program delivery.
  - › Ensure that both of you are comfortable with the time spent and with the learning that occurs.
  - › Sometimes, especially if the Coach has a big workload, group mentoring sessions for talking about challenges and success may be better than private sessions. Of course, any sensitive or private concerns will need to be dealt with one-on-one.
  - › Using a buddy system can be helpful. Peer Mentors with more experience can be teamed with newer recruits to act as their role models. However, some situations may arise with this approach, as described in the example on page 28.
- **Building trust quickly.** With only a few hours of contact each month, it may not be easy to build the kind of trust both parties would like.

Suggestions:

- › Expect the Peer Mentor to move toward program goals as well as their own personal goals.
- › Communicate in a clear and open way.
- › Be clear and direct about the needs and limits that both of you face. This may include being open about the style of interacting. Encourage dialogue and conduct regular sessions to check in on progress.
- › Always ask before making a suggestion or offering feedback. When you offer feedback, ask questions to ensure the clarity of the message, such as, "How do you feel about ...?" or "Does that make sense?" Listen carefully, and remember what the Peer Mentor has said in the past.
- › Keep promises and commitments. If any must be changed, let the Peer Mentor know right away and reschedule or renegotiate them.
- › Address concerns as soon as they arise.
- › Admit errors you have made.
- › Avoid saying negative things about others.
- › Above all, keep confidential information the Peer Mentor shares with you private (unless that information breaks the law or a policy of the organization).

- **Not being the “expert” on all the Peer Mentor’s needs.** Many Coaches find it difficult when they do not have all the answers.

Suggestions:

- › Early in the mentoring relationship, explain the Coach’s role as a “learning helper”,
- › Make it clear that you do not have all the answers, and that you expect to learn together as well as to seek help from others who know more on certain topics.

- **Being sensitive to differences.** Often, at the beginning, you might be tempted to assume that both of you are the same.

Suggestions:

- › Share experiences, discover how you are similar, and work carefully to identify the differences between you. For example, what is occurring now for the Peer Mentor that you did not face? If you are of different generations, ages, genders, races, cultural groups, or professional backgrounds, what unique experiences have you had? Assume a learning mode, and invite discussion about all of these topics. As Stephen Covey reminds us in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, “Seek first to understand”.
- › If you feel that the Peer Mentor’s behaviour or values are not in keeping with the organization’s standards or family support principles, share your thoughts with them and get help from a colleague if necessary. If you cannot resolve the problem even after giving more support and opportunities to the Peer Mentor, end the relationship in a respectful manner.

- **Managing expectations of employment from Peer Mentors.** Despite the fact that Peer Mentoring is a volunteer activity, some of your Peer Mentors may still expect job offers from your organization. As you train new Peer Mentors, the experienced ones may ask you why you are recruiting more when you have not found a job for them.

Suggestions:

- › Explain the purpose of Peer Mentoring again – to engage isolated community members and empower them to be involved in the community and to perhaps take on community leadership roles.
- › Where fitting, inform Peer Mentors about job opportunities in the organization or with community partners.
- › Provide Peer Mentors with a work reference where possible.
- › Support Peer Mentors to take on community-building roles.

#### PROJECT EXAMPLE

##### Supporting Peer Mentors to assume community-building roles

A Peer Mentor was supported to take a lead role in a program designed for women who are new to community development work. She was able to design and implement a project of her choice in her own community. She received training in workshop facilitation, coordinating public events, and project design and implementation. The Peer Mentor chose a pilot *Grandfriends* program that matched Canadian seniors with newcomer families.



- **Maintaining a feeling of fairness and equality among Peer Mentors.**

As your Peer Mentoring program grows, you may have Peer Mentors at different levels of development. Along with feelings of greater self-esteem, empowerment and gratitude may come the other feelings of competition and resentment. If you are prepared to deal with these challenges, it will be easier for you to handle them in sensitive and respectful ways.

Suggestions:

- › Set clearer boundaries by knowing that Peer Mentors go through stages of development. You could even draft job descriptions that mention the types of tasks you might expect them to do at different levels.
- › Create a selection process for choosing Peer Mentors for training programs; this may help to prevent feelings of favouritism.
- › Always keep the lines of communication open and direct; this will help to resolve concerns.

#### PROJECT EXAMPLE

##### Maintaining a feeling of fairness and equality among Peer Mentors

Three Peer Mentors received an opportunity to apply for a training course sponsored by a local group. Due to limits on the number people who could attend, only one was chosen. The Peer Mentor chosen for the training had been scheduled to co-facilitate a program in the area where the training was offered. When the Coach sensed some resentment from the other Peer Mentors, she explained the reasons for the choice.

In another case, an experienced Peer Mentor worked with a new Peer Mentor to co-facilitate a program. The new Peer Mentor was somewhat shy and looked for guidance from the experienced Peer Mentor. This created some resentment in the experienced Peer Mentor because this increased her workload, and because both Peer Mentors got equal credit for their work. The Coach counselled the experienced Peer Mentor, reminding her of the time when she had needed this kind of guidance, and pointing out how this added task was helping her build her leadership skills. The experienced Peer Mentor was then recognized as the lead facilitator.



#### See

Appendix 13: *Mentoring Best Practices for the Coach*. To learn more about specific challenges and problem-solving strategies visit: [www.icre.pitt.edu/mentoring/challenges\\_solutions.html](http://www.icre.pitt.edu/mentoring/challenges_solutions.html).

The material in the section “Manage challenges in the mentoring relationship” was adapted with permission from:

- Center for Health Leadership & Practice (2002) *Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Mentors*. Oakland, CA: Center for Health Leadership & Practice, Public Health Institute
- ALLIES (2009) *Mentoring for Skilled Immigrants Toolkit*. Retrieved on November 29, 2011 from [alliescanada.ca/resources/toolkits/mentoring-for-skilled-immigrants/introduction/](http://alliescanada.ca/resources/toolkits/mentoring-for-skilled-immigrants/introduction/)

Material is also included from FRP Canada (2005) *Mentor's Guide* produced for the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement.

The following are examples of situations and challenges that may arise in peer mentoring, and how they were resolved by family support practitioners and peer mentors.

**? WHAT IS THE SITUATION OR CHALLENGE?**

**When Peer Mentor candidates**

- Resist the formal title of Peer Mentor
- Are not willing or able to commit to a longer time period

**? WHAT IS THE SITUATION OR CHALLENGE?**

**Lack of childcare**

**💡 ACTION OR SOLUTION**

**Family Support Organizations**

- Set up informal mentoring opportunities
- Encourage formal mentoring around specific activities or events

**Participants**

- Become “ambassadors” for the centre and actively help recruit new participants
- Act as informal translators and cultural interpreters for immigrant participants
- Suggest and organize activities in the weekly programs they are already part of within the centre
- Volunteer at events or help to organize them
- Organize and lead field trips

**💡 ACTION OR SOLUTION**

**Family Support Organizations**

- Allow Peer Mentors to bring their children with them during Mentoring activities

**Peer Mentors**

- Take turns looking after each others’ children while each participates in mentoring activities

**? WHAT IS THE SITUATION OR CHALLENGE?**

**Logistical and policy issues**

- Getting to the centre or from place-to-place, especially in rural areas
- Organizational policy that does not permit Peer Mentors to represent the centre, do certain activities such as outreach, or undertake any activity without first having a criminal record check or the correct certification/training

**💡 ACTION OR SOLUTION**

**Family Support Organizations**

- Provide bus tickets (where available)
- Help Peer Mentors to obtain criminal record checks
- Sponsor Peer Mentors to attend training (for example, Peer Health Worker or certified Food Handler), thus turning a challenge into an opportunity

**Peer Mentors**

- Do their mentoring work at the centre
- Support activities at the sites, make telephone calls, and help with administrative tasks
- Do tasks at home, such as designing flyers

## HOW TO EVALUATE PEER MENTORING

Evaluating Peer Mentoring certainly presents challenges, such as tracking people over time and determining whether outcomes are based on the Peer Mentoring or on other factors. Despite its challenges, the mentoring evaluation does not have to be complex, time-consuming or costly.

- The check-in sessions that are part of more formal Peer Mentoring are a good place to collect information that can then feed into an evaluation.
- With informal Peer Mentoring, where check-in sessions may not be possible, the Coach could have regular informal chats with the Peer Mentors and take notes.

Where possible, it is helpful to have an evaluation plan in place before the Peer Mentoring starts.

Each type of evaluation measures a different aspect of an activity's success. Here are some types of evaluation you could use:

- **Input evaluations** measure the resources that you put into an activity. In the context of Peer Mentoring, these would include staff time and resources that support the Peer Mentors.
- **Output evaluations** would be more project-specific and measure the activity's productivity by collecting statistical data. In the context of Peer Mentoring, the data could include the number of:
  - › Peer Mentors recruited
  - › In-kind hours from the Peer Mentors
  - › Events or activities organized by the Peer Mentors
  - › Families recruited by the Peer Mentors, etc.
- **Outcome evaluations** measure changes in attitudes, behaviour, knowledge or skills that the activity creates for the people involved. Most organizations regard outcome evaluations as having the greatest value in determining the success of social programs. In the context of Peer Mentoring, an outcome evaluation would measure outcomes that had a direct impact on the Peer Mentors. This may include:
  - › Having learned new transferrable skills or improved existing ones
  - › Demonstrating leadership
  - › Showing initiative
  - › Gaining confidence in their role as Peer Mentors
  - › Becoming more engaged in the community
  - › Finding work due to this role, etc.

## Evaluation tools

How can you collect the information required for evaluation? This depends on how formal the Peer Mentoring was and what kind of evaluation you are doing. Some common tools are:

- **Ongoing evaluation:** You may decide to collect information during the check-in sessions that happen regularly between the Coach and the Peer Mentor. See [Appendix 10: Sample Peer Mentoring Check-in Form](#).
- **Feedback from Peer Mentors:** This can be collected through feedback forms or surveys, and also by holding group discussions with the Peer Mentors. See [Appendix 14: Sample Peer Mentor Survey](#).
- **Feedback from the Coach:** This feedback is most important in informal mentoring programs, where check-in forms may not be used. See [Appendix 15: Sample Mentoring Coach Survey](#).



### See

[Appendix 10: Sample Peer Mentoring Check-in Form](#)

[Appendix 14: Sample Peer Mentor Survey](#)

[Appendix 15: Sample Mentoring Coach Survey](#)

The material in the section “How to Evaluate Peer Mentoring” was adapted with permission from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. *The Building Blocks of Quality Mentoring Programs*. Retrieved from the Mentoring Canada website on November 29, 2011.

[www.mentoringcanada.ca/training/Mentors](http://www.mentoringcanada.ca/training/Mentors)

## **Guiding Principles of Family Support**

1. Family support programs are open to all families, recognizing that all families deserve support.
2. Family support programs complement existing services, build networks and linkages, and advocate for policies, services and systems that support families' abilities to raise healthy children.
3. Family support programs work in partnership with families and communities to meet expressed needs.
4. Family support programs focus on the promotion of wellness and use a prevention approach in their work.
5. Family support programs work to increase opportunities and to strengthen individuals, families and communities.
6. Family support programs operate from an ecological perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of families' lives.
7. Family support programs value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
8. Family support programs affirm parenting to be a life-long learning process.
9. Family support programs value the voluntary nature of participation in their services.
10. Family support programs promote relationships based on equality and respect for diversity.
11. Family support programs advocate non-violence to ensure safety and security for all family members.
12. Family support programs continually seek to improve their practice by reflecting on what they do and how they do it.



## Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors

Reporting to the Project Coordinator, the Peer Mentor will connect with new Canadian families,\* welcome them to the centre, and help connect them to community resources. The Peer Mentor must be a new Canadian.\*

Time commitment: [This will vary from centre to centre. To be determined by the site. Mention how long the training will last and the name of the program that the Peer Mentor will be working in.]

Salary: None. This is a volunteer position.

### Responsibilities

- Complete the orientation and training offered to Peer Mentors
- Be part of a session to set personal goals and attend regular meetings with the Project Coordinator
- Complete on-the-job training (job shadowing)
- Interact with families at the centre by means of informal talk (through casual conversation)
- Connect with new Canadian families that may be isolated within the nearby community
- Welcome new Canadian families and introduce them to the centre's programs and services
- Help new Canadian families communicate with the centre's staff through language and cultural interpretation
- Give new Canadian families information about community services and resources as needed
- Encourage new Canadian families to be part of ongoing activities at the centre
- Convey questions from families to program staff at the centre, and update staff about families' concerns and needs
- Help with program activities (such as calling participants, setting up workshop rooms, preparing snacks, getting ready for children's arts and crafts, designing posters or flyers, helping at workshops, planning events, etc.)

### Qualifications

- Able to communicate in English (Minimum CLB 5) and one other another language such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Tagalog, or Spanish
- Has experience with or an interest in working with families from other cultures who speak other languages
- Has personal qualities that suit Peer Mentoring, such as being encouraging, supportive, patient, flexible, organized, and reliable
- Able to provide two references (personal or work) from people who are not relatives

### Contact:

First name Last name, Project Coordinator

Tel #

Email

\* New Canadians and new Canadian families are immigrants who have lived in Canada for three or more years.

The material in the Appendix "Sample Job Description for Peer Mentors" was adapted with permission from materials developed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., BC.

## Role of the Peer Mentor

Sample reference sheet for other staff and community partners who act in a coaching role

Reporting to the Project Coordinator, the Peer Mentor will reach out to new Canadian families\* that may be living in isolation in the community and provide mentoring to help them participate in community life. The Peer Mentor will be a new Canadian.\*

### Responsibilities

- Interact with families at the centre by means of informal talk (through casual conversation)
- Connect with new Canadian families that may be isolated within the nearby community
- Welcome new Canadian families and introduce them to the centre's programs and services
- Help new Canadian families communicate with the centre's staff through language and cultural interpretation
- Provide new Canadian families information about community services and resources as needed
- Encourage new Canadian families to participate in ongoing activities at the centre
- Convey questions from families to program staff, and update staff about concerns and needs of families
- Help with program activities (such as calling participants, setting up workshop rooms, preparing snack, getting ready for children's arts and craft activities, designing posters or flyers, teaching workshops (with staff), planning events, etc.)

Here are some suggestions that will help ensure the Peer Mentor has a good experience in her role at the centre:

- File the emergency phone numbers for Peer Mentors in a private location that is easy to find.
- Provide the Peer Mentor with an orientation to the centre or program and its guidelines. This should occur during her first visit in her new role.
- Provide the Peer Mentor with a contact number at the centre, where she can call if she cannot come in as scheduled.
- Make sure to update the Peer Mentor on program dates, including any changes or cancellations to programs.
- Introduce her to the families as a Peer Mentor when she begins her role.
- Acknowledge the Peer Mentor's contribution when she completes her mentoring.
- Share your knowledge with the Peer Mentor; this will encourage her development in working with families.
- Communicate any concerns about the Peer Mentor's performance to the Project Coordinator.

### Contact:

First name Last name, Project Coordinator

Tel #

Email

\* New Canadians and new Canadian families are defined as immigrants who have lived in Canada for three or more years.

The material in the Appendix "Role of the Peer Mentor" was adapted with permission from materials developed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., BC.

## Sample Program Outline

For Staff of the Organization and for Community Partners



### About the Peer Mentoring Program

ABC Family Resource Centre has launched the Peer Mentoring Program, in which people from new Canadian families will be offered the opportunity to become Peer Mentors. The volunteers will be coached by the Project Coordinator to engage and mentor other new Canadian families in their communities.

Peer Mentors will receive both informal and formal training to prepare them for their new leadership role. They will:

- be offered opportunities to job shadow with the Project Coordinator (Coach) and other staff to observe how community partnerships are nurtured
- learn about a strength-based approach to service delivery and about other resources in their communities
- become familiar with the organizational culture and requirements of staff and volunteers, such as keeping time sheets and writing brief reports
- be introduced to computer software that the organization uses, and
- learn to plan, coordinate, promote and facilitate community engagement activities.

The goal of Peer Mentoring is to enhance the Peer Mentors' knowledge of community services and programs and boost their self-confidence by sharing their talents and expertise. They will be able to build their résumés by gaining work experience in a community-based environment, taking part in on-the-job training, job shadowing and networking, and developing their transferrable skills and leadership abilities.

For organizations that participate in the Peer Mentoring Program, program staff will receive help from Peer Mentors to engage and support new Canadian families living in isolation. At the personal level, the program hopes to foster and enhance a mix of skills, knowledge and attitudes within Peer Mentors. Bolstered by the support of new friends and colleagues, this may help them move to the next stage in adapting to Canada – a journey that might include paid work in the not-for-profit sector or elsewhere.

### About the project

[Title]

[Funder]

[Duration]

## Sample Peer Mentoring Brochure


### Benefits to Peer Mentors

1. Share your talent and expertise
2. Gain satisfaction by helping new Canadian families to
  - > Connect with community resources
  - > Build informal support networks.
3. Build your résumé by gaining
  - > Work experience in a community based environment
  - > On-the-job training and chances for networking
  - > Transferrable skills
  - > Leadership skills that support your personal growth.
4. Learn more about services and programs in your community


**Contact Us**

Name  
Project Coordinator  
Welcome Here Family Resource Centre  
Street Address  
City, Province Postal Code

Phone: 555-555-5555  
Fax: 555-555-5555  
E-mail: someone@example.com




## Peer Mentoring Program




We make a living by what we get  
We make a life by what we give


This project is in partnership with



This project is funded by




This project is in partnership with



Canadian Association of Family Resource programs

This project is funded by





### Peer Mentoring Program

Peer Mentoring is a new volunteer program of Welcome Here Family Resource Centre.

The program will provide support, guidance and information about the community to new Canadian families.

Peer Mentors will connect with new Canadian families, welcome them to the centre and guide them to community resources.

Welcome Here Family Resource Centre recruits, screens and delivers orientation and on-the-job training to the Peer Mentors.

**New Canadian families** are immigrants who have lived in Canada for three or more years.

### Role of the Peer Mentor

- Connect with new Canadian families that may be isolated within the nearby community
- Welcome new Canadian families and introduce them to the family resource centre
- Help new Canadian families communicate with the Centre's staff through language and cultural interpretation
- Give new Canadian families information about community resources and services
- Encourage new Canadian families to participate the centre's ongoing activities
- Go with new Canadian families to programs (as needed)
- Maintain contact with new Canadian families on a regular basis
- Help with program activities at the Centre

### To learn more ...

- Contact the Project Coordinator (see Contact Us on back of this brochure)

**Next steps**

- Complete a Peer Mentor application form/screening
- Attend an interview with the Project Coordinator

**New Peer Mentors will**

- Be part of an orientation session
- Complete on-the-job training
- Complete a feedback survey about the mentoring experience


**Upcoming Training Sessions**

January 1 and February 1, 2012



This brochure was adapted with permission from S.U.C.C.E.S.S., BC.

## Sample Peer Mentoring Poster



# HIGH LEVEL TOY LIBRARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT


*Connecting New Canadian families to the Community*

## Invites you to become a volunteer in the following areas:

- ❖ Volunteer Mentor
- ❖ Workshop Facilitator
- ❖ Child Care Attendant
  
- ❖ Parent and Child Playgroup Leader
  
- ❖ Newsletter Volunteer
- ❖ Volunteer Receptionist
- ❖ Telephone Volunteer
  
- ❖ Community Events Volunteer

### at the Toy Lending Library

**10905 100 Ave High Level, AB**



**For info call: Rhodora or Arlene 123 456 7890**

This poster was used with permission from High Level Toy Lending Library Society, AB.

## Sample Press Release



### Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date:

## ABC Family Resource Centre Launches Peer Mentoring

As part of a project to reach and engage new Canadian families living in isolation, ABC Family Resource Centre is launching its Peer Mentoring Program.

The process of adapting to a new country can be complex and lengthy. New Canadian families often encounter challenges that can inhibit integration and lead to marginalization and social detachment. In response to these concerns in the community, ABC Family Resource Centre has launched the Peer Mentoring Program. It uses a volunteer model in which people from new Canadian families are coached to become Peer Mentors, and to engage isolated new Canadian families in activities that build bridges and support understanding among cultures. For organizations that participate in the Peer Mentoring Program, program staff will receive help from Peer Mentors to engage and support new Canadian families living in isolation.

Peer Mentors will receive both informal and formal training to prepare them for their new leadership role. At the personal level, the program hopes to foster and enhance a mix of skills, knowledge and attitudes within Peer Mentors. Bolstered by the support of new friends and colleagues, this may help them move to the next stage in adapting to Canada – a journey that might include paid work in the not-for-profit sector or elsewhere.

#### For more information, contact

[Name]

[Title]

[Tel #]

[Email]

#### In partnership with

[Logo]

#### Funded by

[Logo]

## Sample Participation Agreement

Between Peer Mentors and Organizations



**Organization Name**      ABC Family Resource Centre

**Name of Peer Mentor**      \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Coach**      \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that by being part of the Peer Mentorship program, I will:

- Take on responsibilities as explained in the Peer Mentor Job Description, based on the policies and procedures of ABC Family Resource Centre
- Complete the orientation, training and job shadowing requirements
- Participate in regular check-in sessions with the Coach
- Provide feedback through the Peer Mentoring Evaluation Survey
- Agree to follow the privacy (confidentiality) rules of ABC Family Resource Centre

**Peer Mentor**

**Coach**

Signature and Today's Date

Signature and Today's Date

## Sample Form for Setting Personal Goals

(For the first goal-setting meeting between the Peer Mentor and the Coach)



**Name of Peer Mentor:**

**Name of Coach:**

**Today's Date:**

1. What would you like to achieve by becoming a Peer Mentor?

2. What kind of help or support do you need to achieve these goals?

3. How often will we meet to talk about your progress? What are the best times and places to meet?

**First check-in session:** [date, time and location]



## Sample Peer Mentoring Check-in Form

(Fill this out during regular check-ins between the Peer Mentor and the Coach)



**Name of Peer Mentor:**

**Name of Coach:**

**Today's Date:**

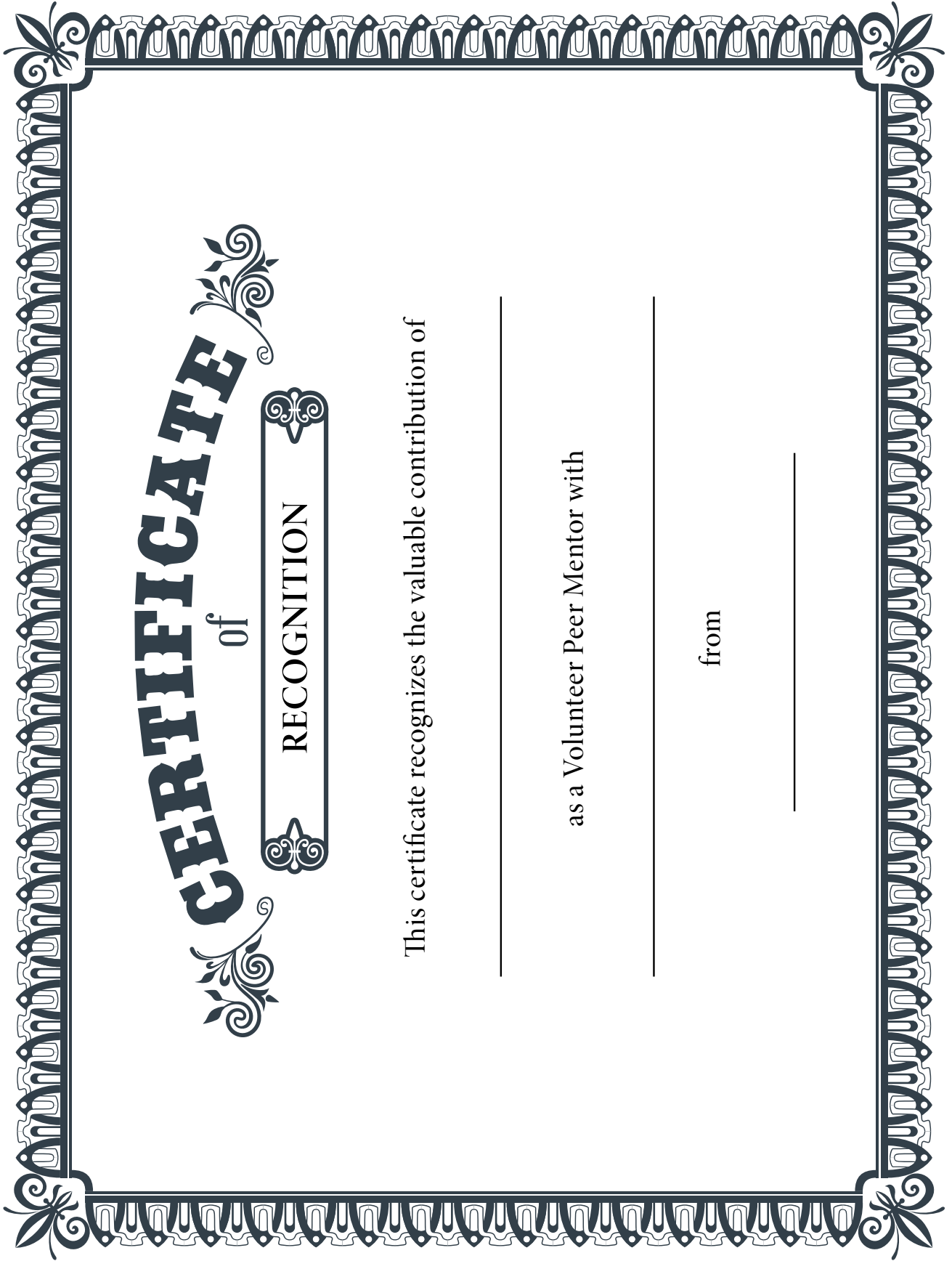
1. What activities did you participate in with families at the program/centre?
2. What went well?
3. What did not go so well?
4. What other resources, information or activities are the participants interested in?
5. What follow-up needs to be done and by whom?
6. Do you have any questions or concerns?
7. List action items to be done before next check-in session, and by whom:

**Next check-in session:** [date, time and location]

## Sample Planned Schedule

	Format	Agenda	Handouts
1	Group	Volunteer information workshop: Overview of Peer Mentoring presented to a group of possible Peer Mentors or supporting organizations.	Peer Mentoring Brochure (Appendix 5)
2	One-on-one	First contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start to build a relationship with the potential Peer Mentor.</li> <li>• Answer questions about Peer Mentoring to determine interest level.</li> </ul>	Peer Mentor Job Description (Appendix 2)
3	One-on-one	Informal interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss potential Peer Mentor’s background, experience, interests and skills.</li> <li>• Explain Peer Mentor role, time commitment required (job shadowing and mentoring itself, meetings with the Coach), screening for all volunteers (criminal record check) and next steps.</li> </ul>	
4	Group	First orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain <i>Guiding Principles of Family Support</i>, and organization’s mission, values and mandate.</li> <li>• Give a tour of the centre to introduce staff, programs and services.</li> <li>• Provide details on policies and procedures, health and safety, first aid, etc.</li> <li>• Review of the Coach and Peer Mentor roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Guiding Principles of Family Support</i> sheet (Appendix 1)</li> <li>• Organization’s policies and procedures (relevant sections)</li> <li>• <i>Peer Mentoring Guide for family support volunteers</i></li> </ul>

	Format	Agenda	Handouts
5	One-on-one	Complete required forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Contact Information Form (from your organization)</li> <li>• Participation Agreement between Peer Mentors and Organizations (<a href="#">Appendix 8</a>)</li> <li>• Confidentiality Agreement (from your organization)</li> </ul>
6	One-on-one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set personal goals for the Peer Mentor.</li> <li>• Discuss the need to create a plan to achieve them.</li> <li>• Set up communication schedule (phone calls, e-mail or meetings).</li> </ul>	Form for Setting Personal Goals ( <a href="#">Appendix 9</a> )
7	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information about community partners and services available.</li> <li>• Discuss Peer Mentors' role in reporting, such as collecting statistics, helping participants complete intake forms, completing program logs, etc.</li> </ul>	Community partner information
8	One-on-one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start job shadow process.</li> <li>• Set up schedule for Peer Mentor to attend workshops, programs, outreach activities, and meetings with community partners.</li> </ul>	
9	Group or one-on-one	Discuss ways to connect with families.	
10	One-on-one regular meetings and phone contact	<p>Schedule meetings on a regular basis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask about successes and challenges</li> <li>• Problem solve as needed</li> <li>• Offer support as needed</li> <li>• Gather information (statistical)</li> <li>• Discuss or review personal goals</li> <li>• Keep a copy of the Peer Mentoring Check-in Form, if one is completed.</li> </ul>	Peer Mentoring Check-in Form ( <a href="#">Appendix 10</a> )
11	One-on-one or survey	Exit interview or survey to gather feedback about the Peer Mentoring experience.	Peer Mentor Survey ( <a href="#">Appendix 14</a> )



## Mentoring Best Practices for the Coach

- Think of yourself as both a “learning helper” and a learner rather than someone with all the answers. Help the Peer Mentor find people and other resources that go beyond your experience and knowledge on a topic.
- Encourage, inspire, and challenge the Peer Mentor to achieve her goals.
- Focus on asking questions rather than giving advice. Use questions that help the Peer Mentor think more broadly and deeply. If the Peer Mentor talks only about facts, ask about feelings, and vice versa. If she faces roadblocks, help her see the broader picture.
- When the Peer Mentor asks for your views, you may wish to share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Stress how your experiences could be different from hers and that you are only offering examples. Resist any urge to solve the problem for her.
- Help the Peer Mentor take the initiative in the mentoring relationship. Be open to her ideas. Do your best not to control the relationship or steer its outcomes; the Peer Mentor is responsible for her own growth.
- Help the Peer Mentor see other ways of thinking about things and to reflect on what she has done in the past that was successful. This approach could also apply to new challenges. Let her know that you do not expect her to follow all of your suggestions.
- Build the Peer Mentor’s confidence through supportive feedback.
- Do something spontaneous now and then. Beyond your formal conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” just to encourage her with a short sentence or new piece of new information.
- Recognize and work through conflicts in caring ways. Invite discussion of differences and ask a third party to assist, as needed.
- Reflect on your mentoring practice. Request feedback from the Peer Mentor.
- Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a major impact on the Peer Mentor’s development as well as your own.
- Be clear that it would be okay for the Peer Mentor to return in the future (after the Mentoring activity has ended).

The material in the Appendix “Mentoring Best Practices for the Coach” was adapted with permission from:

- Center for Health Leadership & Practice (2002) *Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Mentors*. Oakland, CA: Center for Health Leadership & Practice, Public Health Institute
- ALLIES (2009) *Mentoring for Skilled Immigrants Toolkit*. Retrieved on November 29, 2011 from [alliescanada.ca/resources/toolkits/mentoring-for-skilled-immigrants/introduction/](http://alliescanada.ca/resources/toolkits/mentoring-for-skilled-immigrants/introduction/)

Material is also included from FRP Canada (2005) *Mentor’s Guide* produced for the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement.

## Sample Peer Mentor Survey

**Dear Peer Mentor:**

We would like to ask you a few questions about your experience with the Peer Mentoring Program.  
**Please mark your choice of answer for the questions below.**

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**1. The training I received in the Peer Mentoring program prepared me for my work.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**2. The training materials provided were useful.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**3. My Coach provided me with useful support (advice, feedback, etc.).**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**4. My work as a Peer Mentor helped me to develop skills that I could use in the job market.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**5. The Peer Mentoring program helped me establish new relationships in the community.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**6. My work as a Peer Mentor was personally rewarding.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**7. I feel the Peer Mentoring program was useful to the families involved.**

Agree 😊      Somewhat Agree 😐      Disagree ☹️      Don't Know/Does Not Apply ○

**8. Describe your experience working with isolated immigrant families.**

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**9. Do you feel the Peer Mentoring program helped these isolated families? Please explain.**

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**10. If there is anything else you would like to add, please use the back of this sheet.**

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## Sample Mentoring Coach Survey

**Dear Peer Mentoring Coach:**

We would like to ask you a few questions about your experience working on the Peer Mentoring program.

**Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements below.**

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**1. We were successful in recruiting Peer Mentors.**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**2. We were able to provide adequate training to our Peer Mentors.**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**3. Our Peer Mentors were able to effectively reach and engage isolated families.**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**4. Our Peer Mentors were able to develop useful work skills (i.e. language skills, computer skills etc.)**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**5. Our Peer Mentors were able to develop useful social skills (i.e. leadership, networking skills, etc.)**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**6. I feel that the Peer Mentoring program was useful to the Peer Mentors.**

- Agree     Somewhat Agree     Somewhat Disagree     Disagree     Don't Know/Does Not Apply

**7. Describe how this program was beneficial to you, to isolated families and/or to Peer Mentors.**

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**8. Please use the space below for additional comments about this experience.**

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