



Niagara Training & Adjustment Board

le Conseil de formation et d'adaptation
de la main d'oeuvre de Niagara

**WOMEN'S
MENTORING PROJECT
IN NIAGARA
APRIL 2006 – MARCH 31, 2007
EVALUATION REPORT**

APRIL 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Niagara Training & Adjustment Board would like to thank the partners, participants and all those that were instrumental in making this pilot project a reality.

The Niagara Training & Adjustment Board (NTAB) provided project management and accountability processes for the project; the YWCA recruited and worked with the women mentees; Women in Niagara (WIN), as part of the Small Business Club of Niagara (SBCN) recruited, trained and supported the mentors and provided project coordination; a pool of women community leaders provided the training and education program to prepare the mentors; a researcher from Brock University provided research consultation and evaluation for the project.

The mentors and mentees who participated in the pilot provided the spirit and life of the project through their commitment, enthusiasm, struggles, sharing and ideas for future improvements.

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BACKGROUND ON PROJECT

A feasibility study was conducted as part of Phase I of this project that led to the design and implementation process established for this **Community Mentoring Process Model** for women in Niagara. A stakeholder Advisory Committee made up of representatives from business, professions, education, government agencies and women-serving organizations met to plan and explore approaches to meet the broader purposes of:

- increasing participation of women in the labour force in Niagara;
- to improve job retention by women coming out of employment assistance programs;
- to increase skills to match labour market needs in women in Niagara;
- to provide better access to better paying jobs;
- and to increase entrepreneurship and home-based businesses among women.

Community partners worked together to design and implement a one year pilot initiative entitled **The Women's Mentorship Project in Niagara** that was funded by the Local Partnership Fund 2006-2007 through the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board. This project was supported through funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Service Canada.

BACKGROUND ON MENTORING

Mentors traditionally pass on their experience, knowledge, skills and wisdom to someone who could benefit from their modeling, sharing and mentoring. Through supportive, respectful, caring and nurturing mentoring relationships, learning, growth and development can occur and that the goals set by the mentee/protégé can be achieved. "A mentor relationship is a developmental, empowering and nurturing relationship extending over time in which mutual learning and growth occur in an atmosphere of respect, collegiality and affirmation" (Vance & Olson, 1998, p. 1). Mentoring takes place best in an atmosphere of exploration, trust, self-reflection, good communications, goal attainment and self-actualization.

Mentoring has served 2 main functions: **psycho-social functions** of support, guidance, friendship and encouragement and; **career functions** of role modeling, career identification, career inclusion, socialization and networking, skills and competency development and career planning and advancement. Wills and Kaiser (2002) suggest that a good mentor is a wise consultant during a career journey. Mentoring has been likened to a gift exchange (Lander, 2004; Gehrke & Kay, 1984) and to be a professional and career obligation and privilege (Vance, 2002). Mentoring in business has been addressed by many researchers and writers (Allen, Lentz & Day, 2001; Burk & McKeen, 1995; Waters, McCabe, Kiellerop & Kiellerop, 2005). A critical review of the literature, history, definitions and approaches to mentoring can be found in a prior report by Kilty (2006) for the Ontario Hospital Board.

Informal mentoring is voluntary and based on opportunity, choice and mutual attraction matching. This approach is more organic in whether it happens, how the mentoring is established, what the purpose is and how the relationship develops over time. **Formal mentoring** is usually sanctioned, supported and arranged by organizational supports, matching assisted process, educational preparation and methods to monitor its success. This type of mentoring often has set parameters for the purpose of the exchange and how frequent and over what period of time the relationship lasts.

It has been suggested that mentoring can have positive impacts on:

- mentors (increased satisfaction, learning, self-confidence, personal growth, career retention, leadership and competence)
- mentees/protégés (increased self confidence, career success, personal growth, career opportunities and competence)
- careers and professions (increased recruitment, retention, opportunities, competence and knowledge)
- organizations (increased leadership, satisfaction and capacity building)
- society (increased social capital, civic participation, capacity building, utilization of human talent and the creation of a culture of caring, nurturing, success, competence and inclusion).

This project adapted a formal mentoring model with supports for recruitment of participants, matching, mentor skills development and ongoing monitoring, problem solving and feedback throughout the project. Most formal mentoring initiatives have been organized and delivered within a single organizational context or within a single professional or career context. This project adopted a **community-based mentoring model** and used community-based agencies for recruitment, matching and support.

OVERALL PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The overall purpose of the project:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To pilot the proposed mentoring program for women for one year and to evaluate the design against cost and effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for the participants and the local economy. 	
The objectives of the project were:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and train 10 successfully employed or self-employed women from business, industry and the professions to act as mentors to women seeking entry or re-entry into the workforce. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To select 10 clients (mentees) within existing employment services or women-serving organizations, who are deemed ready for mentorship and match with an appropriate mentor. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor the progress of the mentoring relationship from the point of view of the mentee and bring mentees together as a group for regular peer support. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer ongoing support to the mentors through the establishment of a regular one on one meeting with program staff and by the convening of the mentors for regular support group meetings. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To capture data throughout the year on what works and what does not to track success and correlate it to the factors that indicate success. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report regularly throughout the pilot to a stakeholder advisory group assembled to provide guidance and accountability to the program. 	✓
Top issue addressed by this initiative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation of women in the workforce. 	✓
Outcomes of the local project:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mentorship program consisting of 10 mentors in a mentoring relationship with 10 mentees for a period of one year. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A local Advisory Committee made up of stakeholders from business, professions, education, government agencies and women-serving organizations. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written report which will document the learning from the first year of the program. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A realistic assessment of the program's potential for helping women find jobs and keep jobs. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On going funding identified. 	×

✓ All objectives and outcomes complete but the ongoing funding that will be explored further.

EVALUATION/ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A variety of research approaches and methodologies were used to evaluate this pilot initiative. Both formative and summative evaluative approaches to research were utilized in this project.

Formative research is usually conducted during the development or improvement phase of a program. This evaluation approach often focuses on ways to ensure that the objectives of the program initiative are met. In this way, parts of the process, structure, communications and tools can be changed and altered through such evaluation as the project develops. As a pilot project, the organizers collected data as the project progressed so that improvements and adjustments could be made to the mentor training and throughout the mentoring delivery. Adjustments were made to ensure that all 10 mentors had mentees and that the mentor and mentee group meetings generated valuable input for improvements from those engaged in the program. The weekly check-ins and monthly reviews helped organizers to make adjustments along the way. These lessons learned were acted upon throughout the pilot. They also formed part of the evaluation of the entire pilot program so that improvements and recommendations could come forward to improve the overall Community Mentoring Model so that others could take it forward. Forms and procedures used in this project can be improved and adapted to other settings and for use in other communities.

Summative evaluation provides information about the effectiveness, outcomes and impact of a program initiative. Overall, summative evaluation was utilized to determine if the mentoring met the objectives of the pilot project and any impact the intervention may have had on the mentors, the mentees and organizers. Ultimately, the research evaluation was also to see if such mentoring had any impact on increased career and employment opportunities for the women engaged in the project.

Quantitative data was collected through surveys, reports, self-reported ratings of satisfactions and other dimensions. **Qualitative data** was gained through group meetings, focus groups, qualitative questions on forms and surveys and individual telephone and in-person interviews. Direct sample quotes are integrated into the report to bring the voices of the participants into the evaluation as much as possible. Evaluative data was collected at 3 time periods: before the project; during the mentoring; and at the end of the project. This is a list of reports and data sources reviewed for this report:

1. Stakeholder reference group meetings (meetings prior to the project and 1 planned to review the results after the program)
2. Mentor Applications
3. Initial Program Questionnaires
4. Evaluation of mentor preparation and training sessions
5. Networking meeting and presentation evaluation surveys
6. Mentoring Agreements signed by mentors and mentees
7. Weekly check-in sheets for mentors and mentees
8. Monthly summaries for mentees
9. Minutes of meetings (4 mentor meetings, 2 mentee meetings)
10. Final evaluation and feedback survey

11. Ratings of mentors
12. Interviews
13. Celebrations/ debriefing
14. Stakeholders

Participants were invited to participate in the pilot program and were made aware of the forms and documentation required. All gave consent and filled out all or some of the required information. The final evaluation form used at the final group meeting was explained to them and that participation was voluntary and confidential and that their information would appear in a final summary report and consents were signed.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The project took a few months to organize and to develop and finalize the recruitment, selection, matching, coordination and monitoring systems. Initially, 13 mentors were recruited through the Small Business Club Niagara (SBCN) (www.sbcn.ca) and Women in Niagara (WIN) (www.sbcn.ca/win/). All 13 submitted application forms and completed the Initial Program Questionnaires. Eleven (11) potential mentors attended the Mentor Training Day and completed the mentor evaluation and feedback forms.

Ten mentees were recruited through the YWCA through their employment workshops, Job Route Program and housing and transition support services. All mentees recruited indicated a need for career and employment supports, information and changes. All indicated that a mentor might help and they were prepared to meet potential mentors. At the beginning of the evening each Mentee was given brief biographies of three potential Mentors. Throughout the evening, the mentees were encouraged to meet and converse with the Mentors on their list. Sixteen mentors and mentees attended a Networking Evening to participate in a matching exercise and to receive some information regarding labour force statistics and involvement in Niagara. Ten mentors and mentees were matched for the mentoring at this stage. Difficulty contacting two of the initial mentees resulted in a necessity to recruit 2 new mentees through the YWCA employment support programs. **10 mentors were active in the mentoring and matched with 10 mentees for this pilot project, as per the original target.**

RESEARCH BEFORE THE PROJECT

Pre mentoring collection of information both for process, matching and evaluation.

a) Mentorship Application Form

The application form was developed to have the potential mentor apply to be a mentor in the project. The mentor provided the following information:

- contact information;
- background information regarding employment, volunteer work and hobbies for matching with potential mentees;
- brief bios to be used during the pairing process
- and a declared commitment to meet the required hours for a 6 hour training program, a 2-3 hour networking meeting and a minimum of 1 hour per week of mentor contact for 6 months.

Mentors were asked to reflect on why they would like to be a mentor and to provide 2 references. In signing the application they were agreeing "to accept the policies and guidelines and to help achieve the goals of the Women's Employment Mentoring Program." Their continuing participation was also conditional on the receipt of a satisfactory criminal police check.

Summary of results: All of the mentors recruited for the pilot were successful women from a variety of employment fields including office administration, business, sales and advertising, tourism, catering, financial planning, and information technology. Many were small business owners, project managers, consultants, or Executive Directors and were employed by various companies, city governments or their own business enterprises. In addition, they all brought a wide range of community leadership, volunteer experience, networks, involvements, hobbies and varied interests with them to this mentoring. Several shared that they too had gone through career searching and life challenges that would help them to help their mentees. In their reflections, the main reasons they indicated that they wanted to be a mentor had to do with the following key themes:

- to help others to meet their goals and be successful in their careers and life;
- to contribute something positive to the well being of women and to their community;
- to share their stories, experiences, skills, talents and struggles;
- to help others make connections and network for success.

NOTE: the project recruited the target number of women who were motivated to mentor, who had the talent and skills for career and psychosocial mentoring, who agreed to the requirements and commitments and who could offer the kind of mentoring envisioned by the project for women wanting to be successful in job search, career goals or entrepreneurial small business plans.

b) Mentee Applications

Summary of results: Mentees also filled out an application form and indicated why they wanted a mentor. Many indicated they needed to have more confidence and self esteem and to transition back into the workforce. Several indicated that their life circumstances brought them to the region where they found themselves presently in circumstances where they had no social networks or contacts and connections here. Some were unfamiliar with the area or had no transportation. Several indicated that they were also dealing with abuse problems, housing problems and family and personal problems. Two were from other countries and had no social support networks, cultural context experience or employment here. Several were taking courses at the college and other places and felt they needed to develop more skills and to get some job experience. Several already had computer skills, artistic skills, business skills and talents and felt they needed help with networking and contacts to pursue their goals.

Of the forms completed, many indicated that they knew *a lot* about how to find and keep paid employment to only knowing *some*. Some said *yes* they had trouble finding employment in the past and others said *no*. Many were *somewhat, not very or not at all confident* in their ability to find and keep employment. Some had formal or informal mentors in the past, others did not. Contact with other successfully employed women were rated as *none* or *some*. Some felt they could go to another successfully employed woman for advice others said no, they couldn't. They were *somewhat* or *very comfortable* when they met someone who was a professional.

NOTE: The project recruited the targeted number of mentees at various levels of skill development, job preparation and experience. They were at different levels of confidence in their ability to find and keep employment. They were also at differing levels of confidence and comfort in meeting and asking for advice from other successful and employed women before the project began. All of them indicated they needed further goal achievement, job development, and career support and that networking and having a mentor might help them.

c) Initial Program Questionnaire for Mentors

Mentors were asked: why they decided to become a mentor; what they hoped to benefit as a result of the program; what they thought mentees hoped to benefit as a result of the program; any hesitations or concerns they identified about being a mentor; questions about their knowledge about poverty and violence; and their own relationship boundaries and exclusivities so far.

Summary of results:

The main reasons they gave for why they wanted to become a mentor were:

to help other women; to give back to the community; because they enjoyed meeting and talking to people; *"Because I was mentored myself"* and *"Because I was asked."*

The main benefits the mentors said they hoped to get from the involvement were:

- To help others to set and reach their goals and to see them grow
- To become more self confident and have more self esteem themselves
- To extend a hand to others and to make a difference
- To expand their own network and learn from new people
- For personal satisfaction and personal growth

"For the personal challenge and an opportunity to give back"

The main benefits the mentors thought the mentee might get from the mentoring relationship were:

- To achieve their goals
- To get business advice, information and resources
- To build self confidence and motivation
- To get employment
- To receive caring and understanding and experience

"To meet new people and learn new things"

"to grow in the direction she wants to learn and grow."

"to build a better life for herself and her children."

"to benefit from my experience as a single mom, student, and widow."

They were asked about the range of contact of their present day-to-day relationships.

Two said that their present relationships were most exclusively with people from similar backgrounds and socio economic groups as they were; 5 said they were mostly with people similar to them, but not exclusively; and 5 said they were mostly with people from many different backgrounds.

They were asked if they participated in efforts to end violence against women and how much they knew about violence against women and its causes and effects. They were also asked about their knowledge about issues related to poverty and violence. Two participants said they participated a lot in efforts to end violence against women; 5 said occasionally and 2 said never. Regarding their knowledge about violence and its effects and causes 3 said they knew a lot; 8 said they knew some; and 1 said they knew very little.

They identified few concerns or hesitations about being a mentor at this time.

The only hesitations and concerns they had about their role as a mentor at the application stage were that they couldn't make a difference or that they hoped that they wouldn't disappoint their group or organization.

d) Mentor preparation and training program evaluation survey

Summary of results: 13 evaluations were handed out for the education session offered at the YWCA location and 11 were completed. Ratings of the first day's session: 6 (55%) rated it as excellent; 5 (45%) as very good and none below that (good, fair or poor).

Suggestions for improvement were that

- mentors exchange business cards;
- have more breaks;
- have a room with natural light;
- the session was a little long;
- they needed information about who to call for questions, problems or to monitor progress.

The handout materials were rated as follows: 6 (55%) as excellent; 5(45%) as very good and none below that.

They commented that the materials were very valuable. They enjoyed the presenters and the fact that they were all different; they liked the chance to know themselves and to complete the personality style test; and have the opportunity to get to know the other people. The things they identified as enjoying least were having no stretch breaks, it was too long, and they needed more space in the training room. The second day was rated as follows: 5 (45%) as excellent, 6 (55%) as very good and none below that. They were asked if anything was missing and they wanted the matching process clarified; who to contact if there are problems and to monitor the program; and case studies of possible mentees.

All 11 (100%) felt better prepared to be a mentor as a result of the education and some comments were:

"I am also nervous" "I feel better, but not totally ready yet" "I understand the process involved and experience to be a good mentor" "(I have a) better understanding of myself and the communication tools were great"

All of them would recommend this workshop to a friend or colleague. The educational topics they wanted more of were: information on the background of mentees; listening; more on mentorship; basics of anger management, coaching and other best practices; and community resources to help their mentees.

NOTE: The education program was well organized, well delivered and well evaluated. A few modest changes made can be accommodated in the future.

e) Evaluation survey of the mentor/ mentee networking meeting

Summary of results: This meeting was held to bring the mentors and mentees together to meet one another. Mentees were given a short list of three potential mentors with each of their biographies. The mentees would have an opportunity to interview potential mentors at the meeting and it was hoped

that the matching would not only be by the formal exchange of information from the questionnaire, but that the mentees would be fully engaged in participating in the decision about who would be a good mentor for them. For each mentee, a small committee from the YWCA and WIN selected 2-3 potential mentors that seemed to be a good match. Each mentee was supplied with a short biography of the mentor and met with them at the Networking Evening. Mentees provided the YWCA with their first, second and third choice for the potential mentors. In most cases mentees were given their first choice. The method seemed to work well. There were more mentors than mentees and several trained mentors became part of a pool for the future of this initiative. The mentors and mentees were also given an educational presentation that evening by the Executive Director of the Niagara Training and Adjustment Board about the Niagara labour market.

A group of 16 mentors and mentees attended this evening and 8 evaluations were returned. 2 (25%) rated the session as excellent, 5 (62%) as very good and 1 (13%) as good. Their suggestions for improvement were to have a bell for time keeping so that they could meet all three potential mentors; and that a list of mentees be provided to help the process. The information presented on the Niagara labour market at the meeting was rated as follows: 2(25%) as excellent, 5(62%) as very good and 1 (13%) as good. Other suggestions were made to have 1 big room instead of small breakout rooms, and more of an understanding of their roles. They gave plenty of thanks on that night and expressed excitement to get going.

"It was a great atmosphere- welcoming and relaxed. "A good start to kick off the relationship building." "It was a nice light-hearted evening. Thank you so much."

NOTE: The networking meeting was evaluated favourably and the matching approach was found to be successful. It would be beneficial if the exercise was more structured and timed so that all mentees met all mentors for a one on one dialogue. It might be better if the networking and matching exercise was the major focus of this evening. The suggestion is that they come back together a bit later for the Niagara labour force presentation to share in a collaborative group learning experience at a time when the information might be even more relevant to meeting their goals and discussions.

f) Mentor and mentee signed agreements

The signed agreements outlined together the goals the mentee wanted to accomplish through the mentor mentee relationship; what they hoped to get out of the relationship; any concerns they had at the time; any obstacles in their behaviour or circumstances that are important to be kept in mind by the mentor; and what assistance the mentor committed themselves to provide assistance to their mentee.

The mentees outlined their own specific goals but common themes had to do with a) specific career and employment goals and starting a new business; b) relational goals were to build trust and a friendship without judgment; c) connection, linking and networking goals; d) acceptance of guidance and support from the mentor and; e) dealing with transitional housing issues. Many wanted to get

respect, honesty, fun, friendship, commitment to their goals, confidence, independence and education from the experience. They also wanted access to other accomplished women. Concerns at this point were transportation issues, how to communicate, time and frequency of contact and not to be rushed to unrealistic goals. Obstacles were identified as setting unrealistic goals and need for babysitting and to go at their own pace. Mentors offered contacts, motivation, information, support, resources for jobs, self-esteem building and friendship.

NOTE: The mentoring contact was a good approach to clarify expectations and form shared commitment and to clarify expectations of the mentoring experience. A few completed their discussions verbally and clarified the commitment, but not in writing. The agreements also helped to guide the post-evaluation to see if what they hoped to gain and offer were successful.

COLLECTION OF DATA AND INFORMATION DURING THE PROJECT

a) Weekly check-ins and monthly reviews:

Summary of results: Mentors and mentees both filled out a weekly check-in sheet asking if they had met with their mentee/mentor in the last week; if not, why they didn't meet; topics discussed; if they were happy with the way the meeting went; if they had any concerns about how it was going; changes they wanted to make; additional support they needed; and if they were satisfied with the relationship. 10 mentors were conscientious about filling these out; some as they went, some in a batch at the end. Five (5) mentees were more conscientious about this.

Some of the activities they were doing with their mentees were: looking into school and courses, networking and meeting contacts, setting goals, working on motivation, enjoying social time, going to community events together (Trade Show, Alive After Five); consulting on job search and interviewing; and dealing with bosses and new jobs.

They met face-to-face, had lunches, went to events together, met business associates and had in-between meeting telephone and e-mail contact. Missed meetings were because of illness, being out of town or not being able to contact each other. Some mentoring took time to get started and after many attempts to get together they finally got active.

Some of the comments were about their developing relationships and mutual respect, good communication, connecting and mutual positive feedback and compliments:

"my mentor is an excellent listener, genuine and yet business-like", "caring and easy to talk to" "She has confidence and can transfer it" "I feel like I belong and a future of quality and adventure" "We are having fun and becoming friends" "I look forward to our time together" "(She can) help me with decisions" "We are connecting" "I think this program has done what its purpose was"

All but one mentor/mentee dyad developed well throughout the program and the weekly reports indicated growth, development and high satisfaction. One started out as a positive experience and match *"she's great to talk to and perfect for me"* *"fun personable and professional"* and shifted later in the process to *"I don't feel mentored. I don't think my goals are being accomplished"* *"not enough experience to envision and take my career seriously."* *"I found what I wanted after the program."*

Some of the concerns documented on the weekly check-ins were about how to keep in contact, transportation issues and the travel time required to meet one another. They also wanted to make sure both remained involved in planning how the mentoring went and how time was spent.

NOTE: Although all participants agreed to be part of this pilot and to complete forms to help us to evaluate the initiative, it was hard for them to keep up with the paperwork. However, when the weekly forms are completed, it makes it possible to facilitate solutions if things go wrong and changes are needed. The participants suggested that perhaps having both weekly and monthly reports were not necessary and indeed many did not complete the monthly summaries.

b) Monthly group meetings:

Summary of results: The mentors met 4 times during the project timeframe and had plans for one right after. Minutes of meetings were kept and the organizers attended the meetings in order to hear their successes and to gather their ideas for improvements in the program. The evaluator attended one of the meetings. Mentors gave each other support and excellent suggestions for how to keep the mentoring alive and how to help their mentees. As a result, one mentor was able to connect their mentee to another mentor for a visit to City Hall to meet with a colleague in the same career. This meeting was very fruitful for the mentee's career possibilities, confidence and connections. Mentoring the mentors continued in this way and the mentors indicated it was very beneficial in their feedback. In addition, the YWCA project contact person attended the mentor meetings and brought ideas back to support the mentees. The mentee group met twice during the project and received support from one another.

NOTE: The meetings provided good sources of formative evaluation to improve and problem solve as the program developed. It also served as a positive communication, networking and support mechanism. Having a monthly meeting for mentors and mentees separately as originally planned and an occasional combined meeting for both groups would have been best to get the most out of this experience.

EVALUATION AFTER THE PROJECT

a) Debriefing meeting and evaluation survey

At the end of the project timeframe, a meeting was convened with the mentors and mentees where a celebration and meal was shared. At this time, the researcher administered a final evaluation survey, led an integration exercise and debriefed the participants about the overall experience of mentoring. 7 mentors and 6 mentees took part in this experience and completed the final evaluation survey.

Summary of results:

Methods of contact with each other:

Many reported that they used a variety of the methods of mentoring contact: telephone, e-mail, meeting in person and visits on the job. Meeting in person was reported as the main way of making contact by all 7 mentors backed up with telephone by 6, e-mail by 4, visits on the job by 4 and working together and going to community events (Art show) were the extra ones added to the choice list by many. The mentees also reported meeting in person as the main way of having regular contact (6) backed up by telephone (5) and e-mail contact (5)

How would you rate your mentoring experience?

Of the 7 mentors, 4 rated it as *excellent*; 1 as *very good*; and 2 as *good*.

Of the 6 mentees 5 rated the experience as *excellent*; and 1 as *good*.

Did the mentoring meet your expectations? (a little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 a lot)

All 7 mentors rated this as 5, 6, or 7 as meeting their expectations *a lot*.

Of the 6 mentees, 5 rated this as 5, 6, or 7 as meeting their expectations *a lot*. One mentee did not answer as she and her mentor had just begun their relationship and she thought it was too soon to tell.

Rate your overall satisfaction with the mentoring you received.

6 of 6 mentees were *very satisfied* with the mentoring they received.

Work before and after mentoring.

Before the mentoring project and after the mentoring project, all of the mentors indicated that *they were working in a position that they wanted to be in*. Before the mentoring project the mentees indicated that 4 were *not working*, 2 were *working in a job but wanted changes*. After the mentoring project, 2 mentees reported they were *not working but still studying*; 2 were *working, but wanted changes*; and 4 reported they were getting ready for employment (had a resume ready, had better interview skills, were studying or were looking for a job and working on their business idea). Right after the project was complete one mentee got the career job they were looking for.

Would you participate in future mentoring opportunities?

6 of the 7 mentors said yes and 1 said they *didn't know*.

5 of the 6 mentees said yes they would and 1 said they *didn't know*.

Would you mentor others in the future?

6 mentors said yes and 1 said they *didn't know*.

4 mentees said yes and 1 said they *didn't know*. One felt they needed to get healthier and deal with a health problem to be able to mentor others, so they did not answer the question.

Would you suggest mentoring to others?

7 of 7 mentors said *yes*.

5 of 6 mentees said *yes* and 1 mentee said they *didn't know*.

The mentoring experience helped me accomplish the following:

Mentors and mentees were asked if the mentoring experience helped to build self-confidence; taught them skills; helped in their career; gave them an opportunity to learn something new; gave them someone to share ideas with or gave them support and encouragement. Many of the mentors rated that they gained many of these benefits from mentoring others. They especially rated that they had an *opportunity to learn something new as a mentor* and *it gave them support and encouragement*.

Mentees indicated that they gained a closer to *a lot* (5, 6 or 7) on the scale on all benefits outlined. They gained self confidence, some skills and it helped their career (rated a 5 and up). They rated the opportunity to learn something new, someone to share ideas with and support and encouragement as the highest on this rating scale (rated 6 and up).

Mentors and mentees were asked to rate their mentor/ mentee on their ability to listen, openness and honesty, ambition, knowledge about their field, assertiveness, warmth, sense of humour and leadership. Mentors were rated a 7 (high on all indicators). Ratings on listening, honesty, warmth and creativity were rated high for both. Ratings on assertiveness and leadership were slightly lower (but still high 4 and above) for mentees.

What 3 words best describe your mentoring experience

All positive descriptors were given by all 7 mentors and mentees:

- Amazing, outstanding, awesome, great, excellent
- Fulfilling, rewarding, helpful, satisfying, uplifting, successful, fun, enjoyable
- Educational, new learning, interesting, enlightening
- Challenging
- Friendship, cooperation

How often did you meet with your mentor?

Mentors and mentees reported mostly meeting weekly as had been proposed by stating weekly or 10-16 times over the project. One of the mentoring matches got started later and had only reported meeting about 3 times to date.

How many hours in total did you meet with your mentor/mentee?

Mentors reported meeting an average of 18 hours over the project; mentees reported meeting an average of 13 hours over the project. Four (4) mentors reported meeting a total of 20-30+ hours. The next cluster of 3 mentors met 4-8 hours and many of these started later.

What did you expect from the mentoring experience?

Some mentors reported they didn't know what to expect or were unsure and tentative at first, but open to the experience. Some thought they would meet mentees who might be unhappy and or negative. All expected to meet new people and to develop a relationship and friendship; to help with goal setting and achievement; and to be a positive influence or motivator; and to learn about others and self and become more accepting.

Mentees reported they didn't have a clear idea of what to expect from the mentoring, only that the mentor was supposed to help them. They hoped for networking, meeting new people, goal setting, companionship, encouragement, experience, a role model with knowledge of what it takes to get a job or to try to find an employed position to match their resume and skills.

How did mentoring affect your success at work?

Mentors reported they gained more confidence, shared in a positive experience, shared knowledge, identified a potential new employee and were exposed to new information in their field that was relevant for their planning and insights.

Mentees said the experience made them sure they were going in the right direction, another was looking for another job and aware of problems at work, another said it helped them to know who they really were, and to feel more confident.

"It made me sure I am going in the right direction."

How did the mentoring affect you personally?

Mentors reported that the experience made them feel gratified, proud, enlightened and positive. In addition, some of the quotes were:

"I appreciate what I have." "It opened my eyes to other people and other situations." "I discovered I had a more positive way to share my experience ... I felt very positive to see how I (little old me) could motivate and encourage another."

"It was a good growth experience."

Mentees reported that it affected them personally by giving them more confidence, made me stronger, more relaxed in business discussions, support to make changes, nice to know people care.

"It gave me added support and encouragement to make changes."

"It made me more relaxed in business discussions."

What benefits (good things) did you get from the mentoring?

Mentors: new friendship and positive relationship – opportunity to see a person grow – opened up more relationships with other mentors, self analysis, open mindedness, strengthened some professional relationships.

Mentees: feeling of achievement, feeling of potential, feeling of adventure – a friend, meeting other successful business women, creating a new relationship/ friendship, support and encouragement – more professional and more confident.

What did you enjoy most?

Mentors: mentor meetings, good relationship, huge appreciation for work of YWCA and other similar organizations.

Mentees: feeling like I belong, new friends, go out and participate, relaxed atmosphere, great new ideas, mutual respect, being a part of something

What did you enjoy least?

Mentors: hard to contact, paperwork, parking tickets in front of the YWCA.

Mentees: not enough time to enjoy the experience, papers to fill out.

What qualities do you think a MENTOR needs to be successful?

Mentors identified these qualities for a successful mentor: listening, communication, empathy, open minded, flexible, builder of confidence, patience, open and honest, willing to share and be innovative

Mentees identified these qualities for a successful mentee: caring, listener, communication, non judgmental, open minded, willing to share, give honest advice, confident and self-assured, flexible, enthusiastic, *"respect means everything."*

What qualities do you think a MENTEE needs to get the most out of mentoring?

Mentors said: open minded, open and honest, open to new ideas, able to take feedback and criticism, willing to want a better life and to take the steps to go forward, good communication, willing to go out of comfort zone and to stretch, positive attitude, and confidence.

Mentees said: non judgmental, open and honest, open to new experiences and want to make positive changes, accept compliments and criticisms.

What improvements would you suggest to make the mentoring for women project more effective in the future?

Mentors: list of community services; computer rooms for research; advertise to let people know there was a pilot project launched and was successful; more involvement with YWCA, WIN and opportunities for mentor/mentee events; less paperwork and more question and answer times with mentees as a group.

b) Other post evaluations

In addition to those mentees who handed in their final evaluation at the meeting and evaluation evening 1 mentee who started with a positive experience and written reports ended not being happy with the mentoring and they filled out an evaluation form later. In the end, she found the experience to be *disappointing*, to only be a little satisfied with the experience and to only want to be engaged in the future as a mentor, not a mentee. She felt the mentor not to end up being helpful in their career goals, and she reported that she found what she needed after she left the mentoring relationship and got a good job. The ratings of their mentor were lower. This mentee still said what she liked most about the program was *"to be part of a program."*

In addition, 4 mentees filled out the final evaluation form later that had been included in their original package.

- 2 rated the mentoring experience to them as very beneficial and 1 as somewhat beneficial.
- The activities identified as most beneficial were: the networking, friendship time, going to community events together, linking with a former graduate in their program to discuss jobs and possibilities. *"Every activity was a blessing."*
- The activities identified as least beneficial were: the paperwork and when they couldn't get together for some reason.
- All 4 rated their mentors as excellent on a 5 point Likert scale (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor) on the following items: suggestions from their mentor; helpfulness of the material supplied by the mentor; interest and enthusiasm of the mentor; frequency of the meetings; overall evaluation of the mentoring experience.
- The best qualities the mentor brought to the relationship were: enthusiasm, respect, open mindedness, positive, encouragement, honesty, caring, non-judgmental, knowledgeable, friendly, thoughtfulness, and having an understanding of the business community network.

c) Qualitative telephone interviews with organizers, mentors and mentees

Two telephone interviews were conducted with organizers of the program; 2 with mentors; and 2 with mentees on the phone and face to face for more in-depth debriefing.

Was the mentoring program successful from your perspective?:

All indicated that the program was very successful for them and for others.

- *"Yes, it gave me an opportunity I would not have been able to secure myself – to locate a person who was beneficial to me in a specific area."*
- *"Successful? Oh very, it helped her (the mentee) through a difficult time – we would share I'm having this problem – (we had) same situations. It was very rewarding for me. I could consult on how to handle situations in her work. (The mentoring) validates that it is normal and we all face struggles - it is a part of life.' "It has developed into a good friendship – that made it successful." "I can see my future now."*

- *"They are meeting to support each other and when they speak of the program they say it is amazing and building strong relationships – some even cry. They were all ready, open and willing."*
- *"From a 'Job Development' perspective the program is invaluable in filling in gaps in the road to employment and reaching goals."*

Did the matching process work?

- *"The matching method worked for me."*
- *"It was a good match."*
- *"Yes we have them all matched, all learning, mentors and mentees making a difference, building confidence, learning about selves and achieving goals. They are going to lunch, making friends, networking, feeling valuable, open to other situations, and crossing social boundaries."*
- *"Yes, we were given 3 options and a chance to interview them and the choice was left up to us." The mentors were real dynamos and I was impressed with their flare, professionalism and enthusiasm! The mentees I have come to know, as well, are equally incredible – they are all unique and have amazing stories to tell and I have seen growth in surprising areas."*

Where should this project go in the future?

- *"We should tell our stories and experiences and get others excited about the potential and what happened." "Mentors should keep mentoring and meeting."*
- *"I got to know other mentors at monthly meetings, we all talked and were reassured I am more aware and respectful and realize there are volunteers and a commitment and people willing to give time and energy in the community - I respect that more."*
- *"Yes, I will continue to meet with my mentor and may mentor in the future but not while I still need a mentor. But I would help to make this work for others."*

Comments on how it was organized and any changes suggested.

- Mentees need more preparation and readiness to make the commitment.
- The mentor and mentee meetings were important and should be monthly throughout.
- Such an initiative should continue and they had many ideas of how to continue with this interagency model or a model within each agency or a wider mentoring model across the community.
- There needs to be a consistent person to assist with recruitment, selection, training, matching, problem solving and ongoing support for a mentorship initiative to be effective.
- For a mentoring program to be successful it also requires having a consistent pivotal person who can continue to facilitate, problem solve, and be available to participants (mentors and mentees) throughout the process.

- *“Need more collaboration between the bodies that made the program and the mentees; did not get together enough to brainstorm what was useful – sometimes left out there to their own devices a bit.”*
- *“Leave the option for mentors and mentees to meet as a group - not only of this pilot project but future groups to meet with each other every 6 months and find out what kind of progress they are all making and what worked.”*

c) Follow-up evaluation by the stakeholder group: not convened at the time of writing this report to explore ongoing funding and the further development of mentoring in the community in other ways.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The formative evaluation of the pilot indicated that it was successful in meeting its objectives. The evaluation led to many improvements during the pilot project and to recommendations for improvements to the model, process and program for the future.

The summative evaluation indicates that the mentoring project was successful in meeting most of its objectives.

- It recruited and trained the targeted number of excellent and committed mentors.
- It facilitated a match between the targeted number of mentors and mentees.
- Seven of the ten matches had weekly contact throughout the program once they were matched.
- Others had contact, but not as frequent or started a bit later and one terminated a bit earlier.
- The project developed the essential training, monitoring processes, communication formats and evaluation tools that could be used by others.
- The project was rated as successful by the participants and mentors and mentees would be willing to engage in mentoring activities in the future and 100% would suggest mentoring to others.
- All mentors were satisfied with the program and rated it as excellent.
- All but 1 mentee was happy with the program at the end.
- All mentees progressed in their job readiness skills and had great opportunities to network, to make connections and to develop their careers and small businesses a bit further. Several got new jobs or changed jobs, including the one who was not fully satisfied with the program.
- Several felt more confident and were engaged in studies and further preparation for career development, business development and employment beyond the timeframe of this project.
- The actual mentoring after the project got started, and the matching and education meetings were complete lasting only for 3-4 months for most.

Originally the organizers had hoped to have a longer period of time for the mentoring intervention. Some of the career and employment benefits may need longer and more frequent mentoring to actualize the identified employment goals. Many of the mentoring dyads formed through the funding of this pilot are continuing.

It is suggested that perhaps a shorter evaluation to assess the career, employment and business outcomes in 4-6 months after this pilot be conducted to assess the ongoing worth of the project.

In a wider sense, the project also identified and developed a wider pool of resources and leaders for the community. It is well established that when a person receives mentoring that they too will offer their support and help to others in the future for mentoring expansion. This broadening pool of leadership capacities will build the social capital of a community and provide a community resource pool for career, personal, business and employment success for more of its members even further.

"It gave us opportunities to meet people. Everyone needed something different and they found it."

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for this program. When you help me, you help my daughters and my grand daughters and my family. They live far away and now know their Mom is part of a program. Thank you for a new start with the right people!"

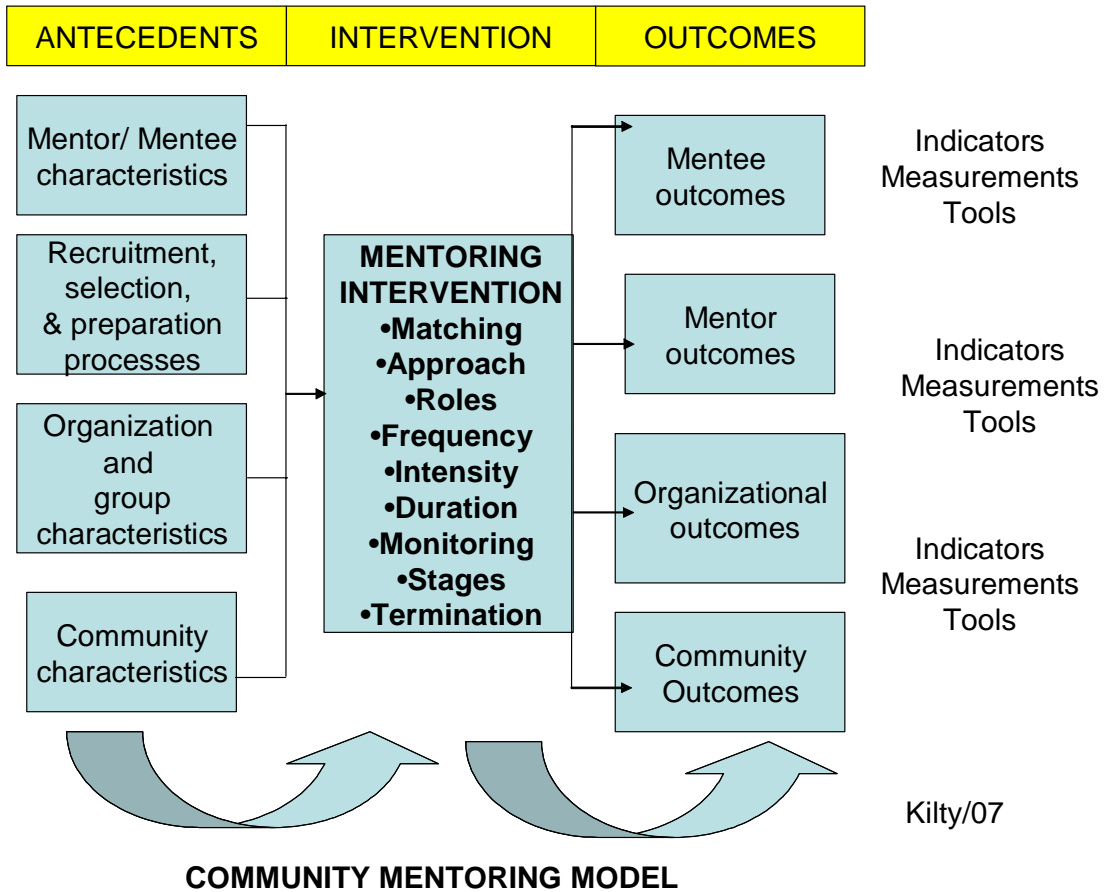
"I have a great mentor who I really, really respect and I appreciate her honesty and willingness to give me support."

RECCOMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE: LESSONS LEARNED

1. To continue to offer individual and group support for these existing mentoring dyads to continue to develop as long as the need and commitment continues.
2. To expand the pool of available mentors to grow by further mentor recruitment, and education and inclusion of some of the mentees as mentors in the future when they are ready.
3. To secure funding to support and facilitate community mentoring for women in career development and for other groups (eg. New Canadians, youth ...).
4. To provide practical supports to make mentoring available through assistance with transportation, computers and bus passes if required.
5. To advertise the success of the pilot program and the lessons learned.
6. To make improvements to the recruitment, selection, training, matching, shared accountability and monitoring tools for future use in community mentoring initiatives
7. To convene a community stakeholders' meeting including the mentors and mentees who were engaged in this project to review their stories and experiences, the evaluation report and to plan the next steps re funding and implementation of further community mentoring.
8. Make the program of mentoring longer to provide more opportunities for the relationship to grow and go through stages and to be able to meet the goals more realistically.

Mentors must be willing to introduce their protégés to other possible sources of support and skill acquisition and to recognize that their protégés will eventually leave them, supplant them, and even transcend them. The very best mentors recognize their role as stewards for future generation” (Ponce, Williams & Allen, 2005).

COMMUNITY MENTORING MODEL



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