

Working Paper

**Mentoring Youth in Brandon: Successes, Challenges
and Best Practices**

Brandon Site Project 2

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Submitted To: The Centre Of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred
Prairie Communities Research Subcommittee

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Project Overview

The overall purpose of the project is to identify the range of “mentoring” initiatives aimed at adolescents in Brandon, and to explore the successes and challenges of these programs. Through these activities best practices will be identified and used to build a model of successful mentoring initiatives.

The project will also strive to promote sharing of challenges and successful practices between similar programs and at supporting the youth, mentors and program coordinators through knowledge sharing and training opportunities. The project will also identify groups of youth or areas of concern that are being overlooked.

On October 30, 2002 the Brandon Site: Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities held a planning session for Phase Two of our research. All participants were provided with a summary of the literature review report and a copy of the Brandon Community Consultation report prior to the meeting. The goal of the meeting was to identify which themes of the Phase One findings to focus on during Phase Two. The meeting participants broke into two groups. One group discussed early years aged children and the other focused on school aged children and youth. Through this latter group an interest in mentoring programs and how they provide support to successful outcomes for youth became a primary focus.

Taking this idea, interested individuals formed a research committee for the project. This committee has provided guidance toward this project proposal.

Building capacity

Preliminary study findings will be presented to those who participated in the study to involve them in the interpretation of results and the creation of a model. The preliminary findings of this study will also be used to plan a workshop in June for program coordinators and adult and youth mentors to address identified challenges or areas of concern and how to build on successful strategies. A speaker knowledgeable about mentoring will be brought in for this workshop and participants will have the opportunity to share their mentoring experiences and knowledge.

Introduction

“Mentorship” and mentoring programs are related to many of the issues that were identified during Phase I research in Brandon. Some of the key areas of concern identified in the Brandon Community Consultation Report have been shown in research as being addressed by mentoring. These areas from our Community Consultation report include participation in physical activities (p.8), life skills training and support (p.10, 12), youth employment (p.10, 18), First Nations identity and self-esteem (p.14), mobile kids (p.16), alternative education services (p.16), preventative services for adolescents (p. 17), youth involved in criminal activity (p.20) and the gap between youth and other segments of the community (p. 21).

Research indicates that children who have successfully negotiated an array of traumatic or persistent difficulties in their lives often have at least one significant and consistent adult in their life (Ryan, Whittaker, Pinckney, 2002). Mentoring programs have been a mediating action of communities to promote such resiliency in children and youth.

Value of mentoring

Research into mentoring programs has shown that mentoring programs can have positive effects in a number of areas of youth’s lives. Studies have found that mentoring programs can improve the overall self-esteem and peer connectedness of youth participants (King, Vidourek, Davis, McClennan, 2002). Mentored youth are likely to have fewer absences from school, better attitudes towards school, fewer incidences of hitting others, less drug and alcohol use, more positive attitudes toward their elders and toward helping in general and improved relationships with their parents (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002). School connectedness and family connectedness has also been shown to be achieved at higher levels by participants in a mentoring program as compared to non-mentored students (King, Vidourek, Davis, McClennan, 2002).

Mentoring programs centering on physical activities for female at risk youth and health education have shown the ability to increase health knowledge, raise self-esteem, provide a better understanding of the role the physical activity plays in one’s social growth and social relations, better school attendance and decreased discipline problems at school (Ryan, Olasov, 2000).

Youth with informal mentors have been shown to be less likely to smoke marijuana or be involved in nonviolent delinquency, and to have more positive attitudes toward school (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, Notaro, 2002).

What is mentoring?

Mentoring can be defined as “a supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone senior in age and experience, who offers support, guidance, and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, enters a new area of experience, takes on an important task, or corrects an earlier problem. In general, during mentoring, mentees identify with, or form a strong interpersonal attachment to their mentors; as a result, they become able to do for themselves what their mentors have done for them” (Flaxman, Asher, Harrington, 1998).

A common vision of mentoring is of a formal structured program such as Big Brother and Big Sisters. However, informal mentorships are more common. Formal mentors connect with youth by participating in a structured formal mentoring program, whereas informal mentors connect with youth through communities or families and are not sponsored by an organization (Grossman, 1999). Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS) is a good example of a formal mentoring program. Youth and mentors are matched up through the BBBS organization and support for the mentors is available through the organization. An example of an informal mentoring may be an aunt who mentors her niece or nephew. In this case they have not been matched up through an organization. There are of course many examples of mentoring that fall in between these two extremes. For example a tutor at a youth literacy program who takes a special interest in assisting one of their clients succeed not only in academia but in other aspects of their life as well. The program was not designed as a mentoring program, however a mentoring role has taken place.

While traditionally mentoring programs match one mentor with one youth, group mentoring in which one mentor is matched with multiple youth or groups of mentors are matched with groups of youth, is becoming more common (Sipe, Roder, 1999). While one-on-one mentoring has traditionally been community based, many group mentoring programs are based at particular locations, such as schools and other youth serving organizations (Herrera, Vang, Gale, 2002). One on one mentoring can also be community

based or site-based. Community based programs are more likely to include social and recreational activities while site-based programs are more likely to target specific activities such as academic, life-skills or career related activities (Sipe, Roder, 1999). It is also becoming more common to combine mentoring with other program components.

Why disadvantaged and at-risk youth?

Many youth are mentored through informal mentors who connect with youth through communities or families and are not sponsored by an organization. Unfortunately, many of the neediest youth do not have access to informal mentors, having neither stable families nor homes in neighborhoods with good social networks (Grossman, 1999). Research has shown that overall, young people who are most disadvantaged or at-risk seem to benefit the most from mentoring (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002). A comprehensive study of two programs found that youth with low academic achievement levels, high absentee rates and minimal family support before program enrollment were likely to show more widespread positive effects than youth in the programs who have comparatively more resources (Grossman, 1999). At risk students participating in mentoring programs typically exhibit less use of illegal drugs and alcohol, less school truancy, improved grades, more self-confidence, fewer unplanned pregnancies and improved relationships with adults and peers (Ryan, Olasov, 2000).

Why is further examination needed?

Research has identified a number of characteristics that successful mentoring relationships have in common. These characteristics include (a) that the longer the mentoring relationship, the better the outcome; (b) that youth are likely to benefit if mentors maintain frequent contact with them and know their families, and (c) young people who perceive high quality relationships with their mentors experience the best results (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002). The methods by which programs successfully foster these characteristics have been less well documented.

Some program practices that do enhance quality mentorship have been documented. Research has indicated that when working with very high-risk youth, having consistent support from project staff both before and after being matched with youth is critical for mentors in helping to guide them through the challenges that arise (Taylor and Dryfoos,

1999). However, relatively little information is available to describe what this support looks like and what topics training should cover to be most useful to the mentors. Also, programs that are driven more by the needs and interests of youth, rather than the expectations of the adult volunteers, are more likely to succeed (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002). The methods by which programs implement this is less documented.

Most planned programs for youth, even those which have some kind of evaluation, have generated only vague and partial descriptions. Few studies describe all of the program's components with sufficient clarity to be able to relate them to the program's success. (Flaxman, Ascher, Harrington, 1998). With generally low levels of funding for these types of programs, evaluations and reporting is often the last thing programs spend money and effort on.

Measuring “success”

When speaking of a program's “success” it is important to explore a variety of meanings of success. What a funding agency may look at as a success may not be the same thing as the youths involved in the program look at as a success. It is important to explore the definitions of success of the youth themselves, as well as mentors, program coordinators and program funders. For youth, success in a program may mean reaching self-stated goals rather than traditional “top-down” goal setting (Martinek, Hellison, 1998). It is important to find out what goals the youth in these programs have and if the programs were successful in helping them reach their goals. Other measures of program success may be indicated by changes in youth behaviours and attitudes as reported by mentors, program coordinators and other important people in the mentee's life such as parents, teachers, employers, case workers, etc. (Grossman, 1999). Program “success” may also be examined through reports of satisfaction by mentees and mentors. Success may also be defined as a successful structure or success in obtaining funding. It is important to keep these many definitions in mind when discussing a program's success.

As Flaxman (1998) notes “mentoring is generally only one programmatic intervention among several other interventions – job placement and training, a special educational program, classroom tutoring, peer group support, psychological counselling, medical assistance, and so on – makes it difficult to evaluate the power of mentoring alone”.

When building our model of successful mentoring programs it will be important to explore how mentoring programs interact with other programs and interventions.

Case studies often provide a rich database when evaluating complex life histories which include multiple contacts with varied service programs. There are numerous methods employed in this area, from simple documentation of the retrospective analysis of what services were offered and the experiences of participants, in this case both the mentor and the person being mentored. More complicated analysis can be undertaken, using the controlled case study where a youth who has received mentoring is matched with a same age youth who had not received mentoring. For our purposes, a case study exploring the experiences of mentors and youth who are being mentored is preferable over a controlled case study due to time and resource limitations, while still providing us with important information.

Goals and Objectives

This section outlines three main goals of the project and the objectives by which the project will address these goals.

1. Goal: To identify the range of mentoring initiatives aimed at adolescents in Brandon as well as possible areas that are not being addressed.

Objectives:

1. Create a list of mentoring initiatives.
2. Identify the target populations of these initiatives and who is actually using them.
3. Identify the main areas of focus of these initiatives.
4. Identify gaps.

2. Goal: To build a model of successful mentoring initiatives.

Objectives:

1. Describe the successes and challenges of mentoring practices in Brandon.
2. Identify the outcomes or benefits for mentored youth and areas where mentoring initiatives are most successful.
3. Identify best practices in mentoring.
4. Look at the similarities and differences between successful mentoring practices.
5. Conduct case studies to identify how mentoring initiatives work in conjunction with other factors to create successes.

3. Goal: To promote knowledge sharing as a method of supporting mentoring initiatives.

Objectives:

1. Provide opportunities for youth, informal and formal mentors and program staff to gather together to discuss and comment on research findings.
2. Hold a workshop for program coordinators and adult and youth mentors to address identified challenges or areas of concern.

Methodology

Research design

A project research committee has been formed to help guide the project. This research committee is made up of interested community members who have committed to being involved in the research design, research implementation and dissemination of results. The terms of reference for this research committee can be found in Appendix C. Also, a Memorandum of Understanding will be drafted that outlines each partner's responsibilities, intellectual property ownership, etc and will be included as Appendix D. This Memorandum of Understanding will be drafted in conjunction with the project research committee over the next week.

The Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) will review the project for ethical soundness. The project will be submitted to BUREC in December 2002. Aboriginal Research Guidelines (see Brandon Site Report p.99) will also be used to guide the project.

Description of Research Setting

Identifying programs for study

The Project Research Committee was asked to identify five programs that involve mentoring that they would like to see involved in the study. The criteria for choosing these programs was fit to the age group 12 to 24, serving disadvantaged or at-risk youth and variety of areas of mediating focus. At least one of the programs should primarily serve Aboriginal youth. The chosen programs are identified below.

Big Brothers and Sisters - A national organization for the development of 6 to 16 year-olds in single-parent families. Big Brothers or Sisters over 18 years, of good character, sound judgment and stable relationships volunteer a few hours a week as a friend to a child. There are three types of pairings: Big Brother and Sister, In-School Mentoring and Couples for Kids.

Youth for Christ U turn Houses - In Brandon homeless youth, and those at risk of being involuntarily on the streets, are given a transitional facility with live-in House Parents where the skills required for independence are taught.

Otetema - This program's goal is to raise the self-esteem of young, aboriginal female offenders, offering mentoring by matching young females with positive female mentors in the community.

Y and School - This YMCA program for Brandon school children provides homework assistance, computer training, life skills, peer group functioning and recreation. Achievements are recognized and reported and counseling for parents, students and tutors is provided.

Brandon Literacy Council – While the Brandon Literacy Council does not have a formal mentoring component to their program they do have a number of youth in their program who will be asked about what types of informal mentoring they are receiving.

Samaritan House – Depending on the number of mentors and youth identified through our first five projects, Samaritan House may be approach to gather extra input from youth. While they do not provide a formal mentoring program they assist many families and youth. Samaritan House Ministries provides a food bank and a clothing program. It assists with literacy concerns, counselling and group work to meet the needs of women and their children. It also has a second-stage housing for abused women and their children.

Description of Participants:

The participants in the project will be mentored youth, mentors and program staff who are involved in formal or informal mentoring initiatives for youth between the ages 12 and 24 who can be termed “disadvantaged” or “at-risk”. This includes initiatives which mentoring is not the primary focus but is one of several program activities. The project research committee identified five programs that contain mentoring to be the main focus for the recruitment of participants. Appendix E describes these programs. One of the programs has an Aboriginal focus.

- Program Staff (5-10) of the mentoring initiatives identified for study will be interviewed to gather descriptions of how the program uses mentoring to reach their program goals. They will also be asked to describe processes related to the mentoring portion of their program such as recruitment processes, training and support. They will be given the opportunity to describe

their experiences and challenges related to mentoring. They will be asked to identify how they, their mentors and their mentees have addressed the challenges. They will also be asked to describe how their mentors support the youth in their programs and what the outcomes of this support has been. Based on a template of recognized affects of mentoring programs they will be asked to provide their perceptions of participant improvement or successes. Program coordinators will also be asked to identify mentors and youth from their programs who may be interested in participating in the study. Program coordinators will also be asked to help identify particular “success” stories and may be asked to describe these situations in greater detail as part of a case study.

- Mentors (up to 30) will be interviewed one-on-one or possibly in focus group format if a group of mentors are identified from the same program. They will be asked about how they became involved in the program, what their role in mentoring has been and to describe their interactions with their “mentees”. They will also be asked about what challenges they have faced in the mentorship role and how they have addressed these challenges. Based on a template of recognized affects of mentoring programs they will be asked to provide their perceptions of participant improvement or successes. Mentors will also be asked to help identify particular “success” stories and may be asked to describe these situations in greater detail as part of a case study.
- Mentored youth (up to 50) will be interviewed in a one-one-one format or possibly in a focus group format if they have participated in a group mentoring program. They will be asked about how they became involved in the program, what their goals and expectations were when they entered the program and how the program has addressed these goals and expectations. They will also be asked to describe their interactions with their mentor and the role of the mentor in their life. They will be asked to identify how they feel the mentoring has affected their life and what improvements or successes can be attributed to the mentoring. Youth who have been identified by program

coordinators and mentors as potential case studies may be asked to participate in a more in-depth discussion of their experiences.

- Community members (approximately 30) will be surveyed to identify the less formal mentoring type initiatives that are taking place in the community. Three focus groups of community members will be conducted. To be able to compare formal and informal mentoring, the focus group questions will be very similar to those asked in the interviews of formal mentors. Community members will be asked to identify what they have done to mentor youth in their community, to describe their mentoring relationship and the impacts of the mentoring.

Data collection Methods

Interviews and Focus Groups:

Through this project each person interviewed will be asked to provide informed consent before participating in interviews or focus groups. A sample informed consent form can be found in Appendix H. Participants under 18 years of age will only be interviewed if they have written consent from a parent or legal guardian. Also, youth who have participated in mentorship programs, volunteer program mentors and focus group participants will be provided with a modest honorarium for participating in the project.

Case studies

In the previous stages of examination, we will identify mentoring program participants who had successful experiences in mentoring programs to conduct case studies on. Two case studies will be conducted. The first case study will be from the mentored youth's perspective and the second will be from the mentor's perspective. Upon informed consent these participants will be interviewed about their mentoring experiences in depth. The more comprehensive view of a case study will be able to provide insight into what other programs and life circumstances affected the outcomes of the mentoring relationship. The complex interconnections between services, mentoring and life situations will be examined.

Participant feedback

Preliminary study findings will be presented to those who participated in the study to gather their input about the findings to involve them in interpretation and the creation of a model. All participants will be invited to attend a session that presents the findings. This session will be evaluated and participant opinions will be gathered.

Potential Measurement Tools

Literature provides three types of measures that mentoring programs can use to assess their own effectiveness: changes in participant outcomes, measures of effective relationships and descriptions of participant characteristics. (Grossman and Johnson, 1999).

Changes in participant outcomes are generally measured overtime. Due to the short time frame of our study this will not be possible. However, client, mentor and program staff perceptions of changes in participant outcomes such as change in scholastic competence, days of school skipped, use of drugs or alcohol, etc can be measured. Appendix F provides a template of factors that research has identified as being affected by youth mentoring. These factors could serve as a template for examining perceptions of participant outcomes.

Length of the mentoring relationship, frequency of contact and quality of the mentoring relationship are measures of effective relationships. Mentors and mentees will be asked to describe their relationships with each other and their perceptions of the quality of the relationship.

Participant characteristics can be used to gauge whether programs are attracting participants that will benefit the most from mentoring. Pre-program characteristics of grades, rates of school absenteeism and family support have been linked to significant impacts of mentoring programs Grossman and Johnson (1999). Program staff will be asked to describe what population they are targeting.

The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Adults Mentoring Young People was commissioned to enhance the understanding of the effects of mentoring on youth and to learn from a broad array of mentoring relationships. This survey presents a template of questions to gather mentor descriptions of mentee characteristics, descriptions of the

mentoring relationship and their perceptions on the impact of the mentoring (McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen, Shapiro, 1998). These questions have been used as a template to help standardize our findings.

Programs will be classified based on a list of parameters found in Appendix F. Appendix F also provide a list of common goals and activities of mentoring projects that will be used to guide questions asked of program staff, mentors and youth. Appendix G provides a draft of the questions that will be asked of program coordinators, mentors and youth who are being mentored.

Procedures:

Setting:

Programs will be asked to share any additional data that they gather about their participants that may provide information on project outcomes. Data that may identify participants will be removed to maintain confidentiality. The sharing of this information will be voluntary and the data will remain property of the program.

Numbers:

Program staff: Five programs have been identified for study. At least one program staff and possibly two staff will be interviewed from each program

Mentors: The number of mentors that will be interviewed will be determined through interviews with program staff. In some programs the program staff may be the mentors, in others there may be one mentor for a number of youth. It is expected that 30 mentors will be identified and participate in the study.

Mentored youth: It is expected that 50 youth will be identified to participate in the study. Ten youth from each of the five identified programs will be asked to participate in the study. The number of youth who are actually interviewed may be less as some programs may have less than 10 active participants and youth and parental permission to participate in the study might not be obtained for all youth identified.

Informal community mentors: Three focus groups for informal youth mentors will be held. Each focus group will be held in a different area of Brandon. Approximately 10 participants are expected for each focus group.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative strategies such as tests of significant differences will be utilized where appropriate. Quantitative analysis will possibly be used to compare formal and informal mentoring initiatives based on the benchmarks outlined in the measurement tools section. Due to the methods employed in this study it is not expected that much quantitative analysis will be appropriate.

Qualitative Analysis:

The majority of analysis will be qualitative analysis. Most interviews will be conducted in a one-on-one format while focus groups will be conducted where appropriate. While it is desirable that the interviews and focus groups are audiotaped, to aid in transcription, we recognize this as a potential obstacle and will defer to program staff's opinions regarding this issue. In earlier focus groups of community members this was not an obstacle, but it may be when speaking with youth. In community consultation focus groups, participants were given numbers and responses were recorded on flip charts and a person entered responses into a laptop with little loss of information. Regardless of method employed, responses will be analyzed via two potential methods, one computer based and one participant interpretation.

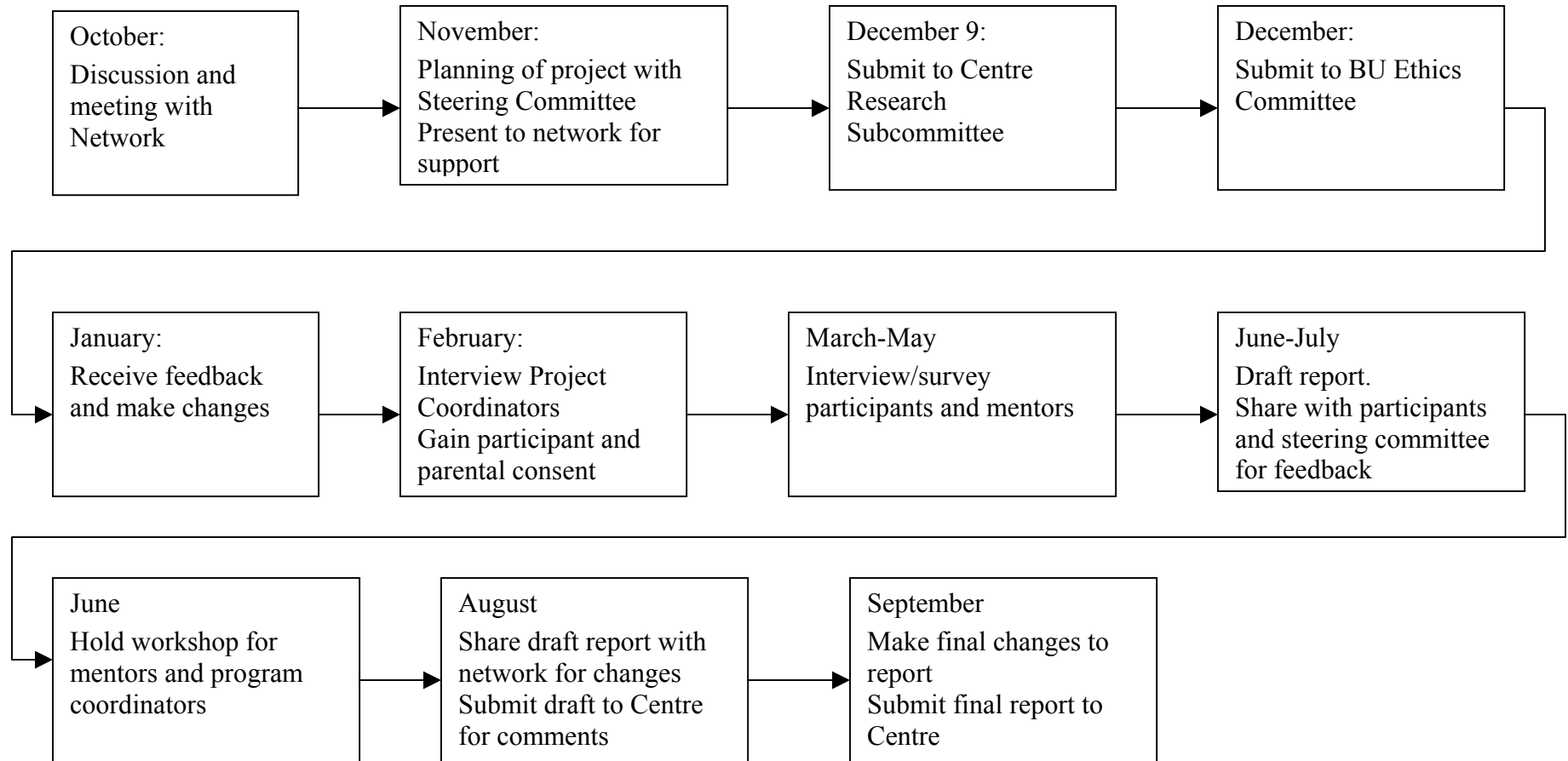
Computer Based Analysis:

Interview and/or focus group transcripts will be loaded into NUD*IST, a qualitative software analysis program that allows textual data to be categorized and sorted. The coding framework will correspond to the primary research questions, including responses to each of the questions.

Participant Analysis:

Meetings will be held with the participants of the study as data becomes available, to promote discussion and interpretation, which will be included in the final report. These meetings will be used to gain participants input in response to key findings and the proposed model(s).

Timelines



Deliverables

The following deliverables will be provided to the Centre of Excellence (COE) by September 30, 2003.

1. A 25 to 35 page summary of the project, using a template format determined by the COE including:
 - Key findings
 - Context to public policy development, program delivery and community groups/organizations
 - Description of methodology and rationale for its use
 - Lessons learned
 - Best or promising practices
 - Innovations
 - Increased effectiveness
 - Implications for model building and a potential model
 - Practical applicability of the model
2. A full and formal research report on the project that is suitable for publication as a stand alone research monograph.
3. An informal report to the COE describing the discussion of the project results with the Community Network and Study participants, including a summary of their responses to key findings and the proposed model(s). This report should also contain an evaluation of the community consultation methods used in the project, with recommendations for future enhancements and tips for applying these methods.

The dissemination of the study results to the community at large will be guided by the project Research Committee and the Brandon Network. Journal articles, presentations at various conferences and media coverage are possible deliverables of this project that will be guides by our Research Committee.

Conclusions

At the end of this project, a model of successful mentoring initiatives will be constructed. The study will identify areas that mentoring programs have been shown to demonstrate a positive change in the health and well being of youth or an enhancement of harm prevention for the youth. It will examine the effectiveness of different mentoring approaches and identify best practices. By examining how challenges have been addressed, innovative and promising practices will be documented.

By providing opportunities for mentors and program staff to gather together to discuss and comment on research findings, the project will support mentoring programs in Brandon through the sharing of challenges and successful practices. The initial outcomes of the focus groups and interviews will be used to plan a workshop for program staff and adult and youth mentors. This workshop will help to build the capacity of mentoring programs in Brandon.

This project will show best practices of mentoring initiatives that address youth issues such as youth employment, supported housing, crime-reduction, etc, that are issues in many communities. Hence, this project will be able to provide insight to communities and policy planners on the factors that lead to successes and challenges in mentoring programs. By examining the challenges and the innovative methods used to address these challenges, other communities struggling with similar challenges will be able to learn from the experiences of project participants.

Appendix A: Budget

Project Coordinator: Elicia Funk

Interviews, Focus groups and Reporting

500 hours @\$15.00 per hour \$7500.00

Research Assistant: To be determined

Transcription, assistance with interviews and focus groups

200 hours @ \$12.00 per hour \$2400.00

Office expenses \$ 250.00

Honorariums

(30 formal mentors, 30 informal mentors, 60 youth)

120 participants @ \$10 \$1200.00

Workshop

Speaker, food, venue \$2000.00

Total Research Budget **\$13,800**

Appendix B: Meeting Phase Two Research Criteria

➤ **Studies must examine MEDIATING ACTION(S) taken by COMMUNITIES.**

The mediating actions that will be examined are mentoring initiatives that exist in Brandon. There will be three main types of mentoring initiatives that are examined: planned mentorship programs, programs that include a mentoring type role where that is not the main goal of the program, and informal neighborhood level mentoring actions.

➤ **Studies must FOCUS on a specific and well-defined pairing of COMMUNITY and MEDIATING ACTION.**

The community in this case will be “disadvantaged” or “at risk” youth aged 12 to 24 who are involved in mentoring type initiatives. The mediating actions will be the formal and informal mentoring initiatives that serve this population.

➤ **Studies must be deliberately designed with the intent to discover INNOVATIONS, EFFECTIVENESS, and BEST or PROMISING PRACTICES in mediating actions that make a measurable, noticeable difference in the well-being of children and youth.**

The study will identify areas that mentoring programs have been shown to demonstrate a positive change in the health and well being of youth or an enhancement of harm prevention for the youth. It will examine the effectiveness of different mentoring approaches and identify best practices. By examining how challenges have been addressed innovative and promising practices will be documented.

➤ **Studies must aim at MODEL BUILDING.**

This project will show an overall model of mentoring programs that exist in Brandon and how they work together. It will also provide a model of individual mentoring programs, best practices of these programs and similarities and differences between the programs that are targeted at different groups of youth.

➤ **Studies must be METHODOLOGICALLY SOUND.**

The methodology that will be used in this project is outlined in this proposal. The methodology is based on practices used in other studies of mentoring.

➤ **Studies must relate to the knowledge learned from the Phase One research.**

As discussed in the introduction section, mentoring programs have been used as mediating actions for many of the main issues that were found in the Phase One research including alcohol and drug abuse, youth crime, teen pregnancies, academic performance, social development, employment and First Nations identity.

➤ **Studies must be ETHICALLY SOUND, and must explain the manner in which communities are involved in the research design, research implementation and dissemination of results.**

The Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) will view the project for ethical soundness. The project will be submitted to BUREC by December 2, 2002.

A steering committee has been formed to help guide the project. This steering committee is made up of interested community members who have committed to being involved in the research design, research implementation and dissemination of results. The terms of reference for this steering committee can be found in Appendix C. Also, a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted that outlines each partner's responsibilities, intellectual property ownership, etc. (See Appendix D) Aboriginal Research Guidelines (Ek, 2002) will also be used to guide the project.

Appendix C: Terms of Reference – Research Steering Committee

Centres of Excellence for Youth Centred Prairie Communities Brandon Research Steering Committee – *Mentoring Project*

Terms of Reference

- Responsible to:** Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Communities Management Committee & Brandon University School of Health Studies.
- Purpose:**
- To provide guidance into the design of the mentoring research project.
 - To review project proposal.
 - To review and comment on draft research tools and processes.
 - To provide guidance and input throughout project activities.
 - To review and provide comments on draft project reports.
 - To provide advice on best methods of dissemination of project results.
- Meetings:** Meetings will be more frequent during the planning phase (November-January) and the final report writing phase (June-July). For the rest of the project the group will meet monthly or every six weeks.
- Length of Term:** The project will run until September 2003.

Appendix D: Memorandum of Understanding

insert

Appendix E: Potential Mentoring Programs for Study

Big Brothers and Sisters - A national organization for the development of 6 to 16 year-olds in single-parent families. Big Brothers or Sisters over 18 years, of good character, sound judgment and stable relationships volunteer a few hours a week as a friend to a child. There are three types of pairings: Big Brother and Sister, In-School Mentoring and Couples for Kids.

U turn - In Brandon homeless youth, and those at risk of being involuntarily on the streets, are given a transitional facility with live-in House Parents where the skills required for independence are taught.

Otetema - This program's goal is to raise the self-esteem of young, aboriginal female offenders, offering mentoring by matching young females with positive female mentors in the community.

Y and School - This YMCA program for Brandon school children provides homework assistance, computer training, life skills, peer group functioning and recreation. Achievements are recognized and reported and counseling for parents, students and tutors is provided.

Brandon Literacy Council – While the Brandon Literacy Council does not have a formal mentoring component to their program they do have a number of youth in their program who will be asked about what types of informal mentoring they are receiving.

Neelin Mentoring Program – Neelin High School has a mentoring program for Aboriginal youth to encourage continuance in education and to act as a liaison between the school and the family.

Samaritan House – Depending on the number of mentors and youth identified through our first five projects, Samaritan House may be approach to gather extra input from youth. While they do not provide a formal mentoring program they assist many families and youth. Samaritan House Ministries provides a food bank and a clothing program. It assists with literacy concerns, counselling and group work to meet the needs of women and their children. It also has a second-stage housing for abused women and their children.

Appendix F: Classification and Impact Templates

Common mentoring goals/impacts

The following can be primary or secondary goals of mentoring programs and can also be used to measure perceptions of the impacts of mentoring. Perceptions of impact can be measured as a scale from no impact to some impact to a large impact.

- Personal development (self esteem, feelings of competence)
- Relationship formation (with mentor, reduction of “hanging out with wrong crowd”, improvement or relationship with family, making friends)
- Academic performance (improve grades, reduce “dropping out” or skipping school, enrollment in post secondary, school connectedness)
- Employment skills (job search skills, job training, finding employment)
- Provide role models
- Reduce delinquency (reduce incidents of “getting in trouble”, smoking, drinking, drug use, running away from home)
- Improve life-skills/health skills (budgeting, personal hygiene, maintaining a place to live, eating disorders, sexual health)
- Other goals

Common activities

The following are common activities that mentors and youth engage in that will be used as a template when exploring mentoring relationships.

- Social activities (hanging out, having lunch, teaching social skills, talking about his/her personal issues)
- Recreational (sports, walking or hiking, bicycling)
- Events (library, museum, concert, play, movies, sporting events)
- Academic (working on homework, planning for university)
- Job-related (job shadowing, help with resume/job search, teaching job related skills, talking about career goals)
- Community service (volunteering together)
- Life skills (personal hygiene, budgeting skills, cooking)
- Cultural (provide cultural learning opportunities)
- Advocacy (standing up for him/her when in trouble)

Classification parameters

The following parameters will be used to classify types of mentoring initiatives.

- One-on-one vs. group mentoring (one mentor per group of youth or group of mentors and youth)
- Community vs. on-site mentoring (e.g. school, community centre)
- Ages served
- Aboriginal focus vs. no Aboriginal focus
- Gender of participants (male, female or both)
- Number of youth served
- Length of program
- Frequency of contact

Appendix G: Draft Questions

Program Coordinators

- How does your program use mentoring?
- What are the goals of mentoring in your program? (see template)
- Do you have a recruitment process for mentors? (If yes, please describe)
- Do mentors receive training? Describe.
- Is support to mentors provided throughout the mentoring relationship? Describe
- Could they use more training/support? In what areas?
- Classification descriptions of program (see classification guidelines)
- How do mentors support the youth? What types of activities do they engage in? (template of activities)
- What are the outcomes of this support? (perceptions of success)
 - How does this relate to program goals
 - Are some outcomes easier to attain than others?
- What challenges has the program (mentors, mentees) faced?
- How has the program addressed these challenges?
- How do you encourage longer mentoring relationships?
- What would you consider to be “best practices” in your experience with mentoring?
- What should other programs who are going to attempt mentoring know? mentors? mentees?
- Can you identify past or present youth and mentors who may be willing to participate in this study?
- Is there a particular mentor or youth who sticks out in your mind as having been particularly successful in the program who may be willing to participate in a case study?
- Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in a presentation of findings?
- If a workshop was given to support mentoring initiatives and mentors, what should it focus on?

Mentors

- How did you become involved in mentoring? (why did you decide to mentor?)
- How long have you been involved?
- What has your experience in mentoring been like?
- What types of activities do you participate in with your mentee(s)? (template)
 - How do you decide what activities to do?
 - How often do you meet?
- What support do you have to help you mentor? What areas could you use more support or information on?
- Do you feel that the mentoring has helped your mentee? In what ways? (template as prompts)
- What do you think the key things are in helping your mentee to be more successful?
- What do you think are traits of a good mentor?
- What challenges have you faced in mentoring?
- How have you addressed these challenges?
- What lessons have you learned from your experience?
- Overall do you feel that mentoring has been a positive or a negative experience? Would you mentor again? Would you recommend it to a friend?
- What should other mentors know if they are going to mentor? Programs? Mentees?
- Is there a particular mentor or youth who sticks out in your mind as having been particularly successful in the program who may be willing to participate in a case study?
- Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in a presentation of findings?
- If a workshop was given to support mentoring initiatives and mentors, what should it focus on?

Youth

- How did you become involved with your mentor?
- How long have you been involved?
- How often do you and your mentor meet? Do you or your mentor often cancel meetings?
- What types of things do you and your mentor do? (template as prompts)
- How would you describe your relationship with your mentor?
- What do you like best about being mentored?
- What do you like least about being mentored?
- What were your goals and expectations about the program/mentoring?
- How has your mentor helped you attain these goals/expectations?
- Are there other ways that having a mentor has helped you? (template as prompts)
- What traits do a good mentor have?
- Have you and your mentor had problems that you had to overcome to work together? How did you do that?
- What do you think that youth who are going to be mentored should know?
- What should people who are going to be mentors know?
- What types of things should mentoring programs include?
- Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in a presentation of findings?
- If a workshop was given to support mentoring initiatives and mentors, what should it focus on?

Appendix H: Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate voluntarily in a research project entitled “Mentoring Youth in Brandon: Successes, Challenges and Best Practices” that is being funded by the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities.

The purpose of the project is to identify the range of mentoring initiatives aimed at adolescents in Brandon, and to explore the successes and challenges of these programs. Through these activities best practices will be identified and used to build a model of successful mentoring initiatives.

The project will also strive to promote sharing of challenges and successful practices between similar programs and at supporting the youth, mentors and program coordinators through knowledge sharing and training opportunities.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to discuss your experiences with mentoring and your perceptions of the impacts of mentoring youth.

Participation is voluntary and there will be no negative consequences if you refuse to participate in it, withdraw from it, or refuse to answer certain questions. Confidentiality will be maintained in this project as your name will not be attached to the responses you give, your individual answers will not be shared or presented in any way that would identify you as the source.

At the conclusion of this study the information collected will be summarized and discussed with study participants.

If you would like more information about the project, please call:

Elicia Funk – (204) 571-8556
or e-mail funke@brandonu.ca

We appreciate your time and effort in helping us understand successes and challenges of mentoring in Brandon.

Having understood the above information and after being given the opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

If participant is under 18 years of age, signature of parent or guardian
Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

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