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Aboriginal Mentoring in Saskatoon:
A cultural perspective

A publication from the
Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre in collaboration with
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and the Community University Institute for Social
Research

IPHRC

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Foreword

IPHRC, in collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and the Community University Institute for Social Research, is pleased to present this report on Aboriginal Mentoring in Saskatoon: A cultural perspective. Mentoring, as a strategy for education, guidance, and skills development, has emerged as a viable approach to Aboriginal youth issues and capacity building. This report highlights the history of mentoring and some of the current mentoring projects that are taking place in the Saskatoon area, and it particularly emphasizes the influence of Aboriginal perspectives on mentoring strategies and programs. The participants provide their recommendations for improving Aboriginal mentoring techniques. The research for this report was undertaken with the local Saskatoon community and represents the words and wisdom of our Youth, Elder, and Community participants. We have striven to represent their opinions to the best of our ability and any errors and omissions are ours. Thanks to Leslie Dawson for her preliminary work on the project and to CUISR, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and Saskatoon Community Foundation for providing resources and guidance.

Kinanāskomitinawāw,

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Executive Summary

Currently in Saskatoon, as well as in Canadian society generally, mentoring is widely being recognized as a significant factor that can enhance skills and interpersonal development within the workforce and the education system. Mentoring is becoming a human resource tool in recruiting and retaining the current and future Aboriginal population. In response to the significant projected growth rate of Aboriginal youth over the next 25 years in Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Indian, 2000), Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon (BBBS) is among a growing cadre of organizations that are recognizing and responding to the need to develop, implement, and evaluate how culturally based mentoring for Aboriginal youth would benefit the youth who access their programs. To this end, Big Brothers Big Sisters partnered with the Community University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) and the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPRHC) to examine the issue of culturally relevant mentoring for youth. The project represented by this report identifies and discusses current approaches to mentoring from western and Aboriginal perspectives as it is outlined in the literature. It provides a detailed overview of the research study, which articulates the perspectives of professionals, Elders, youth and community members on the topic of mentoring. These key informants made several recommendations for sound Aboriginal mentoring approaches that were deemed essential to the development and delivery of Aboriginal mentoring programs.

The findings of this research study emphasize the importance of including the Aboriginal community in all areas of mentoring program design, from its inception to development to service delivery. Each participant group emphasized that a culturally based program was needed. In particular, the participants struggled with the language and discourse surrounding mentoring and mentorship and stressed that a term which reflected Aboriginal culture and the mentoring

relationship was needed. They noted that consultation with the Aboriginal community and Elders could be beneficial in developing a new word for mentoring. The key informants were adamant that Aboriginal mentoring was needed and had to come from the Aboriginal community. Hence, the issue of ownership was considered an important part of the planning process and if non-Aboriginal community is to be involved, their role needs to be supportive, and not one of control.

The youth participants were interested in having access to Aboriginal mentors who are able to provide cultural teachings and were concerned with the personality characteristics of their mentor. For example, they felt that having a mentor who is non-judgmental, supportive and who was more of a "friend" than an authority figure would be beneficial.

The following recommendations were made regarding Aboriginal mentoring and an Aboriginal mentoring program:

- Partner with an existing Aboriginal program, such as the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, where the Aboriginal community has input, influence, and decision making power in the mentoring program.

- Create a culturally appropriate mentoring culture within the Big Brothers Big Sisters; for example, teaching youth how to approach Elders and mentors in a culturally relevant way, as well as providing opportunities for informal mentoring to occur.

- Mentoring training needs to include cultural awareness. Elder involvement is crucial as they provide guidance, support and setting out the appropriate cultural protocols.

- Training needs to include the following: cultural protocols; outlining procedures on issues such as child abuse and neglect; FAS/FAE, gangs and gang activity, residential schools, program expectations, and counseling skills.

- Mentoring program development and evaluation needs to be conducted by Aboriginal people and include Elders in the process. Programming needs to be culturally based and provide cultural programming such as offering cultural camps.

- The lack of trust between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities implies that there are systemic issues that need to be addressed in mentorship development.

- Participants alluded to cross-cultural training as a remedial step. Ongoing open dialogue on the issue is also suggested.

- Within the mentoring relationship trust needs time to develop. The youth identified that the mentor needs to have a non-judgmental attitude and be more of a "friend" rather than a mentor, as they felt the term mentor indicated positions of power. Aboriginal youth often see non-Aboriginal people as having power.

- Re-framing the language used to describe mentoring so that is culturally relevant. Consultation with Aboriginal communities is recommended for this.

- Develop a partnership with other mentorship programs such as the Saskatoon Health Region Aboriginal Mentorship Program to learn about best practices and lessons learned, as well as to share information about cultural awareness training. This will avoid duplication of program development and perhaps save resources. It can also help to enhance the pool of mentors in the Saskatoon community.

- Seek funding and resources to develop culturally appropriate Aboriginal mentoring programs ensuring that partnerships are sought and developed in order to limit duplication of efforts and streamline resources. Any research/consultation on Aboriginal mentoring must be done in collaboration with the Aboriginal community.

- Further research is needed regarding existing informal Aboriginal mentoring activities within the academic, health and human resource, and Aboriginal health research fields. The findings would contribute valuable information to the development of Aboriginal mentoring paradigms.

Abstract

The purpose of this project is to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal mentoring and to develop a culturally appropriate mentoring framework for community agencies within Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This research project explored several facets of Aboriginal mentoring in Saskatoon and the interview questions focused on mentoring personnel, comparing Aboriginal mentoring to "mainstream" mentoring approaches, the importance of culture and how mentoring can be enhanced culturally, and issues around mentor training. The research project was conducted over an 18-month period. In total there were 31 participants interviewed, the majority are of Aboriginal ancestry and include youth, professionals, and community members. The results of this study found that many of the participants struggled with the definition of mentoring and the report highlights the importance of situating the development and decision making for mentoring projects within the Aboriginal community. Elders must be included within the program development and evaluation processes, developing cultural awareness as a core component of mentorship training, and developing mentorship cultures in organizations to support informal mentoring strategies.

Introduction

Mentoring has become a valuable asset in the workforce and in the education system. In Saskatoon, significant resources support mentorship as a tool for addressing human resource recruitment and retention issues that are anticipated as the result of the changing Aboriginal population demographic of the province. It is anticipated that the Aboriginal population will reach 35% of the population within the next 25 years (Saskatchewan Indian, 2000). In response to this reality, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon is seeking to develop, implement, and evaluate mentorship with youth in ways that are culturally appropriate given the large percentage of Aboriginal youth who access their programs. This report details a mentorship research inquiry that was developed to examine existing mentorship paradigms, Aboriginal models in particular, and to articulate from the perspective of key informants to the topic, recommendations for sound Aboriginal mentoring approaches. This report explores these issues to provide concrete recommendations regarding what the participants see as essential to the development and delivery of Aboriginal mentoring programs.

This report begins with a review of the mentoring literature. The literature review introduces the concept of mentoring and outlines the definition of mentoring and approaches to the mentoring relationship. The literature review also discusses the differing worldview perspectives of mentoring between a western worldview and an Aboriginal worldview. The purpose of this research project was conceived out of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon who identified that Aboriginal youth were in need of a culturally based mentoring program.

The second section describes the qualitative methodology used for this research study. Sampling and recruitment was done by a joint effort by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community based programs and agencies. There were three main groups recruited and

interviewed for this study, they are as follows: professionals (which include interviews with two Elders), community members and youth between the ages of 18 and 30 years. Approval was granted from the University of Saskatchewan's Research Ethics Board on November 16, 2005 (Appendix C).

The third section summarizes the findings and the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. The final section of the report outlines the limitations to the study as well as the summary of the report and the recommendations made regarding Aboriginal mentoring and the potential for developing this type of program.

Literature Review

Mentoring Overview

The literature review for this study on Aboriginal mentoring in general and with a focus on children and youth within a Canadian context revealed that there is a huge gap in the literature with respect to this topic. A few documents were found including several grey literature reports and some online mainstream mentoring model websites that contain information about and references to Aboriginal mentoring. However, there was valuable literature on Aboriginal mentoring based out of the Cherokee Nation which has provided critical insights to identifying the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal approaches to mentoring.

The databases searched for this literature review included Academic Search Elite, Wilson Web and an internet search which included the national Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada website. The following is a list of key descriptive words during the literature search: *aboriginal/Indian/First Nation/marginalized mentoring, mentorship, role model, mentoring youth at risk,* and *mentoring children.*

McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux, and McCluskey (2004) describe two types of mentoring relationships: *formal* and *informal*. A formal mentoring relationship is often established through a mentoring program, is planned and systematic in nature and the mentor and mentee have actively sought out to participate in a mentoring program (p. 85). For example, in this type of relationship, the mentor is often older, more experienced and can be authoritative, although this is not the norm. Additionally, the mentor has been sought out or brought together with the mentee to provide career or educational support and guidance to the mentee (Lowe, 2005). The purpose of a formal mentoring relationship is generally to assist the mentee in becoming successful in their endeavors (Lowe, 2005; McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux & McCluskey,

2004). A formal mentoring relationship consists of both individuals seeking the assistance of the outside party to assist in developing the relationship. The role of agencies such as Big Brothers Big Sisters organizations is to assist in identifying the needs of the mentor and mentee and to bring them together on a more formal level. That is, they meet through the agency and begin to develop a relationship with the agency's assistance.

The informal or spontaneous mentoring relationship as described by McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux, and McCluskey (2004) is less structured; the mentor and mentee have developed a relationship on their own, without the structure that a formal relationship requires. The relationship is based on commonalities, evolved into a friendship or is "someone who simply reaches out to give support to another person" and in some instances the mentor has identified talents, skills or special qualities in an individual (p. 85). The literature on Aboriginal mentoring describes this latter type of relationship to be most commonly used and is the most effective style of mentoring for Aboriginal people (Lowe, 2005; Portman & Garrett, 2005; Patchell, 2005; Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink, &Woodard, 2003).

Two types of mentoring support have been identified: "career support and psychosocial support" (Kram (1988) cited in Gonzalez-Figueroa and Young, 2005, p. 215). A mentor offering career support has "power and influence" and is interested in "protecting and promoting a protégé among other people of influence" (p. 215). A mentor offering psychosocial support is providing emotional (listening encouragement) and social (guidance, advocacy) support to the relationship that is based on friendship rather than career advancement (p. 215). In an Aboriginal mentoring relationship, psychosocial support is often the main focus in which the mentor has identified special talents and/or qualities in the mentee. The mentor is interested in nurturing talents of the "young people through self-mastery, inner strength, and the development of

individual abilities that contribute to the well-being of the tribe" (Portman & Garrett, 2005, p. 287).

Mentoring and Worldview Comparisons

The "western" worldview is often characterized as individualistic. In this regard the mentoring relationship is often focused on the advancement of one's career, developing one's credentials, authority and hierarchy in order to advance his/her career (Carr, 2006; Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003). The mentoring relationship is reliant upon data collection that measures success outcomes and answers the question, "has the mentee achieved the outlined goals?" Fact-finding is emphasized – "what were the goals and how have they been achieved?" and there may be less of a focus on the overall well-being of the mentee (Carr, 2006). Success is measured based upon empirical parameters as well as "success" outcomes. As Allen, Russell, and Maetzke (1997) found "research has consistently demonstrated that mentoring provides substantial benefits to both protégés and mentors. Mentees (or protégés) reported higher promotion rates and career satisfaction as well as higher overall compensations" (p. 488), and the mentor is considered the expert who is sharing their expertise with a younger generation of mentees (McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux, & McCluskey, 2004). Criticism of success oriented and hierarchical styles of mentoring relationship allude to unbalanced power dynamics in the mentoring relationship (Ponce, Williams & Allen, 2005, p. 1161). Recently, there is a significant move towards mentoring models which are egalitarian based and the mentoring relationship is a reciprocal one that is designed to meet the needs of each individual in the mentoring relationship.

From the perspective of a mainstream worldview, a mentor is described as a "role model, counselor, advisor, teacher," someone who is able to enhance a person's leadership qualities and act as an advocate. They are perceived as someone who is able to provide the mentee or protégé a structured and positive experience (Lowe, 2005; Patchell, 2005; McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux, & McCluskey, 2004). For the mentor, the relationship can provide "increased competence, increased feelings of confidence in their own abilities, and self-esteem among peers due to participating in mentoring relationships" (Allen, Russell & Maetzke, 1997, p. 488). According to Carr (2006) the benefits for the mentee are described as follows:

> Overall, the mentoring relationship is often described a having five main components:
>
> 1. Fidelity or trustworthiness (keeping promises and respecting cultural traditions and protocols)
> 2. Autonomy (encouraging maximum choice) and understanding the importance of family and community within the Aboriginal community.
> 3. Justice (distributing benefits fairly amongst mentees, which incorporates the distribution by both heredity and community law).
> 4. Beneficence (the principle of doing good in which both people benefit).
> 5. Non-malfeasance (doing no harm)

In exploring how mentoring might be compared between Aboriginal and mainstream perspectives, understanding Aboriginal culture[1] is a place to begin. The qualitative differences between Euro-Canadian worldviews and Aboriginal worldviews help to articulate how social constructs such as mentoring can be different. Previous literature found that there is a "dichotomy in the literature between more formal or Eurocentric perceptions of mentoring and Aboriginal approaches" (Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink &Woodard, 2003, p. 5). The Cherokee Nation has conducted extensive research and has drawn on the Cherokee worldview in

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[1] It is important to point out that there is not just one Aboriginal culture and this report does not subscribe to "pan-Indian" perspectives that assume cultural dynamics are universally applicable to Aboriginal nations. In using the term Aboriginal culture, this report intrinsically respects the diversity of cultures, acknowledges that there are vast differences in Aboriginal cultures and worldviews, and also recognizes many similarities between aboriginal cultures.

developing a mentoring framework that is inclusive of their ideologies. Cherokee authors, Lowe (2005), Portman & Garrett (2005), and Patchell, (2005) provide examples of how mentoring programs and relationships reflect the Cherokee worldview.

Like Aboriginal cultural foundations, the mentoring relationship emphasizes the value of culture, kinship and spirituality and is a complex relationship involving the individual and the community. John Lowe (2005) describes the Aboriginal mentoring relationship as one in which self-reliance is a valued; hence, the mentor is responsible, disciplined and confident (p. 39). The Aboriginal mentoring relationship is often developed on an informal basis (McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux & McCluskey, 2004; Lowe, 2005; Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003) and there is an emphasis on "making meaning or finding meaning" from mentoring relationships (Daloz & Parks, 2003; p. 20). The mentoring relationship is not specifically about ensuring the success of the mentee, rather it can be seen as an opportunity for the mentor to share personal stories of life lessons and past experiences and to provide traditional cultural teachings.

The mentor's role can be described in terms of kinship; an aunt, uncle or cousin may be described as such. "Young men and women are drawn into relationships with elders and leaders in apprentice-like learning experiences to ensure the continuation of traditions and stories" (Portman & Garrett, 2005; Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003). Many of the youth participants described their mentor relationship in terms of their "friend" and is based on trust, a non-judgmental attitude; someone they can identify with and whom they identify with culturally. Because Aboriginal mentoring in its' emerging development emphasizes the relational, the general shift towards egalitarian mentorship approaches is timely and congruent with Aboriginal perspectives on mentoring. "…the mentor's role has shifted from

being authoritarian, such as parent, to increasingly egalitarian, such as older sibling or friend"
(Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003, p. 8).

Aboriginal perspectives of mentoring are relational and communitarian based. In some
contexts, Aboriginal worldview consists of, and is situated in, the inter-relationship between
humans and the land. These views manifest in an emphasis on maintaining and sustaining
cultural traditions where language, culture, and respect all play a vital role (Pooyak, 2006). As
Stan Wilson writes (2001):

> The identity of Indigenous peoples whose concept of self is rooted in the context
> of community and place, differs strikingly from the identity of many Euro-
> Canadians whose concept of self is frequently encapsulated in independence of
> the individual….This self-recognition enables us to understand where and how we
> belong to this world, and it has the profound effect of ensuring that wherever we
> may happen to be at any given time, alone or in the company of other people, we
> do not feel alone. This knowledge nourishes us (p. 91).

Hence, for the Aboriginal mentoring relationship, there is great emphasis placed on
giving back to the Aboriginal community (Portman & Garrett, 2005; Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa,
Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003).

Current Aboriginal Mentoring Activities

In Saskatoon, there are several community-based organizations which provide mentoring
programs to the general community. These agencies include the following: Catholic Family
Services, Volunteer Saskatoon, Kids Not in School, Restorative Circles Initiative, the YMCA
and YWCA and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon. These agencies provide mentoring
programs to a variety of clientele, both males and females, the Aboriginal community, youth and
vary in the length of time the mentee is involved (Tannis, 2006). For example, some mentoring
relationships lasted from a minimum of four months to the end of the school year to more than a

full year. It is dependent on the type of program the agency is offering (Tannis, 2006). Agency mentoring programs provide one on one, peer, group and family mentoring opportunities (Tannis, 2006).

More specific activities on Aboriginal mentoring are observed in the work being done by the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) with the Representative Workforce Initiative. The aim of the representative workforce is to ensure that all groups are proportionally represented in all work sectors within the region (Sinclair, M., Personal Communication, March 2007). Given the changing Saskatchewan demographics, attention is being given "to deliver specific initiatives that recruit, retain and facilitate employment of Aboriginal people" as a means of ensuring that Aboriginal people are included in the workforce of the Health Region (SHR, 2006). The goal of the SHR mentoring project is to support the bigger goals of a representative workforce and to enhance connections to the Saskatoon Aboriginal community. "The development and continuation of the partnerships and relations established with the Representative Workforce Initiative is to build strong linkages with the Aboriginal community, educational institutions, and other organizations" (SHR, 2006).

At a national level, Rey Carr's work (2006) has been instrumental in supporting the development of several Aboriginal mentorship programs. Carr's company has adapted mainstream mentoring models to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives. The Saskatoon Health Region Aboriginal mentorship programs that have seen varying degrees of success have utilized Carr's resources to develop their programs. The cross-cultural training elements of existing efforts including Carr's work and the programs of the Health Region can provide valuable

information for other community agencies to build upon in their own mentorship program development.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, an area where mentoring activities are occurring regularly and yet without recognition, is in the Aboriginal health research field. Nationally, Aboriginal research centres (ACADRE centres – Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Research Environments) have been developed and supported with multi-year funding. A core mandate of these organizations is "capacity building" in the area of research generally, and Aboriginal health research specifically. Capacity building, in one aspect, relates to supporting students through funding programs and streaming students in health research. However, the research centres have also become mentoring "hubs" where students, new scholars, and new faculty are supported through funding programs, and mentored into the health research field through conference participation and workshops and individual mentoring. The research centres, in effect, operate based upon a mentoring "culture" because mentoring, or nurturing capacity in others, is a core mandate. Across the country, the mentoring that has taken place through the eight ACADRE centres has resulted in hundreds of new PhD, graduate, and undergraduate students who now have expertise in Aboriginal health research.

Summary

A mentoring relationship can be dynamic, diverse and complex. As previously discussed this relationship becomes more complex when Aboriginal culture and worldviews are the foundation for the mentoring relationship(McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux & McCluskey, 2004; Lowe, 2005: Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003). For an Aboriginal person, culture is not only part of who they are; it is a part of their core ways of being. This

concept is explored further in the discussion section of this paper. It is important for non-Aboriginal people who are interested in developing a mentoring program to understand the cultural significance and historical background of the population they are working with. This information would include the impacts of colonization, loss of culture, and the impact of residential schools (Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink & Woodard, 2003). Secondly, non-Aboriginal people need to understand that Aboriginal mentors may develop their own mentoring relationships. This informal way of mentoring is more common among Aboriginal people than the more conventional western form of mentoring which is often systematic and formal (Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klink &Woodard, 2003).

Mentoring, for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, needs to begin with identifying commonalities between individuals and respecting differences. It has been shown that successful mentoring relationships are based on individuals (the mentor and mentee) having common backgrounds where both individuals share the same cultural and social beliefs and values, have common goals, have the same religious or spiritual background. Although these commonalities will greatly increases the success of the mentoring relationship (Wentling & Waight, 2001; Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005; Lander, 2004; Daloz & Parks, 2003; Lowe, 2005; Patchell, 2005), understanding other cultures and values can also contribute to successful outcomes. According to the participants, cross-cultural awareness is a key factor in positive relationships across cultures.

To conclude, the literature highlights the inherent differences between Western and Aboriginal notions mentoring. Within Western ideology, mentoring primarily focuses on the success of the individual. However, Aboriginal mentoring processes are relational and communitarian. These differing perspectives play out in mentoring practices and priorities but do

not present insurmountable obstacles. That is, Aboriginal worldview emphasizes the needs of the individual, within the context of the needs of the community. A successful mentoring relationship for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relies on meeting the needs of the individual. For non-Aboriginal mentors involved in Aboriginal mentoring, the literature is clear that understanding the cultural background and history of the Aboriginal mentee is very significant (Portman and Garrett, 2005; Lowe, 2005; Patchell, 2005; Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005; Jaime, 2003; Starnes, 2006). Some contemporary Aboriginal mentoring projects are addressing the challenge of bridging worldview perspectives in mentoring approaches. The resources are being developed and local mentoring programs are at a stage where evaluation can provide excellent direction for Aboriginal mentor program development.

The absence of existing literature clearly indicates the need for continued research in the area of Aboriginal mentorship. As discussed this area will continue to evolve with the changing demographics within Saskatchewan. The ongoing efforts of Saskatchewan and other areas within Canada will serve as a foundation for future explorations of Aboriginal mentorship, both formally and informally. With Aboriginal mentoring projects of the SHR in development and underway, and the experiences of the ACADRE program to draw on, it is an opportune time for organizations interested in Aboriginal mentoring to approach and partner or collaborate with the Health Region to share "lessons learned" and "best practices".

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative methodology to explore the topic of mentorship and articulate, from the perspective of key informants including Elders, youth, and helping professionals, recommendations for sound Aboriginal mentoring approaches. This report makes

recommendations regarding what the participants see as essential to the development and delivery of Aboriginal mentoring programs and makes recommendations based on inferences from the data.

Purpose

Community programs, agencies, and groups are interested in finding strategies to more effectively serve their particular client demographics. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon (BBBSS) serves a large Aboriginal youth population and so Aboriginal input into mentorship development, implementation, and evaluation was their primary concern. In accordance with best practices, BBBSS is interested in developing their mentorship model in a way that will meet the needs of their current and future service users. This study was undertaken to contribute to the development of best practices in Aboriginal mentoring within Saskatoon.

Sampling and Recruitment

For the purpose of this study, youth were defined as individuals between the ages of eighteen and thirty. Participants were recruited through the researchers' personal contacts in the general community, the Aboriginal Students' Centre and with the assistance of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon**.** Participant recruitment was done in conjunction with the following agencies: Volunteer Saskatoon, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon, Catholic Family Services, Kids Not in School, and Restorative Circles Initiatives. Recruitment was conducted through personal contacts with Raven Sinclair, principal investigator, Leslie Dawson, student research intern and Sherri Pooyak, report researcher. In total, 31 participants volunteered to participate in this project. Purposive sampling was used as a strategy, whereby participants were selected based on the criteria set out by the research focus. Within this study, participants were selected

for their knowledge on mentoring or their experiences with mentoring (Trochim, 2005, p. 43). Snowball sampling was also used; recruited participants were asked to recommend other participants for the study. Of the 31 participants, two participants self-declared as Métis and two as non-Aboriginal. The other 27 participants self-declared as Status Aboriginal.

Recruited participants to the study were provided with the study information contained in the consent form and asked to sign the consent form once they understood the information (Appendix B). Signed consent forms have been retained on file.

Data Collection

There were two researchers who conducted the interviews. The initial research intern, a law student, conducted a number of the initial youth interviews. The report author, and a Master of Social Work candidate and Research Coordinator with the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre, conducted additional interviews with youth, community members, and Elders.

Data collection consisted of initial consultations with the interested agencies regarding the purpose and focus of the research project. In the first phase of the project the student research intern sent Letters of Recruitment (Appendix A) to contacts suggested by the principal investigator, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon. Interviews were conducted in the in various environments which included: the participant's place of residence, at their workplace, at the Big Brothers Big Sisters office, or over the phone. The majority of the interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and the focus group lasted 2 hours. Researcher, Sherri Pooyak conducted interviews with the two Elders, the four community members and held a focus group of three at the Big Brothers Big Sisters office on March 12, 2007. A staff member of the Big Brothers Big Sisters office coordinated the focus group and recruited volunteers through their program. The focus group participants had previous involvement with the agency and were requested to

participate and talk about their experiences as a mentor/mentee with the program. All of the participants were over the age of 18 and are currently living in Saskatoon.

It is important to note the logistical problems with the data collection and analysis that extended the project duration. Acquiring the proper consent was initially problematic; for example, in the professional group there were seventeen (17) participants who were interviewed, however only ten of the participants' data could be used in the analysis, because there were no consent forms collected or attached for the remaining seven participants. In the youth group there were twelve (12) participants, although only five could be used because the remaining seven did not have the requisite consent forms or participants did not answer the questions.   Table   1 outlines the participants to the project.

Table 1, Project Participants, Aboriginal Mentoring Project, 2007

Participants	Total Participants	Consent not acquired	Total (with consent)
Professionals	17	7	10
Youth	12	6	7
Community	4	0	4
Elder	2	0	2
Focus Group	3	0	3
Total	31	13	**26**

Source: Focus Groups and Interviews, Saskatoon Saskatchewan, Canada, 2007

Of the thirty-five participants interviewed, twenty-one were defined as "professionals," that is they work in a professional setting, (in a university or business setting), with exception of four of the interviewees who are defined as community members. The community members

include an individual who was interviewed for her involvement in the start-up of an Aboriginal mentoring program for female Aboriginal youth in the inner city of Winnipeg called, *Empowering Our Little Sisters*. The second and third community members are represented by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon, for which this project was being conducted. Those two individuals were interviewed together at the Big Brothers Big Sisters office in Saskatoon. And the last community member interviewed works with the Saskatoon Health Region as the Aboriginal Mentorship Coordinator and Aboriginal Human Resources Consultant with the health region.

There were two Cree Elders that participated in this project. The first is a respected Elder and ceremonial man from his community and has previously worked with youth in a correctional setting. He was interviewed at his home on Moosomin First Nation, Saskatchewan. The second Elder interviewed has been working with youth for many years. He was interviewed for his work with youth and has previously worked in a correctional and residential setting. He currently works in the field of addictions. For each of these interviews the Cree cultural protocol was followed for the inclusion of cultural teachings. Based on the Cree protocol, each Elder was offered tobacco for their participation.

The data collected during this study will remain in a secure location in the office of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre and will be accessible by the participants upon request. After a period of time set out in the ethics protocols, the data will be destroyed. No files or information will be retained.

Ethics

In accordance with behavioural ethics standards, ethics approval was sought and acquired from the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Ethics Research Board. The initial application

was submitted in October, 2005 and approval was received on November 16, 2005 (Appendix C). Once the team reviewed the initial work, there was a need to reconceptualize the project. An experienced researcher, Sherri Pooyak, was brought in to review the project progress, make necessary adaptations, and complete the project in a timely manner. Since the ethics approval had lapsed, the project had to be reopened through formal channels. A letter requesting to reopen the research project was sent on February 20, 2007 and approval was received on the same day. The main goals and objectives of the project were retained, however, the interview questions were revised, additional informants were recruited, data analysis was redone and completed, incomplete data (and data without requisite consent) was removed from the data collection, additional recruitment of participants was initiated and interviews were scheduled, and the final report was completed.

In accordance with Indigenous research ethics and the principles of OCAP (Schnarch, 2004), this report belongs to the participants who have the right to acquire and use the data and the information. The project team holds the responsibility for storing the material for a specified period of time and the material will not be used for any other purpose without participant consent. It is our hope and intention that this project will benefit the participants and the Aboriginal community as a whole. Lastly, Cree cultural protocol was adhered to and respected as set out by the Aboriginal communities in Saskatoon. This involved the inclusion of tobacco and gift protocols, and the inclusion of Elder input in the research material.

Data Analysis

A qualitative thematic analysis was used and is described as the "search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns" (Bernard, 1988, p. 319). Analysis consisted of identifying culturally based themes which identify the differences between

a "western worldview" and an Aboriginal worldview. More importantly, the data analysis sought to identify what culturally based approaches to mentoring would assist youth in becoming successful adults. In addition the research explored what is needed to develop a formal Aboriginal mentoring program.

Data analysis consisted of first, cleaning and organizing the data, and then transcribing the interviews and categorizing them according to the group they were interviewed in. The data was cleaned; any data that did not have a consent form attached was removed from the analysis and subsequently destroyed. Participants whose consent forms were attached to the data were used in the data analysis. The data was then ordered according to group and transcripts were assigned codes to protect confidentiality of participants.

The data was then subjected to thematic analysis and sub-categorized using the interview questions as a guide. A thorough review of each interview transcription was conducted and general themes and significant quotes were noted. The underlying question for the thematic analysis was: What was the common theme among the interviews regarding Aboriginal mentoring? Out of this initial analysis there arose three main themes. A second analysis was then conducted and the data was categorized according to the three themes: personal, Aboriginal mentoring and training. The personal category arose out of the participants' experiences with mentoring, both as a mentors and mentees. The focus was to engage the participants to describe and discuss their ideas as to what they thought was needed in the development of an Aboriginal mentoring program. Subsequent to the analysis, a contextual framework developed out of the data regarding what a culturally based mentoring program would entail and look like.

The findings section begins with the interviews from the Elders to establish the context for the data analysis and subsequent discussion on Aboriginal mentoring in Saskatoon. The two

Elders interviewed talked extensively about "knowing who you are and knowing where you come from" which confirms what we understand from the literature that Aboriginal worldview revolves around a communitarian ethic. The perspectives of the Elders provides a foundation for the data analysis in that those concepts provide the context from which Aboriginal mentoring needs to be considered for programs to be developed – the "Aboriginal perspective". Understanding worldview concepts is pertinent to the development of an Aboriginal mentorship model and many of the youth and professional participants described a desire to learn more about Aboriginal culture and traditions.

Findings

The Wisdom of the Elders

Each of the Elders described mentoring as a process in which the mentors would encourage youth to develop relationships with adults whom they deem to be role models. This would provide them an opportunity to have access to community programming and resources that they may not have had otherwise, including cultural programming. A culturally based mentoring program also allows them to engage in a relationship where they are interacting with someone with whom they can identify, someone who looks like them, and understands who they are. During the interviews the Elders were asked to discuss the concept of traditional mentorship. One Elder indicated that traditional mentorship is having respect for all living and non-living things and the value of meditation or self-reflection as tools for gaining an understanding "who you are and where you come from." The following ideas were also articulated during discussion of Aboriginal mentorship:

> I think they're on the right track, but you have to remember mentoring is as old as time. The nurturing kind of thing…You don't have to have a PhD in psychology to be a parent. Neither would you need a degree to be a mentor, a healthy mentor. (Elder 2, 2007)

> I think that is part of the greatness of Indian people is that the kinship system, because it reinforces, you know. That's the first thing we ask is *where your from?*" as opposed to what's your name and what you do. There's cultural differences. If your look at the ceremonial, if you look at the role of the oscapewas (*helpers*) they learn by doing, they're taught the precise way of doing things and as you go along you ask questions, you know. You learn by doing and you do a lot of hard work. (Elder 2, February 27, 2007).

Elder 2 described the characteristics of an Aboriginal mentoring relationship as follows; they are teachers, provide support, offer encouragement, coaches another, and can assist the

individual in a spiritual way. "I think the key to mentoring is to finding the good in people…

stuff that they don't see in themselves, encouragement."

In the Aboriginal community, the mentoring relationship focuses on the kinship system,

family members, including the extended family, play a significant role in providing support and

encouragement, role modeling, storyteller and the one who can pass on the traditions. Elder 2

described mentoring as a "parental thing." A brother/sister, aunt/uncle, cousin or grandparent

often acts a mentor to their younger sibling, cousin, and niece/nephew and plays a significant

role in the mentees lives.

When Elder 2 was asked *what the advantages/disadvantages of enhancing Aboriginal*

mentorship might be and to discuss solutions in overcoming the barriers defined he replied that a

successful Aboriginal mentoring program "needs to come from an Aboriginal based agency and

not from outside, is community driven and incorporates culturally based group activities and

programming such as culture camps, and attending or encouraging youth to participate in

powwows.

During my interview with Elder 1, I asked him *what would be helpful in mentoring young*

people today? His response surprised me when he said "First Nation people would have to leave

the cities." Elder 1 explained further by talking about the importance of Aboriginal people living

in their own communities as they are better able "to understand who they are as a person and

they come to understand themselves better… and to know how your ancestors lived." He

explains further by saying that "traditionally we were led with the direction of our parents and

grandparents, they pointed out to us, they showed us where to go this is why we are told to have

respect for our Elders, because they have shown us the way." An Aboriginal mentoring program

that is community driven and/or is a collaborative effort with the non-Aboriginal community

needs to be clear about each person's role, especially if they are going to have Elders involved with the program. Elder 2 explained that Elders can be used for different things and it will be up to the community to decide what it is that constitutes these needs. Elder 1 talked about how today's young people do not know how to approach Elders; these are teachings which could be revived with the assistance of a mentoring program, and through the mentors.

In the Words of Our Youth

"Knowing where you come from" is an important cultural value within Aboriginal culture and one that was reflected by Elder 2 and the youth participants. All of the youth participants commented on a desire to know their culture and their language, one youth spoke about moving to their reserve as a teenager while another talked about growing up on their reserve. While both understood that was a part of their heritage they still felt that they did not fully understand their culture due to their loss of their language. An Aboriginal mentoring program with Aboriginal mentors can provide an opportunity for the youth to learn about their cultural traditions.

All of the participants agreed that having a mentor was important and described a mentor in the following ways "support person," "someone they could talk to about their problems with," "who will be non-judgmental" and "who would listen and offer advice in a non-threatening way." Having a mentor of the same cultural background was identified as important as he/she could teach the mentee about their culture and cultural traditions as well as provide the mentee with a sense of belonging. During the interviews with the youth (Appendix E), they described the impact of colonization and residential schools has had on them and how they have felt the effects of losing their culture and language. Having a mentor with a strong cultural background and who speaks the language would beneficial for young Aboriginal people.

Two of the youth interviews were done independently of the others, with the remaining three conducted as a focus group with the assistance of Big Brothers Big Sisters Association in Saskatoon, SK. Four of the five participants were Aboriginal and one was Métis. All five participants have been mentored and only two of the participants' mentors were non-Aboriginal, with the other two participants describing their mentors as "role models" or "helpers." One participant described extended family members as being role models in the following:

> I really just sort of looked up to them because they were athletic, they were smart, they were social able, they were just good role models, that way, and they, they, I guess they didn't really didn't live a destructive life, like they didn't get into drugs and they didn't get me into bad habits, they sort of kept me on the right path in life, and I, you know I still look up to them.

When asked the question *what expectations do you have for a mentor*? The participants talked about the importance of their mentors leading a positive lifestyle, someone who was drug and alcohol free, who was physically active, and more important someone who was "non-judgmental," "trusting," "respectful," "understanding," "supportive" and "willing to share their life experiences with them as a part of their mentoring." These were deemed to be important characteristics for a mentor.

The next interview question asked the participants to *define what their "vision" of mentoring Aboriginal youth would look like*. One participant talked about having "a guide" who would "push you" to finish things. The focus group participants talked about the barriers in engaging Aboriginal youth to participate in a mentoring program. Two of the youth spoke about their experiences living and growing up on reserve. The barriers identified are as: 1) the lack of recreational activities for youth who live on reserve 2) the lack of encouragement and support youth feel and 3) the struggle of finding one's identity (especially for Métis youth and youth who have been involved in negative activities (i.e.; gangs, alcohol and drug use). The participants

identified strategies for breaking down these barriers <u>such as</u> encouraging teachers (who are on and off reserve) to provide additional support to youth. The youth felt that it was important to have teachers provide on-going support to youth, such as encouraging him/her to participate in after school recreational activities. The development of recreational programming and facilities on reserves specifically for youth was also suggested for rural mentorship programs.

In their view, a mentoring program that offers positive role models who can support and encourage youth would help to alleviate some of the alienation many youth feel about being Métis or Aboriginal. As one participant described how some youth experience alienation, "I think some of them feel intimidated, and they just think 'well I'm branded this way so I guess I'll stay' … and they probably won't like me because they know I, did all these things … I wish that, um, there was just more encouragement to reach those people."

In light of this last statement, the next question asked the participants to *describe the kinds of things they would like to see being done?* The common answer was to encourage the youth to explore and continue their involvement with the interests. Secondly, for the relationship to be based on trust where the mentee is given a choice to be involved in the relationship and there are clear and defined roles and expectations.

When asked "Have any of your mentors included cultural aspects into your mentoring program?" one participant described the importance of culture within the mentoring relationship: "I think it's…important…I think the answers too…knowing your heritage, learning … just getting an understanding of it…know yourself better…when you're young, you're just sort of establishing your identity…I think that's important, it's always important to learn about all cultures, I think it's important to learn about your own." Another participant added that

storytelling, promoting a sense of identity, and cultural pride would also be important aspects to incorporate into the mentoring program.

What the Helping Professionals Had to Say

Interviews from the professional and community member groups were asked the same questions (Appendix D). The data collected from the professional group was organized and divided thematically into three categories for the analysis: personal experiences with mentoring, Aboriginal mentoring, and training. The personal set of questions provided a background to the interviewee's experiences with mentoring.

The following catalogues the participants' responses which have been condensed into a thematic schema. In regards to the first question *describe mentoring and mentorship*, they were asked *if they had served as a mentor and in what capacity, and to define successful mentoring.* All of the participants interviewed had served as a mentor in some form or another, many informally, and described their mentoring roles within the context of family members. However, most of the professional respondents are employed in an academic setting and described how their involvement in academia served as a setting for developing more formal mentoring relationships with their students. This was reflected in the data, as many of the respondents talked about the impact of colonization on Aboriginal people and struggled with the existing terminology, often challenging the language revolving around "mentoring and mentee" as they felt it creates positions of hierarchy and power imbalances. Many of the participants described how the current language and description of the mentoring relationship was in conflict with their ideologies as an Aboriginal person. However, the participants also described the mentoring relationship as "providing guidance," "insight and support," "shared background," "teaching by example" (from both a personal and professional aspect) and as one participant described it

knowing "how you relate to people." For one participant the mentoring relationship is an "on-going process."

Defining a successful mentor proved difficult for one participant when asked, "Where is the line between being appreciated and being a mentor?" For another respondent successful mentoring involved many aspects, such as "community involvement" and "personal time commitment" for both the mentor and mentee. Time was identified as a significant factor within the mentoring relationship; rapport building with the mentee takes time and patience. Spending time with the mentee creates a situation in which the mentor can assist in enhancing the mentees' self-esteem, assist in fulfilling goals, and build trust.

Trust is deemed the most important aspect of a successful mentoring relationship as trust can only be attained, according to the participants, if the mentor is able to be "non-judgmental," "consistent," and "understanding." The mentor has to be able to create a "safe and trusting environment" whereby "choice" is given as option. That is, the mentee must have a choice to be involved in the relationship and is part of the decision making process.

The next question asked the participants to *explain how mentoring is different in the Aboriginal community*. Most participants referred to worldview. One participant indicated one way of describing a traditional Aboriginal worldview as follows, "the helper (the mentor) acts as a guide or role model to the one being helped and a third is the one who understand both perspectives and is both a helper and one who is helped." From this perspective the inter-relationship between two people is based on reciprocity. Other participants compared Aboriginal mentoring to non-Aboriginal mentoring in terms of the role family members (extended and immediate) play in this type of relationship where there are "different expectations and different lifestyles" from the mainstream "norm". The perception of the mentoring relationship is viewed

as a "journey of life lessons" where spirituality plays an integral role. Understanding and participating in traditional ceremonies is a vital aspect of this relationship. "Youth need to be introduced to the idea that there are possibilities out there, where they can dream and achieve their goals."

One participant noted that there is general lack of understanding about Aboriginal people from the non-Aboriginal community. In the Aboriginal community spirituality and cultural traditions (such as ceremonies and treatment of Elders) are an important part of many Aboriginal people's beliefs and value systems. In a mentoring relationship, where the mentor is non-Aboriginal, these values need to be understood by the non-Aboriginal mentor. Non-Aboriginal people need to understand the values, beliefs and abide by cultural protocols set out by the Aboriginal community. As one participant noted Aboriginal mentoring "should not be different in the Aboriginal community; however, it may be approached from a slightly different perspective according to the personality differences of the individual."

Participants were asked *to define what might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance Aboriginal mentorship*. Their response was categorized into two related main themes: 1) providing cultural awareness for the agency who is interested in providing Aboriginal mentoring; 2) respecting cultural traditions and protocols. The participants were adamant that mentoring programs needed to incorporate a cultural awareness (sensitivity training) program as part of their core training. As well, it would be beneficial to offer cultural programming which would provide youth (the mentee) an opportunity to learn about their culture. One participant described what this would look like

> If a person is working with an Aboriginal child, cultural sensitivity is of utmost importance. In order to understand Aboriginal children, the person needs to be sensitive. People get stuck in colour. The ideal would be to see Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person go into their world, the person that is working with that family,

needs to approach that family from their map of the world. We cannot go in there from our agenda. What cultural sensitivity is would be introducing children to ceremony, sweat or bring them to a place where sweat lodge is being set up and they learn what it represents, and what the poles represent. There is a whole set of protocol. For example, how is a sweat lodge set up, or a teepee? What is a powwow about, what's a cultural camp all about? What does that entail?

Respect for cultural traditions needs to include and respect Saskatchewan's many Aboriginal nations in the Saskatoon area. Each nation has their cultural protocols and traditions that need to be recognized, respected, and adhered to. Non-Aboriginal agencies and mentors would benefit from cultural training workshops. This will be further discussed in this report. However, as one participant discussed in the interview, it is important to have Elders who can incorporate traditional values within the mentoring program and relationship. Another participant discussed the importance of providing the different Aboriginal cultural groups to define "how they would interact" and "to open lines of communication" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people regarding what Aboriginal values and beliefs are as they focus on honesty and trust.

Participants were next asked to discuss *what might be the advantages/disadvantages of enhancing Aboriginal mentorship and discuss solutions in overcoming the barriers defined.* The professional group identified the following to be an advantage to having Aboriginal mentors; Aboriginal mentors might be better able to "understand the systemic and structural issues" facing Aboriginal people; they can be "role models who empower and encourage" the mentee to mentor others which in turn builds a positive relationship. Aboriginal mentors enter the relationship with shared values and belief systems, while "showing that they care about a person, that they respect a person as they are, they can accept a person as they are without changing the person… just being able to sustain a relationship that respects who an Aboriginal youth is without trying to

change them and only inviting them when they ask youth to do certain things;" the importance of having a non-judgmental, accepting attitude is important.

Disadvantages identified by the participants include: "time commitment required by the mentor in building and developing the mentoring relationship;" "racism such as structural racism;" "discrimination, marginalization and geography, such as a lack of access to resources due to the geographic location of some communities." Deterrents that prevent a successful mentoring relationship were discussed in the following: "the power differences that exist within the mentoring relationship," and "the lack of resources," "community involvement," "youth having a low self-esteem" and the lack of Aboriginal people who are in positions of authority.

The participants suggested that having the ability to develop strong relationships with their mentors was important. Relationship building that would develop into a friendship was a significant factor for the youth and they described wanting someone with whom they could talk to about their personal issues and who would offer them advice and respect their decision. The initial screening process that occurs during the recruitment phase was identified as a barrier as it requires potential mentors to answer highly personal questions and to discuss intimate matters with the agencies screener. It may also contribute to a formalizing of the process that is immediately off-putting to Aboriginal youth who have had negative experiences The Aboriginal community must identify what their needs are in regards to an Aboriginal mentoring program. Participants also commented on the need for community organizations to provide recreational programming, such as a "cultural camps, provide a workshops on cultural awareness which includes mentors, mentees, Elders, family members and agency staff." The participants also emphasized the importance for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities involved in mentoring to create a trusting and working relationship. This is reflected in the statement "I think

mentoring implies there is trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and there is not.". This lack of trust clearly indicates an area that requires meaningful dialogue to address this issue.

The last question the participants were asked to discuss is *how involving Elders would enhance Aboriginal mentorship and how agencies can access Elders.* Elder involvement in mentoring programs was strongly supported and encouraged as Elders are able to "support and provide," "wisdom," "guidance," "passing on of traditional and cultural knowledge (such as how to follow protocols)," "healing," "trust," "respect and support," and the value they bring in the stories they have to "share of their life experiences and wisdom." Elders could assist the agency and staff members in understanding the Aboriginal worldview, assist in setting up the cultural guidelines of the mentoring relationship and how to abide by the cultural protocols when involving Elders in Aboriginal mentoring programs. The participants identified the greatest barrier to learning about cultural matters was being able to access Elders and the fact that when Elders are involved in projects, their time involvement is usually limited due to funding

What the Community Members had to say

There were three groups interviewed representing community members. For the purpose of this study community was broadly defined as the "greater" community involved in Aboriginal issues. The community representatives include an Aboriginal organization representative, two NGO representatives, and one Regional Health Authority representative. All community participants are involved in Aboriginal mentoring programs and development.

The community members were asked the same set of questions as the professional group (see Appendix D). Community members were asked questions that have been categorized thematically for the purpose of data analysis as follows: to *describe mentoring and mentorship,*

they were asked *if they had served as a mentor and in what capacity, and to define successful mentoring*. The next set of questioning was concerned with the idea of Aboriginal mentoring as participants were asked to *explain how mentoring is different in the Aboriginal community* and to *define what might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance Aboriginal mentorship*. The questions also set out to find *what might be the advantages/disadvantages of enhancing Aboriginal mentorship and discuss solutions in overcoming the barriers defined;* and *how involving Elders would enhance Aboriginal mentorship and how agencies can access elders.*

When community members were asked to *describe mentoring and mentorship*, they were asked *if they had served as a mentor and in what capacity, and to define successful mentoring*. Responses stressed the importance of focusing on "relationship building" whereby the mentor is able to share the how they have had the "same experience." The participants also discussed the value of having a mentor with whom the mentee is able "to identify with their culture, sense of identity and to provide education, open your eyes." For the community participants they described the importance and values of relationship building and sharing a common cultural background as integral in creating a positive environment in which the mentees' sense of "self-esteem" becomes a process of "empowering," where there is a sharing of "knowledge," "sharing similar life lessons," is a "friend," someone who listens, provides support, "role model", and someone that they "can learn from." For the mentor, the relationship encourages a reciprocity where sharing is promoted. It is imperative within the mentoring relationship that the mentor listens to the mentee and "understands what his/her needs are." Two of the three participants served as mentors in both a formal and informal capacities. The third participant stated that due to the level of time involved with their mentoring program it was not feasible.

Community members were clear that non-Aboriginal mentors need to understand Aboriginal family dynamics. If non-Aboriginal mentors are going to mentor Aboriginal people, there needs to be an understanding as to the needs of Aboriginal families. Non-Aboriginal people need "to have more connection and experiences" with Aboriginal people in order to provide support to the families involved such as including extended family members through facilitating family involvement, and including the family in activities. Community members expressed difficulty in defining and measuring successful mentoring. One participant posed the question "what are the outcomes?" Prior to the mentoring relationship developing, the purpose and goals of the relationship needs to be established from both the mentor and the mentee. For example, the participants emphasized the importance of "increasing" and "building a mentees self-esteem," "helping the person feel good about who they are," "helping a person grow which can be measured through benchmarks" and that it "is about people meeting their own needs".

The next question asked community members to *explain how mentoring is different in the Aboriginal community* and *to define what might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance Aboriginal mentorship*. The participants all agreed that mentoring in the Aboriginal community is done on an informal level in which the mentor has many roles that vary from that of "teacher," "role model," and one who shares information. As one participant noted "it is ingrained in the fabric." An emphasis was placed on building family and community relationships or a "widening of the circle" where there is no hierarchy within the relationship.

The participants all agreed that Aboriginal people have differing worldviews, which is a fundamental part of their belief system. For example, Aboriginal people spend more time with and supporting family (both immediate and extended family members) whereas non-Aboriginal family members are mainly focused on immediate family. Mentoring is also done on an informal

level, where the mentor and mentee have developed a relationship on their own, without the assistance of a mentoring agency or service provider such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon. All of the participants explained that individuals who can be defined as mentors are already "spread thin" by their own community involvement.

When the participants were asked *to define what might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance Aboriginal mentorship* they all responded: "Elders need to be involved from the beginning." Elders provide "guidance, leadership, wisdom, support to the staff, and children," "take time to reflect" and are described as being "methodical" about their approach in assisting the agency or program staff. Elders also are able to provide important cultural teachings to the mentors and mentees.

Funding "needs to be meeting the needs of the program not the other way around." Program developers also have to "take time to develop and support the program." "Building partnerships and developing trust between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community" is key and program developers need to take the time to develop relationships with the community, potential and current mentors and mentees. A change in the current approach to "work with them rather than for them" towards Aboriginal mentoring in the agency was suggested. Lastly and more importantly, non-Aboriginal people need to understand the culturally differing styles of communication, when working with Elders. "Incorporat[ing] traditional cultural teachings, such as the tipi teachings" and having Elders as part of this process were emphasized. For example, Elders will share stories and will lead by example, rather than verbally telling the person what to do and how to do it.

When community members were then asked *what might be the advantages/disadvantages of enhancing Aboriginal mentorship and discuss solutions in overcoming the barriers defined,*

they had a lot to say. In regards to the advantages of Aboriginal mentoring, community members quickly identified that having a shared cultural background (between the mentor and mentee) was the greatest advantage to Aboriginal mentoring. One community member described the importance of having the "same cultural background" within the mentoring relationship where the relationship has the ability to develop a stronger connection. As one participant noted, "when you feel someone is from the same background" it validates the experiences of the mentee. In the mentees' perspective, having a shared worldview assists in the relationships building process.

One community member in the following comment explained the shared worldview; "the West itemizes whereas Aboriginals have a holistic approach." Occasionally differing worldviews (West vs. Aboriginal) can manifest in different practices in this type of relationship. An Aboriginal mentoring program should have the inherent foundation for accommodating differing worldview manifestations. For example, an Elder may meet with a mentee when "the time is right", and the mentee understands this. Contrast this to meeting on a specific day, at a specific time regardless of whether it meets the needs of the mentee. Similarly, Aboriginal families include extended family and corollary commitments whereas organizations only recognize "familial obligations" as pertaining to the immediate family.

In terms of disadvantages and solutions regarding Aboriginal mentoring, community members identified the following as challenges of Aboriginal mentoring. Receiving support from the Aboriginal community may be difficult as trust needs to be developed and supported, which requires an investment of time. Secondly, ownership was identified as a barrier; that is, who should be providing the mentorship programming is an issue. One community member and other participants were adamant that the Aboriginal community and its members should drive Aboriginal mentoring programs. This does not mean that non-Aboriginal people should not be

involved and should not partner and collaborate. It means that the impetus, control, and direction

for Aboriginal mentorship should originate in the Aboriginal community. Collaborations and

power sharing will ensure that the mentoring programs are sound.

> Mentoring work has to be community driven, they have to facilitate and acknowledge that, build the program from the ground up. EOLS (Empowering Our Little Sisters) is incorporated and non-profit, with a focus on service delivery partnerships. [The] integrity of Aboriginal people is met. [There is a] positive relationship with BBBS and trust has been developed with the agency (community member from Winnipeg, MB, February 12, 2007).

A third disadvantage identified by two participants was "the screening process." They found

the screening process "to be too long and intimidating for some interested mentors" and

"suggested that only mandatory questions be asked and for the screener goes out to the

community". For example the screener conducts the interview at the interested parties home,

rather than the agency. If Aboriginal mentoring is going to be successfully developed and

implemented, it "needs to be Aboriginal driven" and Aboriginal people need to be "involved in

all areas of the program development." Fourthly, the participant from Winnipeg shared the

following experience between the Winnipeg Big Brother's Big Sisters (BBBS) and the

Aboriginal community: "In Winnipeg the perception of BBBS was negative and no one wanted

to be involved with the agency, thus they identified a need for the development of a partnership."

For the purpose of this study, none of the participants were asked questions specific to this,

therefore it is unknown as to how the Aboriginal community perceives Saskatoon's BBBS.

A fifth disadvantage identified by the participants was the differences in mentoring

approaches. One participant noted that Aboriginal people's mentoring approach as follows,

"Aboriginal people are more likely to engage in informal mentoring relationships, whereas non-

Aboriginal people are more likely to engage in formal ones." That is, Aboriginal people develop

mentoring relationships on their own and rarely seek out to become mentors. Lastly, many of the participants, including the youth and professional group, cited that a significant disadvantage for mentoring was the "perception of what mentoring is" and the "language used to describe mentoring" was not reflective of how Aboriginal people become involved in mentoring relationships. Because most mentoring programs are based on mainstream models and Westernized interpretations of best practice approaches, developing Aboriginal mentoring that truly addresses these concerns will require creativity and critical insights to Aboriginal ideology, worldviews, and cultural practices.

Community members were asked *how involving Elders would enhance Aboriginal mentorship and how agencies can access Elders.* Elder involvement was identified as an integral component and aspect to having a successful mentoring program as Elders can assist in developing a partnership between the mentor and the mentee as well as the Aboriginal community. The community member from Winnipeg responded to the question of accessing Elders by saying that when they were developing their program it was the "women who identified the Elder they wanted to work with and who was willing to be involved without the formal process of seeking one out." She further noted that if "they, the Elder, believe in the process, they will involve themselves." If an agency is going to include having an Elder as part of their program, the Elder does "need to be involved in all phases of the process." The other community members talked about how the school mentoring program they were involved with has "been a resource in accessing Elders." Elders have been available through the program.

Training

In this section, the findings from the professional and community member groups are synthesized. This section focuses on participant's suggestions regarding mentoring training.

They were asked the following questions: *Do you think group or one-on-one mentorship is more effective? Why or why not? What type and how much training is needed for people to become mentors? Who should be involved in training and evaluating Aboriginal mentorship programs and why?*

When the participants were asked if they thought *group or one-to-one mentorship was more effective,* both parties agreed that there were positive and negative aspects to group and one-to-one approaches to mentoring. They also agreed that the most effective approach to mentoring was dependent upon the individual's goals and on the relationship building and trust development aspects in which the mentee is able to develop a "connection." One participant noted that the relationship is based on one that is "intimate and confidential" and this is more difficult to achieve in a group context.

Group mentoring, however, provides an opportunity for the mentee to develop relationships naturally without the formal process of scheduled meeting times. For example, if the mentee attends a community event with the agencies group (like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon), such as a powwow or other cultural activity, the mentee has the safety of a group in which he/she feels more comfortable to interact with the adults. Community members also talked about a group dynamic setting the stage for establishing an informal mentoring relationship which they felt "works better" and would create an opportunity for "youth who are unclear of their goals and needs." One community member went on to say, "In some situations a group is always mentoring themselves." In many ways, this latter concept of group mentoring is like establishing a mentoring culture and presenting opportunities for informal mentoring relationships to develop.

The difficulties of mentoring within a group setting were identified as power imbalances and the development of a hierarchy in mentoring relationships, which can cause difficulty for establishing a confidential and trusting relationship, especially in a group setting. Two community members felt that a one-on-one type of mentoring relationship is more effective as it creates an opportunity for the mentor and mentee to develop a "strong open relationship" where the mentee is able to get to know the mentor. However, one community member discussed the negative aspects of one-on-one mentoring relationship, as this person felt that Aboriginal people can be shy and intimidated which could inhibit the mentoring relationship.

Participants were asked *What type and how much training is needed for people to become mentors?* The most important training participants identified as needed was the development of a cultural awareness workshop, which would describe traditional cultural protocols when working with Aboriginal people and agencies. This type of training would also include learning how to approach Elders when seeking knowledge about cultural protocols and ceremonies. Participants also identified that training was needed on following protocols and procedures on issues involving child abuse and neglect. Further, the participants also suggested training on FAS/FAE, "gangs/gang activity," residential schools, program expectations regarding the mandate and purpose of mentoring and the basics of guidance counseling (i.e.: educational and career counseling). One community member commented that it is important for mentors to be able to develop trusting relationships with families who are fearful of becoming involved or investigated for child abuse/neglect. Aboriginal people are often familiar with being judged as the result of conditions of poverty. This participant stressed the importance of providing support to families because in her experience "many families expressed in regards to having strangers be at their house for fear they (the mentors) would 'tell on them' and disclose signs of neglect or parental

issues, such as the parent may be out drinking or is drunk at the time the mentor is to meet with the child." Working with the families is an important aspect of the relationship and mentors need to remember this when they are working with the mentee.

Who should be involved in training and evaluating Aboriginal mentorship programs and why? Six of the ten participants agreed that Aboriginal people need to be involved with the training and evaluation of Aboriginal mentoring programs. The participants had a list of suggestions regarding who should be involved, including Elders, people who have previously mentored or been mentored; parents and children, professionals and researchers.

In regards to evaluation, one participant stressed the importance of having an Aboriginal agency conduct the evaluation and its process. One community member did not see race as a factor in regards to who should conduct the program evaluation. All of the participants interviewed agreed that Elders need to be involved in all areas of an Aboriginal mentoring program. Elder 2 also suggested that mentors need to be trained on keeping kids safe, both physically and mentally and need to be a part of the training process, such as learning how to provide mentoring training (training trainers). The third suggestion was to utilize the existing community organizations and possibly develop a partnership that could provide a mentoring program.

Lastly when asked*: Is there anything additional that you would like to share regarding mentoring?* As one participant put it "we may all know of a good mentorship by experience, but we are less able to explain what good mentorship is in terms of a series of metrics or standards." This reflects the overarching theme that Aboriginal people have been mentoring informally for a long time. It also reflects that mentoring in the Aboriginal community needs to come from within

the community and not from the 'outside' and that the Aboriginal community needs to be supported to articulate mentoring practices and paradigms that will work for them.

Discussion

The themes which arose from the data include personal experiences of mentoring, opinions of Aboriginal mentoring, and recommendations about what needs to be included in regards to mentorship training and evaluation. All of the participants were asked if they had formally or informally been involved in a mentoring relationship and all agreed that they had in some form. The personal experiences were vital in providing information on what was and was not beneficial in a mentoring relationship. The following is a list of recommendations which were developed from the interviews with all three groups and are suggested for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon as they develop their mentoring approaches.

Recommendations

- Partner with an existing Aboriginal program, such as the Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre or other organization, where the Aboriginal community has input, influence, and decision making power in the mentoring program.

- Create a culturally appropriate mentoring culture within the BBBSS; for example, teaching youth how to approach Elders and mentors in a culturally relevant way; providing opportunities for informal mentoring to occur.

- Mentoring training needs to include cultural awareness. Elder involvement is crucial as they provide guidance, support and setting out the appropriate cultural protocols.

- Training needs to include the following: cultural protocols; outlining procedures on issues such as child abuse and neglect; FAS/FAE, gangs/ gang activity, residential schools, program expectations; and counseling skills.

- Program development and evaluation needs to come from the Aboriginal community and implemented by Aboriginal people which includes Elders in the process. Programming needs to be culturally based and provide cultural programming such as offering cultural awareness workshops and culture camps.

- The lack of trust between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities implies that there are systemic issues that need to addressed in mentorship development. Participants alluded to cross-cultural training as a remedial step. Ongoing open dialogue on the issue is also suggested.

- Within the mentoring relationship trust needs time to develop. The youth identified that the mentor needs to have a non-judgmental attitude and be more of a "friend" rather than a mentor, as they felt the term mentor indicated positions of power. Aboriginal youth are often positioned to see non-Aboriginal people as power-brokers.

- Re-framing the language used to describe mentoring so that is culturally relevant. Consultation with aboriginal community is recommended for this.

- Develop a partnership with other mentorship programs such as the Saskatoon Health Region Aboriginal Mentorship Program to learn about best practices and lessons learned, as well as to share information about cultural awareness training.

- Seek funding and resources to develop cultural appropriate Aboriginal mentoring programs ensuring that partnerships are sought and developed in order to limit duplication of efforts and streamline resources. Any research/consultation on Aboriginal mentoring must be done in collaboration with the Aboriginal community.

- Further research is needed regarding existing informal Aboriginal mentoring activities within the academic, health and human resource, and Aboriginal health research fields. The findings would contribute valuable information to the development of aboriginal mentoring paradigms.

With respect to Aboriginal mentoring, all of the participants agreed that it was important and emphasized that these be developed for and run by Aboriginal people. The participants also noted that if there is to be an Aboriginal program developed, the Aboriginal community as a whole (including rural and urban communities) must be involved in this process from program development and evaluation to service delivery. An Elder suggested that Aboriginal people need to be in higher positions of authority, such as management positions in levels of government and within the Saskatoon Health Region. The participant from *Empowering Our Little Sisters'* in Winnipeg, MB who was interviewed as a community member, also suggested Aboriginal mentoring programs collaborate with Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies which would bridge service gaps and help to develop trust between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Bridging communities and developing trust was also identified as an important element for the participants. For Aboriginal people the impact of colonization and residential schools has

created an untrusting and tenuous relationship with the non-Aboriginal community as a whole. Trust is a major issue, one that needs to be developed between the two communities. One participant discussed the amount of time it took her to develop a trusting relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. She emphasized the importance of relationship building as being an integral part in developing the foundation of a mentoring relationship and program.

Thirdly, the value and importance of having a culturally relevant and appropriate mentoring program is a necessary and vital aspect for Aboriginal youth. All of the participants reflected on the necessity of having a culturally based mentoring program in the city of Saskatoon. The youth particularly reflected on how they wished they knew more about their culture and thought that a strong culturally based mentoring program was needed. Surprisingly the youth participants did not consider race an important factor in providing a mentoring program, whereas the professional and community members did. If an Aboriginal mentoring program is to be provided a strong cultural component, reflecting the needs of the individual and community, is necessary. As noted in the literature review finding common ground between the mentor and mentee, such as cultural background, interests, goals and spiritual or religious beliefs helps create a successful mentoring relationship (Wentling & Waight, 2001; Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005; Lander, 2004; Daloz & Parks, 2003; Lowe, 2005; Patchell, 2005). Understanding cultural background and history when working with Aboriginal people or those who have a multi-cultural background is crucial (Portman & Garrett, 2005; Lowe, 2005; Patchell, 2005; Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005; Jaime, 2003; Starnes, 2006).

As for agencies that are interested in developing an Aboriginal mentoring program, the participants were adamant that this type of program needed to be developed and run by the

Aboriginal community in collaboration with the non-Aboriginal community. Some suggestions included: 1) the hiring of additional Aboriginal staff, which includes positions in management and in other professional positions; 2) meet with community members who are mentors to discuss how to involve and meet the needs of Aboriginal people who are seeking a mentoring relationship; and 3) the participants expressed that developing informal mentoring relationships would be more effective when working with Aboriginal people. For organizations, this may involve creating a "Mentorship Culture" within the organization. A mentorship culture might involve mentorship training for both mentors and mentees. It may involve less formal strategies such as cultural teachings around traditional mentoring activities including protocols for youth to approach mentors and Elders. It may include creating posters designed to disseminate informal traditional (yet contemporary) mentoring information for youth. Developing and encouraging informal mentoring relationships could consist of organizing group-based activities between the youth and mentors. There are many possibilities to developing culturally relevant Aboriginal mentoring practices and at this point in time, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and other organizations may need to dialogue and strategize in collaboration in order to tease out the "lessons learned" and the emerging mentoring "best practices".

Limitations to the Study

The primary limitation to this study is the low number of Aboriginal youth participants. As with any study involving youth, there is difficulty in establishing a rapport and trust in the short amount of time that is allotted to a particular study. Although there were 12 participants who were youth, 7 of the interviews were unusable as the participants either did not answer the questions or there was no consent form attached to the interview transcriptions. A small focus group of three alleviated this limitation to a certain extent and contributed to triangulation of the

data which, overall, enhances the veracity of the findings. A second issue for involving the youth participants was that of the 5 interviews, only two of the participants were males. The young men are underrepresented. This is not reflective of the general population of Aboriginal males and females and should not be considered as such.

For the professional group, the limitations revolved around the participant's occupations as the majority worked in an academic setting. Hence, their input cannot be considered reflective of the overall demographic of the Aboriginal community, as these participants only constitute a small and rather elite portion of the community. Although the interview data collected was valuable and provided interesting points for discussion, additional recruitment was done to collect further data from community members who were not involved in an academic setting in order to better identify the needs and views of the Aboriginal community.

Conclusion

This report explores the concepts of Aboriginal mentorship programs in Saskatoon. This report has highlighted information and research completed about Aboriginal mentoring and includes a review of the literature on Aboriginal mentoring, approaches to Aboriginal mentoring and mentoring youth at risk. The findings of this research study emphasize the importance of including the Aboriginal community in all areas of the program design, from its inception to development to service delivery. Each participant group emphasized that a culturally based program was needed. Many of the youth participants struggled with the term "mentor" to describe their experiences with that they referred in describing a "friend," "role model" and felt that a new term was needed. The issue of ownership was considered an important part of the planning process and if a non-Aboriginal community is to be involved with an organization like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon their role is to be supportive and collaborative, and not one of control. The youth participants were interested in having access to Aboriginal mentors who are able to provide cultural teachings and were more concerned with the personality characteristics of their mentor. As well, informal mentoring relationships exist and are developed through non-traditional means. Rather these informal relationships are developed through student/professor relationships, as was identified with the professional group. Academia also provides a valuable opportunity for youth to develop these relationships once they enter a university setting and with resources directed at capacity in Aboriginal health research, for example, the opportunity exists to draw upon existing activities to create mentoring paradigms.

Youth and Elders mentioned creating an environment where mentoring is more aligned with traditional, informal concepts of mentoring such as role modeling, and relationships. The means to enact these suggestions in a contemporary context may include creating a mentoring

culture within organizations that serve Aboriginal clients. Cultural awareness training, mentorship awareness workshops, and mentorship information dissemination can all play a role in raising awareness about what mentorship is and how it can be made culturally relevant.

Informal mentoring activities at the local, regional, and national level are areas where mentoring knowledge is untapped. Research is needed to examine, for example, the mentoring culture that exists within Aboriginal health research centres which operate with a mandate of "capacity building". Reviewing the success of these organizations is an indication that mentoring within those agencies is working.

One community member identified that the biggest limitation in regards to Aboriginal mentoring, is the lack of available funding. Additional funding would provide further development of resources and training for an Aboriginal mentoring program. It would also allow for specialized training to be offered on issues affecting children and youth. In addition, mentoring programs that had funding available would be able to offer cultural camp and resources to support the development of mentorship cultures within organizations and deliver cross-cultural training that was identified by all participants are critical to Aboriginal mentoring.

It is apparent that formal Aboriginal mentorship programs in Saskatoon are in the early stages of development and require a collaborative effort between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups to develop in a direction that will meet the needs of the Aboriginal community.

> Mentoring can help people achieve their highest potential, and for that reason, it has a profound effect on the mentor, the protégé, the organization, and the profession. No matter what way one looks at it, mentoring is a gift (Lander, 2004, p. 178).

Our task, as organizations committed to the well-being of our clients, is to make this gift relevant and applicable to Aboriginal people.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Letter of Request of Participate
Mentoring in Saskatoon-A Cultural Perspective

Date

Dear Sir/Madam:

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled: "Aboriginal Mentoring In Saskatoon: *A Cultural Perspective"*, funded by The Big Brothers Big Sisters Association of Saskatoon in cooperation with Community-University Institute for Social Research. The Principal Investigator for the project is Raven Sinclair, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, and Faculty Researcher, Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre.

This research project will be completed by:
>   Leslie Dawson
>   Research Intern
>   Community-University Institute for Social Research
>   432-221 Cumberland Avenue
>   Saskatoon, SK   S7N 1M3

In 2002, a report was completed by scholar, Derick Tanis, titled: "Mentoring in Saskatoon: *Toward a Meaningful Partnership"*. One of the recommendations was that future research focus on the distinct needs of Aboriginal people with respect to mentoring. The objective of this research is to understand and analyze what additional aspects could be make to improve on mentoring programs to benefit Aboriginal people. The hope would be that information offered from Aboriginal mentors would assist in providing a blue print for mentoring agencies to collaborate in making Aboriginal mentoring more effective and culturally appropriate.

In order to collect this information, we are planning to survey and interview up to 20 professionals and youth who have experience in the area of mentoring. You have been selected because of your experience. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time from the project. Should you wish to withdraw, your information will not be used and any information gathered will be destroyed. In conjunction with this letter you will find the interview sheet and a consent form. You may download the sheet and complete the interview at your own leisure. Once you have completed it, you may save the document and electronically mail it back to the researcher at: RESEARCHERS EMAIL You may also choose to mail your consent form and questionnaire in to the above address or I will assume that your consent is implied upon receiving a copy of the questions answered by you.

Please be advised that confidentiality and anonymity of electronic communication cannot be guaranteed, however, we will do our best to ensure that communications are not lost or misdirected. Please ensure you double check electronic addresses and send the e-mail with a request for a receipt to ensure your e-mail has been received by the researcher. Once your e-mail has arrived to RESEARCHERS EMAIL, you will receive a confirmation from the researcher.

Your information will be printed immediately and the e-mail deleted from the researcher's private e-mail account.

If you have any questions regarding this project you may call the researcher, Leslie Dawson, at (306) 000-0000.

This research project has been approved and received ethical clearance by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Research Ethics Board on October 11, 2005. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant you may be addressed through that committee through the Ethics Office at (306) 966-2084. Out of town participants may call collect. In addition to providing Community-University Institute for Social Research and Big Brothers Big Sisters Association of Saskatoon with a final report, you may also request a copy of the report from Community-University Institute for Social Research.

Sincerely,

Leslie Dawson
Research Intern

APPENDIX B: Consent Form
Mentoring in Saskatoon-A Cultural Perspective

You have been invited to participate in a research project regarding Aboriginal mentoring in Saskatoon. The research has been funded by Big Brothers and Sisters Association of Saskatoon in conjunction with Community-University Institute for Research. You may contact the researcher or any member of the research team at any time at the University of Saskatchewan:

Leslie Dawson, Research Intern, (306) 000-0000
Raven Sinclair, Principal Investigator & Supervisor (306) 664-7372
Marie Basulado, CUISR (306) 966-2136
Wayne Wiens, Community Facilitator (306) 244-8197
Community University Institute for Social Research
University of Saskatchewan
432-221 Cumberland Avenue
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 1M3

The purpose for this research is to explore Aboriginal perspectives in mentoring and provide information to agencies that may assist in enhancing mentoring services to Aboriginal people in Saskatoon.

The objectives of this research are to provide the agencies with an analysis of the commonalties related to Aboriginal mentorship in Saskatoon and perhaps a strategic framework of how agencies can collaborate to better enhance services to Aboriginal people in Saskatoon.

The benefits of participating in this research are that Aboriginal people can share ideas of what successful Aboriginal mentorship should entail. It is important that Aboriginal people voice their concerns and work together to improve conditions for Aboriginal people that access mentorship programs.

There are minimal risks involved for participants in this research with the exception of taking time to complete the interview. We plan to survey and interview up to 20 professionals and youth who have experience in the mentoring area.

The involvement of professionals will consist of a telephone conversation with the researcher followed by the completion of a questionnaire. Brief follow-up communication either in person or by telephone for the purposes of getting your feedback on the final report will take place.

For youth participants, the research will be completed by an interview process whereby the researcher will ask you the questions and the session would be taped or notes will be taken. Interviews will last approximately thirty minutes to a maximum of one hour. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous, however, your own words may be used within the report to capture the value and experience you are sharing. You may request a copy of your transcript and any notes taken by the researcher to ensure accuracy or to take out quotations that may identify you.

Questionnaire responses, notes and any taped transcriptions and interview tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet by the Community-University Institute for Social Research at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years. The data may be viewed by Big Brothers and Big Sisters Association for further research on the topic of mentoring. The consent forms will be stored separately so that it will not be possible to identify you.

You participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw anytime from the interview or project if you so choose. Should you choose to withdraw; any information you shared will be destroyed and not used in the report.

If you have questions regarding this project, please feel free to ask at any point. You may also contact the Principal Investigator at 664-7372 or the Researcher if you have questions at any time at (306) 000-0000. This research project has been approved and received ethical clearance by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Research Ethics Board on October 11, 2005. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant you may be addressed through that committee through the Ethics Office at (306) 966-2084. Out of town participants may call collect. Please be advised that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in any communication by email about the project or your participation. In addition to providing Community-University Institute for Social Research and Big Brothers Big Sisters Association of Saskatoon with a final report, you may also request a copy of the report from Community-University Institute for Social Research.

I _____, have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Code Name:_____

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____
Researcher

APPENDIX C: Certificate of Ethics Approval

University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

16-Nov-2005

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Raven Sinclair

DEPARTMENT
CUISR

BEH#
05-241

STUDENT RESEARCHER(S)
Leslie Dawson

SPONSOR
CUISR

TITLE
Aboriginal Mentoring in Saskatoon – A Cultural Perspective

CURRENT APPROVAL DATE
16-Nov-2005
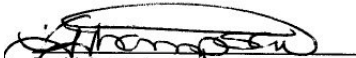
CURRENT RENEWAL DATE
01-Nov-2006

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The term of this approval is five years. However, the approval must be renewed on an annual basis. In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: *http://www.usask.ca/research/ethical.shtml* .

APPROVED.

Dr. Valerie Thompson, Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan

Please send all correspondence to:

Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Room 304 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon SK S7N 5C8
Telephone: (306) 966-2084   Fax: (306) 966-2069

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PROFESSIONALS

1. How would you describe mentoring and mentorship?

2. Have you ever served as a mentor and if so in what capacity?

3. What does successful mentoring or mentorship mean to you and how do you see that being fulfilled?

4. Do you think that mentoring is different in the aboriginal community? Please explain.

5. What do you think might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance aboriginal mentorship?

6. Do you think group or one to one mentorship is more effective? Why or why not?

7. What might be the overall advantages of enhancing Aboriginal mentorship in Saskatoon?

8. In terms of time (hours, days, etc.), How much training do you think would be adequate to for teaching Aboriginal people to be mentors?

9. How do you see elder involvement enhancing Aboriginal mentorship programs and how to you see agencies accessing elders?

10. Who should be involved in training and evaluating Aboriginal mentorship programs and why?

11. How do you see more of the Aboriginal community becoming involved in mentorship programs both as mentors and mentees?

12. What are some deterrents you see in mentoring programs within the community for Aboriginal people? Do you see any solutions for any problems you may have defined?

13. What might be some of the challenges of mentoring in the aboriginal community?

14. Is there anything additional that you would like to share regarding mentoring?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: Youth

1. Have you ever had or do you have a mentor? (Prompts) How long? How much time do you spend with mentor?

2. Is your mentor Aboriginal? (Prompts-)If no, would you prefer an Aboriginal mentor? Why or why not?

3. What expectations do you have for a mentor? What kinds of things could they improve on?

4. What is your vision for mentorship? (Prompts) What do you think Aboriginal youth need today when it comes to mentorship or having a mentor?

5. If you were a mentor what kinds of things would you like to see being done?

6. How important do you think it is to have a mentor?

7. Have any of your mentors included cultural aspects into your mentoring program? Prompts-If yes, what were the benefits and deterrents. (Prompts) If no-do you think that this should be part of mentoring and why?

8. Would you ever consider being a mentor for younger Aboriginal people? Why or why not?