



Indigenous Communities Counselling Psychology (ICCP) Program

**Walking In Two Worlds:
Mentorship Program Guide**

2016

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Canada

FORWARD

The Indigenous Communities Counselling Psychology (ICCP) program is directed towards enhancing and promoting counselling for and in Indigenous communities that is informed by both Western and Indigenous knowledge and protocols. In other words, the program walks in two worlds, in service to both. Consistent with this mission, the *Walking in Two Worlds: Mentorship Program Guide* is grounded upon a review of the research literature together with insights and guidance from community Elders, UVic faculty members, ACCP program graduates, current ICCP students and mentors, supervisors, and field counsellors in Indigenous contexts.

The purpose of this *Guide* is to provide support, resources, and information that will assist mentors to support the cultural, spiritual, and emotional empowerment of their mentees. It includes a brief review of the research literature on mentoring and mentorship programs with a focus on effective practices, and its complementary nature to Indigenous values and practices, and some potentially useful resources and links. The guide is intended to be a living document requiring active community participation in its co-construction. Research, like counselling, is a collaborative activity. As our mentorship program evolves, we hope you will assist us in ensuring our handbook reflects the best practices and approaches our mentors co-discover with their mentees.

Please contact *Walking in Two World's Mentoring Coordinator* or ICCP program faculty with comments, suggested additions, or materials.

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Background And Intention Of The WITW Mentorship Program

In 2008, the Counselling Faculty in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, in partnership with Indigenous Education, launched a unique graduate counselling program that was developed in consultation with and relevant to the needs and traditions of Indigenous communities. This pilot cohort program took place from September 2008 through to June 2011. Following the success of this program, the MA degree program in Indigenous Communities Counselling Psychology (ICCP) was established. A second cohort of students started their studies in January of 2014. As part of their educational experience, a mentorship component was developed to provide an opportunity to create a meaningful relationship between formal Western counselling practices and traditional Indigenous healing methods. The Walking in Two Worlds (WITW) Mentorship Program matched each student in the ICCP to a mentor. The mentors were all previous graduates of the first cohort and were therefore acting in the capacity of elder, offering guidance and wisdom as the students engaged in their studies and practicum experiences. Students were encouraged to create a relationship with their mentor, for both informal and formal reasons.

This guide is intended to provide an overview of how the WITW Mentorship Program, and more specifically, mentorship, supports dual worldviews and learning.

ICCP Program Values and Principles

Seven key values and principles adopted by the ACCP pilot program Advisory Committee are integral to the program framework and inform all aspects of program delivery:

- The Indigenous paradigm as central
- The sacred and the spiritual dimension
- The ancestral dimension
- Stories, ceremony, culture, language, and communal healing
- The earth and our relatives
- The circle
- Counselling vocation and practice

Introduction To Mentoring

"ka-kí-kiskéyihvétan óma, namoya kinwés maka aciyowés pohko óma óta ka-hayayak wasétam askihk, ékwa ka-kakwéy miskétan kiskéyihitamowin, iyinisiwin, kistéyitowin, mina nánisitotatowin kakiya ayisiniwak, ékosi óma kakiya ka-wahkotowak."

"Realize that we as human beings have been put on this earth for only a short time and that we must use this time to gain wisdom, knowledge, respect and the understanding for all human beings since we are all relatives."

- Cree Teaching

Mentorship can be thought of in many different ways; from formal to informal, with many different terms being used interchangeably such as: mentor, friend, or coach. Understanding the ways in which we use the term helps to clarify the roles and relationships required of a mentorship program. The ICCP uses a blended formal and informal mentorship program. Formal mentors are commonly identified in Western culture through its use of established goal setting and through agreed upon times to meet to review progress. Typically, this type of mentorship is used to promote learning and career advancement within an organization. The ICCP matched each student with a mentor on the basis of the student's assessed ICCP learning needs and the mentor's recognized attributes.

Informal mentorship is defined by a natural relationship being formed with one person identified as the learner and the other as the role model. Mentors can be any age and only need a desire to be of assistance to a learner and have the ability to listen and provide counsel to be of benefit to the learner. So how is this different from being a counsellor? Mentors typically offer "knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities," supporting their mentees with career and personal development (BREFIgroup, 2015). While they may be privy to sensitive information, their purpose is not to transform or change the relationship to that information.

Historical Overview

The scholarly literature on mentorship is rich and deep. It ranges from supporting the hierarchical, formal, and stipulative role of mentors in military and corporate contexts, to its historic and important custodial and caring roles in professional learning in nursing, teaching, and school counselling. Mentorship also has a long and documented history in many Indigenous communities. Known by many names, the practice of mentoring was woven into existing Indigenous social and familial relations; it was the essence of the relationship. Beliefs, values, and practices focused on passing-on knowledge, and nurturing children and initiates, to complex environmental, spiritual, ceremonial, artistic, and traditional knowledge and skills. The practice of mentoring, and its essential qualities and values, can be understood to be complementary to, and supportive of, Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Faure (2013) defines mentoring as "a supportive learning relationship between a caring individual who shares knowledge, experience and wisdom with another individual who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange, to enrich their professional journey." Professional mentoring is widely understood as having both career and "psychosocial" functions (Kram, 1983). Mentoring has proven effective as a means of supporting new professionals as they grow into their new positions and accompanying responsibilities, and in helping them learn to balance their professional selves with their social, cultural, emotional and spiritual selves (Alfred, 2000; Jackson, et al., 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

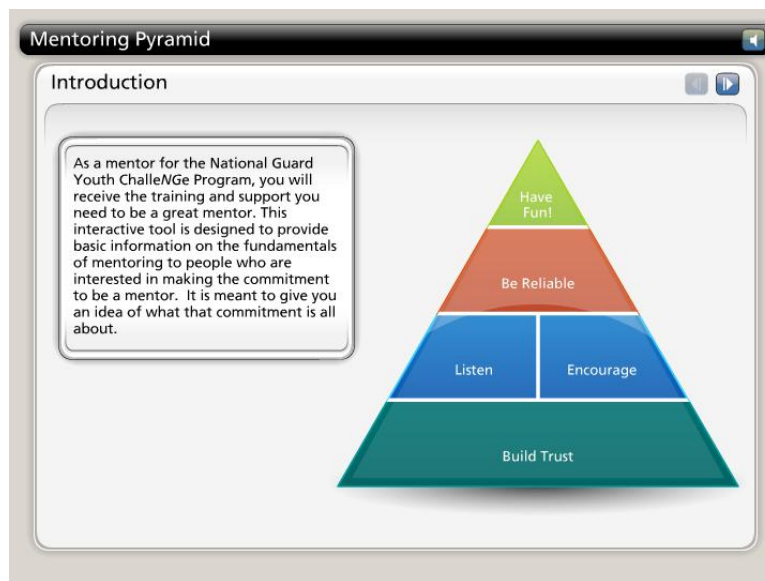
Both Indigenous and Western traditions stress the primacy of respectful relations as the foundation of successful mentorship, in that relationships need to be built before any effective mentoring can take place. Mentorship takes place in an environment of trust and mutuality must be established (Kutilek & Earnest, 2001; Mincemoyer & Thomson, 1998). The mentee has also

been found to be more receptive to constructive guidance if he or she feels like an active participant in the mentoring relationship (Mincemoyer & Thomson, 1998).

Community experience and the research literature suggest that both mentors and mentees grow and learn throughout their mentorship relationship. Gains for mentors are also noted in the literature, with innovations in practice, and increased professional openness being two salient benefits. Perhaps, most importantly, research suggests mentees supported by effective mentors are more likely to explore creative solutions to professional problems and challenges because of the supportive environment mentoring creates for them (Podsen & Denmark, 2000). Within the context of teaching, there is evidence to suggest that mentorship results in stronger and more intentional professional practice.

Building The Mentor-Mentee Relationship

Much like a therapeutic relationship, the relationship between mentor and mentee is based on trust. In their online *Mentor Training Guide*, the Oregon Youth Challenge Program provides an interactive mentoring pyramid (n.d.). The pyramid clearly demonstrates important elements of the mentor-mentee relationship that may be useful reflection for mentors and mentees in the WITW program, from building trust to having fun.



Source: Oregon Youth Challenge Program, n.d.

Elements such as determining a schedule for contact and making formal connections, goal setting and evaluating outcomes are elements of formal, Western mentorship and are important to the outcomes of the ICCP. However, additional mentorship guidance, specifically regarding cultural connections to informal elder directed learning, support for the use and role of traditional healing practices and how to apply these to a formal context such as counselling is essential to the learnings we hope to support through the WITW program. As students learn valuable Western counselling theory and practice methods through their practicum and internship, the WITW

Mentorship Program seeks to weave the Indigenous healing practices and cultural wisdom together with the Western methods creating a new fabric of practice.

Asking for support can be difficult, and for this reason, it is important for mentors to make the initial contact with their mentees, first to establish the desire to provide mentorship and guidance and second to encourage the participation of their mentees in the process. Once this is done, mentees should be in regular contact with their mentors, and while we do not have an established rule for when or how contact should be made, we suggest that mentees discuss their growing practice with their mentors at least once per month. Setting goals, such as with formal career mentoring, is not necessary but mentors can encourage their mentees to set their own goals for growth as a counsellor. It is reasonable for mentees to have questions about how a certain practicum session went and how to react or handle situations differently. Mentors have the ability and time to reflect on the needs of the mentee and offer quiet support and guidance. Mentors are actively committed to the development of their mentees and through the process of careful listening and reflection are able to provide guidance for their mentee's learning.

Making an Indigenous healing cultural connection with traditional Western counselling practices takes time. An open approach to reviewing a mentee's methods, including developing an understanding of their own depth of connection to their culture and cultural practices, will support the mentee's learning process. Encouraging the mentee to reflect on the similarities and differences of both ways of healing, as well as the therapeutic benefit to their clients of each approach, overtime will ground the mentee in their developing helping practice.

Roles, Responsibilities And Goals

"Colleagues are a wonderful thing - but mentors, that's where the real work gets done."
- Junot Diaz

There are a number of salient findings in the literature on mentoring that strongly suggest the following general practices/processes are central to focusing and managing mentor-mentee relationships:

- a) defining roles and responsibilities; and,
- b) establishing short and long term goals for the mentorship period.

In addition to these important initial processes, the literature on mentoring stresses the importance of establishing regular open and supportive communications, and working collaboratively to solve professional problems and challenges.

Defining Roles and Responsibilities

To lay the foundation for a strong relationship, it helps to clearly define the roles and responsibilities for both the mentor and the mentee. Questions to consider include:

- What will the role of the mentor be?
- What types of mentoring will be most effective?
- What are the responsibilities of the mentee and mentor? For example, around scheduling meetings and monitoring completion of mutually determined goals during the mentoring period.

Establishing Short and Long Term Goals

ICCP mentors and mentees are strongly encouraged to work together early in their relationship to develop mutually agreed upon goals (Podsen & Denmark, 2000). These goals become the basis for the mentoring activities. For example, the mentor and mentee may decide that introducing the mentee to professional societies and conferences, and assisting them in

professional networking, and perhaps presenting a professional paper or poster based on their course work, are important professional goals for their relationship. The mentor would then support the mentee in reaching these goals and monitor their achievements. Mentors can also help mentees build awareness of professional behavioural competencies. Appendix A provides an *Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies* framework, developed by the BC Public Service Agency (2012) and used by BC government hiring managers. The framework can be used as a resource for discussions around professional development.

Mentors are encouraged to provide regular and constructive feedback to mentees on goal progression. Mentees should have an opportunity to be reflective on their actions and discuss challenges and problem solving strategies with their mentors. As counsellors, you recognize that open, respectful, and supportive communication is essential to this process, and that it is the responsibility of both mentor and mentee.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is important to the success of the WITW Mentorship Program. Mentees may be in a situation where they will want or need to share personal information. As with the counselling relationship, trust and confidence is built through an understanding that the

information given will not be shared with other people.

Appendix B provides an example of a Confidentiality Agreement that may be used to promote an awareness of and requirement for the mentors to keep the confidence of mentees and for mentees to keep the confidence of their clients when sharing with their mentors.

Learners are encouraged to share information in a healthy manner. Healthy sharing means respecting the privacy and confidentiality boundaries of the clients they support, while still allowing for the mentor to have insight into the scenarios the mentee would like supported. For example, if a mentee is working with a family and is feeling triggered during sessions with a particular family member, the mentee can state when they are triggered, what causes the trigger and which role of family member (if relevant) is causing it, without identifying individual names or providing

enough details to be able to accurately combine the information to determine the individuals they are working with.

"Mentoring brings us together – across generation, class, and often race – in a manner that forces us to acknowledge our interdependence, to appreciate, in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words, that 'we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny.' In this way, mentoring enables us to participate in the essential but unfinished drama of reinventing community, while reaffirming that there is an important role for each of us in it."

--Marc Freedman

Academic, Counselling, Spiritual, and Pastoral Support Protocols For Mentors

Defining the goals and objectives of their relationship is up to the individual mentors and mentees. While the ICCP Mentorship Program is not meant to replace the existing program and university based academic, health, career, and counselling services at the University of Victoria, mentors may find themselves acting as a supportive first contact and as a sounding board for mentees facing challenges and issues in any of these areas during the duration of the program. Therefore, in this guide Appendix C contains contact information for various University of Victoria services and Appendix D contains contact information for community based support services to refer mentees requiring assistance outside the parameters of the mentorship relationship as defined by the participants.

Following is the suggested protocol for requesting programmatic academic support from the ICCP:

1. Encourage mentee to contact their individual course instructors directly when experiencing course specific academic difficulty or challenges.
2. Course instructors will notify the ICCP Program Coordinator and the WITW Mentorship Program Coordinator, both of whom will coordinate with the instructor and mentee to arrange individual tutorial support provided by the ICCP.
3. Mentees seeking or requiring more intensive academic support may be referred to UVic university based student academic services (see Appendix C), or the ICCP Program Coordinator will work with the mentee and instructors to develop an individualized support solution where possible.

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Appendix A

BC Public Service Agency Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies



Source: British Columbia Public Service Agency, 2012

Appendix B - Confidentiality Agreement

It is understood and agreed that the identified Discloser of Confidential Information (below) may provide certain information that is and must be kept confidential to the Recipient of Confidential Information. To ensure the protection of such information, it is agreed that:

1. The Confidential Information to be disclosed can be described as and includes: personal information relating to the mentee, or their counselling clients, including but not limited to personally identifying information such as name, age, address or other details that could be used in whole or in part as to be combined to create personally identifying information; and, information of a confidential or personally sensitive nature.

2. The Recipient agrees not to disclose the Confidential Information obtained from the Discloser to anyone unless required to do so by law.

3. This Agreement states the entire agreement between the parties concerning the disclosure of Confidential Information. Any addition or modification to this Agreement must be made in writing and signed by the parties.

4. If any of the provisions of this Agreement are found to be unenforceable, the remainder shall be enforced as fully as possible and the unenforceable provision(s) shall be deemed modified to the limited extent required to permit enforcement of the Agreement as a whole.

The parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this Agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Recipient of Confidential Information

Name (Print or Type): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Discloser of Confidential Information

Name (Print or Type): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(adapted from IPWatchdog, n.d.)

Appendix C – University of Victoria Support Services

UVic Career Services

<http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/career/>

UVic Counselling Services

<http://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>

UVic Graduate Students' Society

<http://gss.uvic.ca/>

UVic Graduate Studies

<https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/>

UVic Health Services

<http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>

UVic Learning Commons

<http://www.uvic.ca/library/locations/home/learning/>

UVic Native Students Union

<http://uvicnsu.ca/>

UVic Office of Indigenous Affairs

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/>

UVic Private Practice Therapist List

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/resources/private-practice-therapists/index.php>

UVic Resource Centre for Students with a Disability

<http://www.uvic.ca/services/rcsd/>

UVic Student Awards and Financial Aid

<https://www.uvic.ca/registrar/safa/>

Appendix D - Community Support Services

Family Caregivers Network 250-384-0408

British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) 250-381-7303

Parents Together 250-474-6468

Single Parent Resource Centre 250-385-1114

Suicide Intervention Line 1-800-784-2433

Vancouver Island Crisis Line 1-888-494-3888

Victoria Disability Resource Centre 250-595-0044

Surrounded by Cedar

<http://www.surroundedbycedar.com/>

Victoria Native Friendship Centre

<http://www.vnfc.ca/>

Victoria Native Friendship Centre Health Services

<http://www.vnfc.ca/programs-services/health-services>

Legal:

Dial-a-Law 1-800-663-1919

Lawyer Referral Service 1-800-663-1919

Legal Aid - Legal Services Society 250-388-4516