



Peer Support: Educator Mentorship Program Overview

Peer Support is a mentorship and coaching program for educators of Indigenous students. Indspire pairs educators from across Canada based on their professional learning goals and provides support online to this learning community through webinars, discussion forums, and other professional development tools.

Who can be a mentor?

A mentor is an enthusiastic educator who is willing to provide support and guidance to help shape the professional growth and development of another educator with the aim of improving student outcomes. Mentors inspire their mentees and facilitate academic, educational, and professional development. Mentors are well versed in leadership, teaching, and learning strategies, program development, curriculum, local culture, language and traditions, and the learning environments of Indigenous students both in rural and urban settings. Through the relationship that develops between mentor and mentee, an opportunity for collaboration grows.

Mentors provide the following:

Support: Encourage growth and achievement by providing creative classroom strategies that support educators to do the best work possible with their Indigenous students.

Information: Share their knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Listen and offer advice, resources, and constructive feedback (should have/strive to establish background knowledge in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, teaching, and learning).

Contacts: Stimulate curiosity and build confidence by presenting new ideas, opportunities, successful practices, and challenges.

Goal Setting: Guide mentees in reaching their goals related to student success and achievement.

Role Models: Share stories of achievement and become role models to their mentees.

The following are criteria for participation in the program as a mentor:

1. A minimum of five years teaching experience working in Indigenous education;
2. Possess a strong understanding of mentorship to improve professional development;
3. Have a repertoire of strategies to improve student achievement;

4. Have had some success in positive outcomes for Indigenous students; and
5. Be enthusiastic and have a positive attitude towards Indigenous education.

Who can be a mentee?

Whether you are just starting out, are mid-career, or are embarking on a new learning journey, being a mentee is a great way to enhance your commitment to education and professional growth.

Relationships developed with your mentor and become channels for change and opportunity, with the ultimate goal of facilitating student achievement.

Mentees can be any of the following:

1. Students in a Bachelor of Education program;
2. Emerging educators;
3. Educators in a new grade, community, or position; or
4. Educators looking for Indigenous resources or ways to include Indigenous knowledge and culture in the classroom.

For both mentors and mentees, Indigenous ancestry is an asset but not a requirement; partners in Indigenous education are welcome to participate.

Application Process

While the program runs each year from September to May, applications are accepted throughout the year. The process is as follows:

1. Complete and submit an application form (visit indspire.ca/peer-support).
2. Intake Conversation – Applicants will be contacted for a 10-minute conversation by phone, including a series of questions to assist with the matching process. The questions will take into consideration personality preferences and traits, mentor's expertise, and mentee's specific needs.
3. Police Record Check – all participants will be required to have one completed.
4. Contract – mentors are required to sign a contract for the term of the mentorship program.

Matching Process

Using information from the application form and intake conversations, Indspire considers the following when pairing educators:

1. Professional learning goals;
2. Region;
3. Subject areas; and
4. Grade level.

It is very important to answer all questions on the application form to ensure a suitable match.

Program Process

The program requires mentors and mentees to follow the steps below, which were developed by Indspire as a framework for success to facilitate a positive collaborative relationship:

1. **Build a relationship:** Mentors and mentees will be introduced by email. The mentor should initiate contact with the mentee within one month of receiving this email.
2. **Read the program guide:** It will provide all of the information needed to guide a collaborative learning journey and establish a positive learning relationship.
3. **Sign up:** Create an account in Indspire's *K-12 Institute* (visit indspire.ca/institute), which is a professional learning community that connects educators of Indigenous students with programs, information, and tools to improve educational outcomes and increase high school completion rates.
4. **Meet monthly:** Communicate and collaborate with one another at least once per month. Choose specific dates and times to meet, whether it be by phone, Skype, in person, etc.
5. **Watch webinars:** All mentors and mentees are required to watch the orientation webinar available on Indspire's website and are expected to participate in at least two other monthly professional development webinars during the program.
6. **Stay Connected:** The Program Coordinator will contact mentors and mentees 2-3 times during the year to see how you are both doing.
7. **Rematches:** Sometimes personalities may not be compatible. If either party feels that the match is not working, please contact the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. We will make every effort to address any such concerns and/or find a more suitable match.
8. **Complete surveys:** There are three online surveys for mentors/mentees to complete during the program year-
9. **Certificate of Completion:** Mentors and mentees will receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of the program year. Upon completion of each of the three surveys, mentors will receive a \$200 professional development honorarium to use at their discretion (i.e. \$600 total). Mentees are entered into a draw for a prize to be drawn at the end of the program year.

Contact:

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