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Peer Mentoring Guideline for Young Mentors

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CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION TO A COMPRAHENSIVE GUIDE FOR YOUTH MENTOR

Mentoring provides an opportunity to build the potential of employees. It fosters professional relationships where parties have the opportunity to collaborate and share insights. It provides a forum to offer constructive and frank advice to support the career development of the mentee. It is particularly effective in fostering the career development of members of equal employment opportunity groups such as women, people with a disability, and members of racial, ethnic, and ethno-religious minority groups.

This guideline has been developed as main training material for youth workers and youth peers to become youth mentors for MyPeerMentor Project. This Guide is intended to serve as a primary resource for individuals designing mentoring programs for youth, including youth with disabilities, in the transition phase to adulthood. MyPeerMentor Project intends to implement - a mobile application for peer mentoring implementation for Android device. In this setting, a young peer mentor (trained by youth workers) meet the youth with disability at educational environment to ensure transition to workplace. This will be a one-on-one peer support including virtual sessions which will capture the difficulties for those with mobility impairments which are disabled by the chances to move due to inaccessibility of the environment.

One-to-one peer mentoring by its nature is a career oriented mentoring, when the focus is to encourage future success of the individual by bringing in successful work environment. There the youth with disability is able to build self-confidence and social skills while also learning work habits, team work and communication with colleagues as well as gaining professional competencies.

2. JOB INCLUSIVE MENTORING FOR DISABILITIES

Well-structured mentoring relationships can be instrumental in assisting youth who are moving from one stage of personal development to another. For generations, family and neighbourhood networks served as the primary source of mentors for young people. Today, these networks have expanded to include caring adults and other youth who volunteer in schools, community-based

organizations, and businesses. Well-structured mentoring relationships help vulnerable youth in two principal ways:

• Assists them in navigating the complexities of adolescence and young adulthood

• Engages youth and connects them to productive academic, community, and social life choices.

The establishment of a supportive adult or peer relationship through mentoring is critical to the ability of youth to link to the world of work or to education and training, and to engage in other productive activities that help them grow. Research shows that mentoring can increase an individual's chance of having a productive and satisfying life. The ability of youth to have these positive experiences, however, depends a great deal on having access to caring adults that are ready, willing, and able to be involved. Unfortunately, while vulnerable youth, older adolescents, and young adults are in the greatest need of caring adults, they are the least likely to have access to them.

Mentoring a youth is not terribly difficult. By and large, youth appreciate mentors who are supportive, caring, and willing to assist them with activities that support academic, career, social, or personal goals. Trust is crucial to all mentoring relationships. Youth in mentoring relationships are not as likely to connect with or trust someone who seeks to cure or solve perceived problems, who assumes a parental role, or who is judgmental or overly critical.

While mentoring takes many forms, there are four common characteristics around which mentoring programs should be organized:

- Mentors and mentees should make a long-term commitment (generally, at least six months);
- Mentors should focus on building trust and respect with their mentees;
- Mentees and mentors should set high, clear, and fair expectations for themselves and their mentoring partner; and
- Mentors and mentees should meet or communicate with enough regularity to develop a strong relationship.

✓ At a minimum recommended, mentors and mentees should meet at regular intervals for at least four hours per month for at least a six months

✓ For e-mentoring, 30 to 45 minutes of online time each week for at least six months is recommended

Research shows that less successful mentors adopt an authoritative role and emphasize behaviour change more than developing mutual trust and respect. For this reason, the recruitment, screening, and training of volunteer mentors should be done carefully to support the specific needs of each individual youth.

In order for youth with disabilities to be self-sufficient and healthy, to have good family and social relationships, and to contribute to their community (job inclusion) and society generally, they may need family, educational, social, and economic supports. Without adequate supports, youth in transition who have disabilities are more likely than their peers without disabilities to experience the following:

• live in poverty and be dependent on public assistance.

• have chronic health problems, and lack comprehensive health insurance.

• be unemployed or underemployed.

• be dependent on family members for housing and finances.

Compared to other youth, youth with disabilities face significant challenges. They are:

• twice as likely to drop out of high school and half as likely to attend or finish college. Those who do finish high school are more likely to have taken a less rigorous course load than their non-disabled peers.

• more likely to develop mental health disorders. Not all PwD are mentally impaired but more likely them tend to have mental health issues (like depression, anxiety, social phobia...).• four times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

2.1. Balancing opportunities

Many youth with disabilities have not had the same opportunities as their peers without disabilities to be exposed to necessary career preparation options. In the past, the career planning process for youth with disabilities often did not reflect the values of personal choice and self-determination. Rather, many youth with disabilities were relegated to passive roles in their own career-planning process. This often resulted in very few options being recommended or offered; options that reflected the low expectations of advisors; options that featured perceived needs for protection and support; and options driven primarily by community availability rather than by self-determination. As a result, many youth have not had the opportunity to pursue career options that they found motivating and satisfying.

These stubborn realities are largely reversible if this group of vulnerable youth is provided access to the same career-preparation and work-based learning opportunities as their peers without disabilities. Mentoring can play a key role in helping youth with disabilities achieve success and break this longstanding pattern.

2.2. A Career Preparation Framework

The applicable literature suggests that all youth need the following:

• Access to high quality standards-based education regardless of the setting

• Information about career options and exposure to the world of work, including structured internships

• Opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills

• Strong connections to caring adults

• Access to safe places to interact with their peers and

• Support services and specific accommodations to allow them to become independent adults.

2.3. Needs of Young Mentee with Disability

There are five categories, referred to as comprehensive career-centred guide (table below), which can help steer families, service providers, educators, government programs, mentoring organizations, and youth themselves through the transition processes.

Job Inclusive Guide for Youth with Disability	
General Needs	**Specific Needs**
School-Based Preparatory Experiences	In order to perform at optimal levels in all education settings, all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills. The following are necessary components of all educational programs: • Academic programs that are based on clear state standards • Career and technical education programs that are based on professional and industry standards • Curricular and program options based on universal design of school, work, and community-based learning experiences • Learning environments that are small and safe, including extra supports such as tutoring, as necessary • Supports from and by highly qualified staff • Access to an assessment system that includes multiple measures • Graduation standards that include options. In addition, youth with disabilities need to do the following: • Use their individual transition plans to drive their personal instruction, and use strategies to continue the transition process post-schooling

	• Have access to specific and individual learning accommodations while they are in school • Develop knowledge of reasonable accommodations that they can request and control in educational settings, including assessment accommodations • Be supported by highly qualified transitional support staff that may or may not be school staff.
Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning	Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential in order for youth to form and develop aspirations and to make informed choices about careers. These experiences can be provided during the school day or through after-school programs, and will require collaborations with other organizations. All youth need information on career options, including the following: • Career assessments to help identify students' school and post-school preferences and interests • Structured exposure to postsecondary education and other life-long learning opportunities • Exposure to career opportunities that ultimately lead to a living wage, including information about educational requirements, entry requirements, income and benefits potential, and asset accumulation • Training designed to improve job-seeking skills and workplace basic skills (sometimes called "soft skills"). In order to identify and attain career goals, youth need to be exposed to a range of experiences, including the following: • Opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing • Multiple on-the-job training experiences, including community service (paid or unpaid) that are specifically

	linked to the content of a program of study and school credit • Opportunities to learn and practice their work skills (so-called "soft skills") • Opportunities to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills related to a career pathway. In addition, youth with disabilities need to do the following: • Understand the relationships between benefits planning and career choices • Learn to communicate their disability-related work support and accommodation needs • Learn to find, request formally, and secure appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations in education, training, and employment settings.
Youth Development and Leadership	Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of that process. In order to control and direct their own lives based on informed decisions, all youth need the following: • Mentoring activities designed to establish strong relationships with adults through formal and informal settings • Peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities • Exposure to role models in a variety of contexts • Training in skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution • Exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service • Opportunities that allow youth to exercise leadership and build self-esteem.

	Youth with disabilities also need the following:
	• Mentors and role models, including persons with and without disabilities
	• An understanding of disability history, culture, and disability public policy issues, as well as their rights and responsibilities.
Connecting Activities, Family Involvement and Supports	Young people need to be connected to programs, services, activities, and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options.
	All youth may also need one or more of the following:
	• Mental and physical health services
	• Transportation
	• Tutoring
	• Financial planning and management
	• Post-program supports thorough structured arrangements in postsecondary institutions and adult service agencies
	• Connection to other services and opportunities (e.g., recreation).
	Youth with disabilities may need one or more of the following:
	• Acquisition of appropriate assistive technologies
	• Community orientation and mobility training (e.g., accessible transportation, bus routes, housing, and health clinics)
	• Exposure to post-program supports such as independent living centers and other consumer-driven community-based support service agencies
	• Personal assistance services, including attendants, readers, interpreters, or other such services
	• Benefits-planning counselling, including information

	regarding the myriad of benefits available and their interrelationships so that youth may maximize those benefits in transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.
Family Involvement and Supports	Participation and involvement of parents, family members, and/or other caring adults promotes the social, emotional, physical, academic, and occupational growth of youth, leading to better post-school outcomes. All youth need parents, families, and other caring adults who do the following: • Have high expectations that build upon the young person's strengths, interests, and needs and that foster each youth's ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency • Remain involved in their lives and assist them toward adulthood • Have access to information about employment, further education, and community resources • Take an active role in transition planning with schools and community partners • Have access to medical, professional and peer support networks. In addition, youth with disabilities need parents, families, and other caring adults who have the following: • An understanding of the youth's disability and how it affects his or her education, employment, and daily living options • Knowledge of rights and responsibilities under various disability-related legislation • Knowledge of access to programs, services, supports, and accommodations available for young people with disabilities • An understanding of how individualized planning tools can assist youth in achieving transition goals and objectives.

3. DISABILITY FACTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Having a disability shouldn't stop anyone from finding a job (and neither should discrimination). However, the rights of people with a disability in the workplace can be quite confusing to understand. So we've taken a look at a few key facts which a mentor may need to know.

FACT1: In the workplace 'disability' is a pretty broad term.

Often when people think 'disability' their minds jump to people with physical disabilities such as those who use wheelchairs. But in the workplace, disability can refer to physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, and learning disabilities. Even people with Hepatitis C or HIV are counted as having a disability.

Why is this worth noting? Well, basically it means that the laws don't just protect people with a physical disability – they're here for everyone who may be discriminated against due to a disability.

FACT2: Discrimination isn't ok. In fact, it's illegal.

Just to recap, discrimination against PwD refers to people being treated unfairly (and missing out on job opportunities) just because they have a disability. The good news that in many countries, law protects employees with a disability from discrimination at all stages of employment - from the initial interview right through to leaving the company.

The sad truth is that some employers do still discriminate against applicants with a disability. Sometimes this discrimination is more obvious, such as telling someone flat out that they won't be considered for the job because they assume they'll be 'too slow'. Other times, discrimination is more indirect – like when businesses don't provide access for people who use wheelchairs.

FACT3: There are times when an employer can refuse PwD (People with Disability) a job because of your disability.

Sometimes it can be legal for a company to refuse someone a job because of their disability. This can be the case if disabled person can't perform the 'inherent requirements' of the position. In other words, the person must be able to carry out the duties of the job.

These 'inherent requirements' will depend on the job – for instance, a person with low vision may not meet the requirements to be a delivery driver. But, if someone's disability won't affect his/her performance, that person deserve a fair shot – and employers aren't allowed to turn him/her down just because of disability. That's why the laws exist – to ensure there's an even playing field for everyone.

FACT4: In some cases, workplaces must make changes to suit your needs.

Sometimes, a workplace might need a few adjustments to make it accessible and safe for an employee with a disability. Employers must make what are called 'reasonable adjustments' for a person with a disability who is offered a job, or to an existing employee, to make sure they can do the requirements of the job.

Perhaps a ramp needs to be installed, doorways widened to allow wheelchair access, or a bigger computer screen is necessary. If such an adjustment can be made, it's the employer's responsibility to make it happen.

In some cases, employers do not have to make these changes if they can show that it would be very difficult to do so, or be very high cost.

On the upside, employers don't always have to carry to cost of these alterations. Workplace Modifications Scheme (a country must have) can assist where there are costs in modifying the workplace or purchasing equipment for eligible employees with disability.

FACT5: It can be up to person if he/she tells your boss about your disability, or not.

The person with disability only needs to tell employer about his/her disability if it has the potential to endanger disabled ones or co-workers, or, if it could affect disabled one's ability to do the job.

For example, if somebody has epilepsy and his/her job involves operating heavy machinery, he/she needs to tell employer.

It's also good to keep in mind that if somebody doesn't let employer know about any illness, disability, or injury – he/she may not be covered by Workers Compensation if the condition recurs or gets worse on the job.

Otherwise it's completely up to person whether he/she tells anyone or not – some people prefer to keep things private, while others are comfortable sharing. The only thing worth noting is that, if he/she discusses his/her disability with the boss, the boss may be able to make changes to workplace to make things a little easier.

FACT6: The employer isn't allowed to tell anyone about workers' disability, unless he/she say so.

That's right: The employer must keep details of disability confidential unless having consent. It is up to person whether he/she wants to tell colleagues about his/her disability (see country regulation).

FACT 7: If any experienced discrimination at workplace, person with disability can take action.

As a first step, PwDmight choose to raise the issue directly with the people involved, or with a manager, supervisor, or the Human Resources department.

Or, if it is not comfortable, disabled people can make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission (or have advocate do this on behalf).

The complaint to the Commission will need to be in writing, and describe when, where, what happened, and who was involved. There is a complaint form that can be filled in and post or fax back, or it can be done online.

4. A DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT AND THE ROLE OF MENTORING

Today, the transition period from childhood to adulthood is longer than any other generation has experienced. The age range of 14 to 24 years old was chosen as the focus of this guideline in recognition of this shifting dynamic. While a clear linear path of a youth's development does not exist, there are broad patterns of cognitive, motional, interpersonal, and physical development that mentoring programs for youth and young adults need to be aware of in designing their programs. The literature relating to youth development identifies the following as phases or stages (the developmental context) in which youth must achieve competence as they mature toward adulthood:

• Development of social competencies

• Building of supportive relationships

• Engagement in the community and

• Establishment of independence.

Social competencies comprise one set of skills and knowledge that youth need in order to navigate the transition into adulthood effectively. Making career choices and preparing for work have been identified as key areas in which youth need to develop knowledge during this period. Obviously, the youth's interests and the types of activities the youth will enjoy and benefit from will vary as the youth matures and gains experience. To foster achievement of the competencies identified above, mentoring programs that serve this age range should include opportunities for youth to engage in constructive peer relationships as well as one-on-one interchanges.

4.1. Challenges

Many vulnerable youth who reach the age of majority may no longer qualify for services that they received as minors.

The development toward adulthood is not an easy one for most youth:

They increasingly look outside the family to their peers for approval in order to establish their independence, and this struggle for self-definition sometimes leads to risky or even deadly behaviour. At the same time, programs and

services for adolescents and young adults often lack financial resources or are plagued with inconsistencies, systems gaps, and challenges. A mentoring program cannot solve all such challenges but there are some specific challenges that can be "tackled" in the program design. Although no mentoring program can resolve all challenges youth face, well designed mentoring programs can help youth with disabilities in the following ways:

• Communicating with parents or other family members who may not recognize a youth's emerging independence or who lack high expectations for the youth's transition into adulthood
• Aiding in the improvement of academic skills
• Promoting opportunities for youth to explore career interests
• Improving and increasing socialization opportunities with their peers and
• Providing information and guidance about how to navigate the adult service system.

Mentors can also help guide youth through the sometimes awkward developmental stages that accompany the transition into adulthood. Mentoring organizations can become strong voices within their communities and states as well as nationally to identify and advocate for the reduction of systems gaps in the delivery of services. In order to support the dual goals of improving direct mentoring services and system improvement strategies, an organizing framework for mentoring is needed. What follows is such a framework.

4.2 Building on Youth Development and Youth Leadership Competencies

During the review of definitions and current research regarding youth development and youth leadership, common competencies and outcomes can be divided into five developmental areas - key components to positive youth development: Working, learning, thriving, connecting, and leading (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002).

Five developmental areas are:

Working: Positive attitudes, skills, and behaviours around vocational direction characterize this area of development. Young people should be actively

involved in activities that will expose them to the world of work and offer the opportunity to practice not only the actual skills needed for a particular career but also the work-readiness skills needed for finding and maintaining employment. Meaningful engagement in one's own career development process is of major importance in order to make informed choices. Youth with disabilities need activities that support career goal-setting and -planning, as well as networking with other individuals in particular fields. Some youth may need assistance in finding and acquiring the supports and accommodations they need to participate meaningfully in education, training, and the workplace.

Learning: Positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviours characterize this area of development. Often, supporting this competency area requires something as simple as giving young people the opportunity to use the skills they have acquired in school or other training programs in a different context. Youth should be encouraged to develop not only a higher aptitude for academic achievement but also the ability to approach learning with a strategy for achieving success. Youth with disabilities need to learn how to develop and use their personal development plans and to identify the educational and training supports related to specific careers. These youth may also need tutorial assistance and information about service learning, a teaching approach that combines community service with academic curricula to meet community needs.

Thriving: Attitudes, skills, and behaviours that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being characterize this area. Not only must a young person have intellectual and social competencies to achieve success in adulthood; he or she must also have the wherewithal to maintain his or her physical and emotional health at its highest level. This includes having the ability to identify environments and situations that would potentially compromise one's physical health. However, the core of this area of development is the ability to identify and assess those situations that enhance one's physical and mental health. Thriving is the optimal relationship between physical and emotional well-being, as determined by each youth's particular circumstances and range of abilities. Youth both with and without disabilities

may need information on community resources related to social, recreational, and physical and mental health needs.

Connecting: This area refers to the development of positive social behaviours, skills, and attitudes. Relationships with elders, peers, supervisors, family, and other community members commonly influence these behaviours, skills, attitudes, and tolerance of diversity. The level to which a young person has developed in this area will also dictate how he/she continues to build varied relationships later on in life and balance the demands of work and personal life. Further, maintaining these relationships in a way that will positively benefit the young person is the goal of this area of development. For youth with disabilities, connecting may include additional factors such as learning to access and use an array of support services, including assistive technology, transportation services, workplace accommodations, and other services to promote independent living.

Leading: This area centres on the development of positive skills, attitudes, and behaviours around civic involvement and personal goal-setting. Youth who are civically engaged in a positive manner, willing to participate in public activity, and able to navigate the civic arena are likely to become adults who participate in civic upkeep. In this case, the term "civic" can refer to an entire city, a neighbourhood, a community, or any other setting relating to a public environment. Ideally, a youth who develops the inner strength and vision to set and meet goals will create a Doppler Effect of benefits, as the youth gains personal benefit from leadership experiences, so will his or her surrounding peers, co-workers, and environment.

For each of the five youth development competency areas discussed previously, the table that follows details a set of suggested activities that mentors can either perform themselves or collaborate with others to provide.

4.3. Five Developmental Areas

Needs Area	Developmental Area	Mentoring Strategies
School-Based	**Learning** is based on positive basic and applied	• Assisting in the development of a personal development plan

Preparatory Experiences	academic attitudes, skills, and behaviours.	• Identifying resources and supports needed for educational and training enrichment • Identifying career preparatory needs to include in transition plans • Providing tutoring support and informal academic self-appraisal • Exploring service-learning opportunities.
Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences	**Working** focuses on the positive attitudes, skills, and behaviours necessary to meet expectations in jobs, careers, and vocational development.	• Promoting career exploration activities and tools • Providing information on networking with individuals in a particular field • Promoting activities to support career goal-setting and planning • Providing information on job shadowing, workplace visits, and tours.
Youth Development and Leadership	**Thriving** centres on attitudes, skills, and behaviours that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being.	• Exploring problem solving and conflict resolution • Sharing information on community resources related to social, recreational, and physical and mental health needs • Promoting the role of social, recreational, and sports activities • Assisting with developing and implementing strategies for balancing work, school, and life.

Needs Area	Developmental Area	Mentoring Strategies
Youth Development and Leadership	**Leading** is the area of development that centres on positive skills, attitudes, and involvement and personal goal-setting.	• Promoting youth leadership development experiences • Promoting community activities and volunteerism • Promoting youth activities that encourage group participation as well as collaboration with other individuals and groups.
Connecting Activities	**Connecting** refers to the development of positive social behaviours, skills, and attitudes.	• Providing information on resources for self-sufficiency • Promoting work and life balance • Encouraging cultural activities that promote understanding and tolerance • Providing information on community services.

5. MENTORING FOR CAREER PREPARATION

Determining What a Mentor Can Do

When a mentor has extended contact with an individual mentee (more than a few hours per month) and the bond of trust is strong, the relationship can move beyond the companionship phase and lead into activities that can help the youth in reaching developmental objectives. These activities can be formal and structured, or more informal with less structure.

School-Based Preparatory Experiences – Learning: Because youth who need mentors may also need academic assistance, a mentor can help in the developmental area of Learning. Learning objectives can be addressed in school, in the community, or online. With the assistance of teachers or counsellors, a mentor can help by providing tutoring for specific classes or upcoming tests. The mentor can also help with classroom projects, service

learning, or public performances or arts activities. Mentors can also demonstrate the importance and value of life-long learning that impacts personal growth and career opportunities.

Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences – Working: Because many youth have limited work and work-preparation experience, a mentor can serve a valuable role in these areas. In a school or community-based setting, a mentor can assist a young person in utilizing the Internet to conduct searches to discover the duties and qualifications of particular jobs, in writing resumes and cover letters, in conducting mock interviews, and in developing strategies for a job search. In work-based situations, mentors can provide assistance with soft skills (such as dressing appropriately, speaking to adults, and getting organized) as well as with specific job skills and duties. Mentors can also help youth with setting educational and career planning goals, arranging informational interviews, and setting up internships or other work experiences.

Youth Development and Leadership - Leading and Thriving: The leading and thriving developmental areas both fall under this guideline because the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and behaviours included in these two developmental areas support both positive youth development and leadership. Because all youth need opportunities to develop self-assurance and confidence, mentors can help them learn how to become positively engaged in community life, to engage in healthy and safe lifestyles, and to learn life skills, such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, negotiation, or money management. Modelling behaviour that can demonstrate a sense of responsibility is a role that every mentor can play.

Connecting Activities – Connecting: Because all youth need opportunities to develop positive social behaviours, skills, and attitudes, mentors can provide motivation for a youth to develop quality relationships with adults and peers and to develop an understanding of how to access community resources, which can be a valuable source of support. With an awareness of others, of cultural differences, and of self-responsibility, youth can take major steps toward becoming mature adults.

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6. TIPS FOR MENTORING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

These are:

• Youth with disabilities are, first and foremost, youth. Like all youth, they face the complexities of adolescence and are deeply affected by people and events around them. Issues related to friendships, sexuality, family, and other relationships are profoundly important.

• Youth with disabilities know their needs and can usually express them to others.

• Some youth with disabilities take more time to perform certain activities. Whether an activity involves traveling somewhere, communicating through speaking or writing, performing specific work tasks, reading, or solving a problem, adults who work with youth with disabilities must understand that a youth's time in responding does not mean that the individual is incompetent or unintelligent, lacks understanding, or is ignoring you. Although you may be able to perform a task for a youth with a disability more efficiently than the young person can complete it, resist the urge to help. If the young person would like your assistance, he/she will ask you for it.

• Some youth with disabilities take medication. Some medication may affect how they interact with others, and the effects may vary from day to day or hour to hour. Youth that are supposed to be taking medication may sometimes choose not to take it for a variety of reasons. Self-medicating (using illicit drugs or alcohol) is also common.

• Some youth with disabilities have more than one disability. Sometimes, a disability may contribute to mental health impairment.

• Some youth with disabilities have difficulties with testing and assessment. Youth are commonly given tests that are normed for "average" students who do not have disabilities. Students with learning disabilities, attention problems, visual impairments, or other disabilities often cannot access these materials as readily as their peers without disabilities; hence, their scores may not be valid or reliable. Doing poorly on tests is not necessarily a reflection of intelligence.

• When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People who have limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting).

• Remember that people with disabilities, like all people, are experts on themselves. They know what they like, what they do not like, and what they can and cannot do.

• If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions. Do not insist or be offended if your offer is not accepted.

• Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

• Usually people with disabilities do not want to make the origin or details of their disability the first topic of conversation.

• Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect.

• People with disabilities may be accompanied by a personal assistant or a sign language interpreter. Always direct your communication to the individual with a disability and not to the companion.

• Use a normal speaking tone and style. If someone need you to speak in a louder voice, he/ she will ask you to do so.

• Don't be embarrassed to use common expressions such as "I've got to run now," "See you later," or "Have you heard about" even if the person doesn't run, see, or hear well. People with disabilities use these phrases all the time.

• Be aware that many people can have disabilities that are not apparent. Just because you cannot see a disability does not mean it doesn't exist.

• Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to get some things done.

• Give unhurried attention to a person who has difficulty speaking. Don't pretend to understand when you don't; ask the person to repeat what he/ she said.

• Speak calmly, slowly, and directly to a person who has a hearing impairment. Don't shout or speak in the person's ear. Your facial expressions, gestures, and body movements help in understanding. If you're not certain that you've been understood, write your message.

• Greet a person who is visually impaired by telling the person your name and where you are. When you offer walking assistance, let the person take your arm and then tell him or her when you are approaching inclines or turning right or left.

• Avoid excessive praise when people with disabilities accomplish normal tasks. Living with a disability is an adjustment, one most people have to make at some point in their lives, and does not require exaggerated compliments.

• Avoid terms that imply that people with disabilities are overly courageous, brave, special, or superhuman.

• Respect all assistive devices (e.g., canes, wheelchairs, crutches, communication boards, service dogs, etc.) as personal property. Unless given specific and explicit permission, do not move, play with, or use them.

• Don't pet a guide or companion dog while it's working.

• Make community events available to everyone. Hold them in wheelchair accessible locations.

• When planning a meeting or other event, try to anticipate specific accommodations a person with a disability might need.

• Relax. Anyone can make mistakes. Offer an apology if you forget some courtesy. Keep a sense of humour and a willingness to communicate.

7. DISABILITY-SPECIFIC PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The information in table below is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather provides a good starting point for any organization interested in mentoring

programs for older youth. When considering mentoring strategies for youth with disabilities, keep in mind the isolation many youth with disabilities experience. Hence, group activities need to be a part of mentoring services. One way to accomplish this is to partner with an Independent Living Centre, another disability advocacy group, or with any youth group with youth leadership programming. This can promote acquisition of knowledge and skills such as self-advocacy; independent living; transportation skills; financial and benefits planning (e.g., medical and income support); an understanding of disability history, law, culture, policies, and practices; and an understanding of community resources.

MENTORING ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT YOUTH IN MEETING DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES		
Learning is based on positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviours.		
School-	Mentors can help ALL youth reach these developmental objectives:	Mentoring activities that support the achievement of developmental objectives:

Learning is based on positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviours.		
School-	**Mentors can help youth WITH DISABILITIES with specific needs such as the following:**	• Helping youth apply academic skills to community needs • Helping youth identify and

Working focuses on the positive attitudes, skills, and behaviours necessary to meet expectations in jobs, careers, and vocational development		
Career	**Mentors can help ALL youth reach these developmental objectives:**	**Mentoring activities that support the achievement of developmental objectives:**

	Working focuses on the positive attitudes, skills, and behaviours necessary to meet expectations in jobs, careers, and vocational development	
Career	**Mentors can help youth WITH DISABILITIES with specific needs such as the following:**	• Finding varied internships and work experience, including summer employment, to learn

Leading is the area of development that centres on positive skills, attitudes, and behaviours around civic involvement and personal goal setting. **Thriving** centres on attitudes, skills, and behaviours that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being.

Youth	**Mentors can help ALL youth reach these developmental objectives:**	**Mentoring activities that support the achievement of developmental objectives:**

Leading is the area of development that centres on positive skills, attitudes, and behaviours around civic involvement and personal goal setting. **Thriving** centres on attitudes, skills, and behaviours that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being.

Youth	**Mentors can help youth WITH DISABILITIES with specific needs such as the following:** • Participating in mediation and conflict resolution training.

Connecti	**Connecting** refers to the development of positive social behaviours, skills, and attitudes.	
	Mentors can help ALL youth reach these developmental objectives:	**Mentoring activities that support the achievement of developmental objectives:**
	• Demonstrate effective interpersonal	

Connecting refers to the development of positive social behaviours, skills, and attitudes.		
Connecti	• Providing tutoring activities that engage youth as tutors or in being tutored.	