



**GEM Lab**

Canadian Centre for  
Evidence-Based  
Mentorship Solutions

# Mentorship Through a Feminist, Anti-Racist Lens

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# A Letter from GEM

Girls E-Mentorship Innovation (GEM) is a top 100 rated charity offering a research-based mentorship program for high school girls facing socioeconomic barriers to build their professional skills and achieve their academic and career potential.

GEM was founded in 2012 from a vision that all young women should have the opportunity to succeed despite where they've come from or what barriers they've faced. Developed with educators, social workers and policy experts in conjunction with high-school girls using collaborative design-thinking, GEM's dynamic mentorship program was created for girls, by girls, to build their strength to overcome barriers as they transition into adulthood. GEM believes that women mentoring girls is essential in fostering the success of the next generation, and critical to creating gender equity, and building inclusive economic growth in Canada.

This report was developed in the summer of 2021 to assist organizations in conducting mentorship programs through a feminist, anti-racist lens. Combining academic research from across the non-profit sector with GEM's own experience providing mentorship to racialized, self-identified adolescent girls, this report provides a series of recommendations on how to implement feminism, anti-racism, and intersectionality in a mentorship program for youth.

It is our hope that by publishing this report, organizations across Canada can benefit from our extensive research in the field of mentorship and provide evidence-based mentorship services to support adolescent girls and women.



**Wendy Sung-Aad**

Executive Director



**Rochelle de Goias-Jackman**

Founder and Board Co-Chair

# Executive Summary

Mentees who are able to maintain successful relationships with their mentors report feeling both supported and challenged in their personal and professional development, as well as their goal setting. In order to provide youth with the support they need, it is imperative that mentorship programs are conducted using a feminist, anti-racist lens at the relationship and program level.

This report will begin with a discussion on the importance of vulnerability and representation in mentorship, followed by discussions on feminism, anti-racism, and intersectionality in mentorship. The goal of this report is to provide GEM's mentorship program participants with the context they need to employ an intersectional approach to their mentorship relationship.

The following definitions will be elaborated on throughout this manual:

- **Critical Consciousness:** A fundamental understanding of oppressive social elements, hierarchical structures, and one's place in society.<sup>1</sup> An active process of learning truths and unlearning biases.
- **Vulnerability:** Willingness to show emotion or to allow one's weakness to be seen or known.<sup>2</sup> Being open about the challenges we've faced to help others learn and grow.<sup>3</sup>
- **Feminism:** The belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes.<sup>4</sup> Feminism is about respecting diverse women's experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving to empower all women to realize their full rights.<sup>5</sup>
- **Patriarchy:** A social system in which power is held by men, through cultural norms and customs that favour men and withhold opportunity from women.<sup>6</sup>
- **Autonomy:** Self-directing freedom and especially moral independence.<sup>7</sup> Simply, autonomy is about a person's ability to act on his or her own values and interests.<sup>8</sup>
- **Empathy:** The ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.<sup>9</sup>
- **Anti-Racism:** The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes.<sup>10</sup>
- **Systemic Racism:** Systemic racism includes the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary.<sup>11</sup>
- **Self-Reflection:** The activity of thinking about your own feelings and behaviour, and the reasons that may lie behind them.<sup>12</sup>
- **Micro-Aggressions:** A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group.<sup>13</sup>
- **Bias:** The action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to influence your judgement.<sup>14</sup>

- **Identity:** The distinguishing character or personality of an individual.<sup>15</sup> Who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others.<sup>16</sup>
- **Accountability:** An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.<sup>17</sup>
- **Intersectionality:** A framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages.<sup>18</sup>

## Best Practices and Recommendations

### 1. Apply a Feminist Lens to Mentorship

- a. Be aware of and be sensitive to the different support that male and female-identifying individuals experience in the home and workplace as a result of gender-based social constructs.
- b. Engage in problem-solving exercises with mentees based on their individual needs.
- c. Encourage mentees to develop their own autonomy, independent thought and core values without imposing personal beliefs on mentees.
  - i. Ask mentees for their feedback and for their opinion on the mentorship program, on shared hobbies and interests, as well as on current events.
  - ii. Ask for them to explain their opinion and engage them in conversation about their thoughts.
- d. Promote "mutual engagement, authenticity, empowerment, and the ability to deal with difference and conflict" within the mentorship relationship.<sup>19</sup>
- e. Be dependable and consistent; listen actively to mentee's interests without imposing opinions or values.<sup>20</sup>

### 2. Apply an Anti-Racist Lens to Mentorship

- a. Engage in regular self-reflection and interrupt personal biases, including microaggressions.<sup>21</sup>
- b. Recognize your own intersectional identity and acknowledge the identities of others.
  - i. Understand that one's racial identity cannot be isolated from the experience of gender, sexual identity, wealth or class, citizenship, religious identity, ability or disability, body size, and more.<sup>22</sup>
- c. Respect other ethnic and cultural identities. Allow mentees to define and explain their own identities.
- d. Recognize the ability for every mentor to apply an anti-racist lens regardless of race. Avoid labelling racialized program participants as 'experts' on anti-racist practices.
  - i. Do not place the responsibility to educate and inform communities about racism and systemic barriers solely on racialized individuals.<sup>23</sup>
- e. Be willing to be vulnerable and have "difficult discussions about race" with mentees if they express an interest in having that conversation.<sup>24</sup>

- f. Actively listen to the lived perspectives of people who are different from you. Communicate accountability when mistakes are made.<sup>25</sup>

### **3. Apply an Intersectional Lens to Mentorship**

- a. Recognize Difference: All experiences and identities are valid. Ask yourself how others "assert their identity" and how this "informs the issues they care most about."<sup>26</sup>
- b. Avoid Oversimplified Language: It is important to avoid language "that seeks to define people by a singular identity."<sup>27</sup> We can be more open to other points of view by "avoiding language that assumes our own experiences are baseline."<sup>28</sup>
- c. Analyze the Space you Occupy: Recognize "when difference is not represented in the spaces you occupy."<sup>29</sup>
- d. Seek Other Points of View: Explore other identities and the narratives of those who are different from you. "Take the opportunity to listen; however, do not expect people with identity markers other than your own to be there or want to educate others."<sup>30</sup>
- e. Show Up: Research different intersectionalities and "rally ... for people who face different systems of oppression than you. Learn about the work that is currently being done around these topics."<sup>31</sup>

The most important consideration for mentors is to allow their mentee to explain their own identities and intersectionality. Mentors must listen and help their mentee to set and achieve goals that are relevant to that identity.

# Introduction

Mentorship refers to a relationship between two individuals in which one provides guidance and support to the other. The youth involved in GEM's mentorship program report a wide variety of positive personal and professional development outcomes, including improved professional communication, industry knowledge, self-esteem, self-direction, resilience, and overall feelings of preparedness for their future. Mentees not only value the professional development and networking skills taught by mentors, but they also value the personal support and friendship that they receive throughout the relationship.

According to a graduate of Girls E-Mentorship (GEM)'s 2020-21 Cohort, "having a mentor really showed me that a person like myself could be successful." The success of a mentorship relationship is dependent on several variables, including the personal and professional compatibility of the mentor and mentee. Mentees who are able to maintain successful relationships with their mentors report feeling both supported and challenged in their personal and professional development, as well as their goal setting.

In order to provide youth with the support they need, it is imperative that mentorship programs are conducted using a feminist, anti-racist lens at the relationship and program level. This report will begin with a discussion on the importance of vulnerability and representation in mentorship, followed by discussions on feminism, anti-racism, and intersectionality in mentorship. The goal of this report is to provide GEM's mentorship program participants with the context they need to employ an intersectional approach to their mentorship relationship.

# The Value of Representation

The first step in conducting mentorship through a feminist, anti-racist lens involves developing one's own critical consciousness, which is defined as a "fundamental understanding of oppressive social elements, hierarchical structures, and one's place in society."<sup>32</sup> As discussed in GEM's "Women in the Workforce: The Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Model," critical consciousness is an active process of learning truths and unlearning biases. It is essential for participants in mentorship programs to actively develop their own critical consciousness. According to Albright et al, "mentors who are unaware of the oppressive forces at work in their protégés lives may be less able to develop a relationship in which their protégé benefits from their social capital."<sup>33</sup> The common misconception that "hard work is sufficient for social mobility ... neglects the reality that oppression systematically restricts or denies individuals access to resources and opportunities for social mobility."<sup>34</sup> Mentors who can understand and act on these concepts will be able to provide support and guidance that suits the individual needs of their mentee.

For participants of GEM's mentorship program, "vulnerability breeds vulnerability." GEM mentees feel most comfortable in their relationships when their mentors share personal experiences that they can relate to. One graduate of GEM's 2020-21 Cohort explained how important it was to see herself in her mentor:

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*"I was exposed to incredible and successful women who looked and lived like me; some struggled with self-identity, others grew up [in a] low income [household], and some had low self-esteem. GEM is a program that [helps] you to see how you can get to your dream reality."*

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In the context of mentorship and professional development, seeing is truly believing. Laura Thomas, Director of the Antioch University New England Center for School Renewal and the Antioch Critical Skills Program, noted that "early experiences shape what [young adults] imagine to be possible for people who look like them, live where they live, or come from where they came from."<sup>35</sup> The ability to engage in an open and honest conversation about the barriers faced by mentees and mentors will allow for more valuable mentorship support. It is essential, therefore, for all mentors to engage in the process of learning truths and unlearning biases to best support their mentees. By reflecting on their own experiences with feminism and anti-racism throughout their careers, mentors can engage in vulnerable discussions with their mentees on how to persevere when facing systemic barriers to success.

In the following sections, this report will define feminism, anti-racism, and intersectionality in the context of mentorship. This report will conclude with a set of best practices and recommendations for adopting a feminist, anti-racist and intersectional approach to mentorship at the relationship and program level.

# Feminism and Mentorship

## Building a Meaningful Relationship with Female-Identifying Mentees

In order to most effectively develop a positive mentoring relationship with young women, it is important to understand how female adolescents build relationships. Belle Liang, G. Anne Bogat, and Nicole Duffy, in their chapter for the *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, detailed several considerations for mentors when developing a relationship with their female mentees. First, they note that adolescent females commonly benefit from “problem-solving relationship issues with a friend” and will “seek out emotional support [through] co-rumination – excessive talk about problems in the absence of active coping.”<sup>36</sup> Mentors are encouraged to problem-solve and provide advice based on their own experience to support their mentees.

Liang, Bogat, and Duffy also note that “girls may exhibit less striving for autonomy in adolescence and may be even willing to forgo certain relational qualities associated with traditional masculine norms, such as power and assertion.”<sup>37</sup> As a result, many girls feel the need to “silence their own thoughts and feelings in order to preserve relationships.”<sup>38</sup> Such a “sacrifice in voice, and ultimately well-being … has been linked with low self-esteem, hopelessness, and depressed mood in adolescence.”<sup>39</sup> For this reason, mentors should encourage their mentees to develop their own autonomy, core values and beliefs throughout the mentoring relationship. This can be done by asking mentees for their opinion on the themes of the mentorship program curriculum, shared hobbies and interests, or current events.

Above all other considerations, it is important for mentors to recognize that each relationship will vary depending on the personality and needs of the mentee. No mentee is the same and will require a different approach in order to find success. Liang, Bogat, and Duffy cautioned that gender-specific programs can have a tendency to “overgeneralize and stereotype girls’ needs and behaviours,” which can have negative implications for program participants.<sup>40</sup> They recommend that mentors “listen to girls’ interests without presumption” as opposed to “imposing values.”<sup>41</sup>

Relational-cultural theory suggests “four major growth-fostering characteristics [for female relationships]: (a) mutual engagement, (b) authenticity, (c) empowerment, and (d) the ability to deal with difference or conflict.”<sup>42</sup> In order for female youth to feel comfortable developing strong relationships, they must feel a personal connection to their mentor. Research indicates that “the quality of a friendship is more likely to influence girls’ adjustment and that girls expect higher levels of intimacy, self-disclosure, and empathy than do boys.”<sup>43</sup> Girls also have the tendency, however, to “be more negatively affected by their relationships - psychological distress and crises in the lives of girls and women often stem from disconnections in relationships.”<sup>44</sup> Mentors of adolescent girls should therefore be dependable and consistent in their relationship with their mentee so as to develop a strong, meaningful connection.

## Case Study: Relational-Cultural Theory in Sweden

Madelene Larsson, Camilla Pettersson, Therése Skoog, and Charli Eriksson, in their article for *BioMed Central Public Health*, analyzed the formation and development of mentoring relationships for female youth at a non-governmental organization in Sweden. According to their research, “successful mentoring relationships with girls and women are characterized by authenticity, empathy, engagement, empowerment, companionship, collaboration, connectedness, mutuality, and trust.”<sup>45</sup> Larsson et al noted that young women in mentoring relationships valued “not needing to achieve or perform,” as well as “the absence of certain demands, such as sharing information about themselves.”<sup>46</sup> Much like the mentees in GEM’s mentorship program, the young women in this study valued their mentor for the personal experience they shared just as much as their professional expertise.<sup>47</sup> Through their study, Larsson et al found that “adolescent and emerging adult women can establish an authentic relationship with non-kin adult women ten years older if the relationship is undemanding and non-judgemental on the protégé’s terms.”<sup>48</sup> This will allow the young women to develop the tools necessary to “deal with challenging and intractable experiences in the future.”<sup>49</sup>

Based on their research, Larsson et all recommended that female mentorship programs adapt the relational-cultural theory of mentorship, which encourages mentors “to listen actively, show respect, and pay attention to what gives the protégés strength, hope, and desire, with a feeling of empathy, engagement, and authenticity in a non-hierarchical relationship.”<sup>50</sup> In addition to the professional support and advice they receive throughout the program, young women in mentoring relationships value the psychosocial support and friendship they receive from their mentor. In order to feel supported and valued in the relationship, it is important for mentors to be empathetic, engaged and authentic.

# Anti-Racism and Mentorship

## Defining Anti-Racism

According to NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity, anti-racism is defined as “the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes.”<sup>51</sup>

The existing literature on anti-racist education largely shares 3 beliefs: (1) a focus on making systemic oppression visible and moving beyond the traditionally narrow focus on individual and interpersonal prejudice; (2) an effort to confront and dismantle systemic oppression, showing how whiteness confers unearned privilege and is complicit in keeping systemic and structural racism in place; and (3) an understanding that strategies to transform structural inequalities are central to anti-racist moral education.

The practice of anti-racist mentorship and education is widely discussed within BIPOC communities. Historically, anti-racist practices have been brought up from within the marginalized communities most affected by racism. It is important to note, however, that addressing systemic oppression will require action from all groups in society. In his article, “Racism, anti-racist practice, and social work: articulating the teaching and learning experiences of Black social workers,” John Wainwright found that while Black teachers had the lived experiences that could help contribute to enhance a student’s learnings, this experience cannot be equated with expertise. While Black teachers had a distinct “willingness to link their experience of racism to an understanding of anti-racism,” Wainwright found that “Black respondents had no greater theoretical insight than white practitioners.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, it was found that when labelled as an ‘expert’ on anti-racist practices, “Black teachers and students are placed under unnecessary pressure in the arena of racial equality, whilst enabling some white colleagues to renege on their own responsibilities.”<sup>53</sup> It was also not the case that all Black students formed a connection with the Black teachers on the grounds of race. Importantly,

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*“other elements of their multi-dimensional identities, including ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age will inform how [participants] engage in the learning process with each other.”<sup>54</sup>*

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The implementation of anti-racism in mentorship programs, therefore, cannot simply fall on the BIPOC participants. It is important that all participants be provided with the training and resources needed to employ an anti-racist approach to mentorship.

## Barriers to Implementing Anti-Racist Policies

Anita Chikkatur, in her article for *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, outlined five primary barriers to creating an anti-racist school culture based on her experience at a charter school in the United States and provided recommendations for implementing anti-racist policies in programs for youth, three of which are relevant to GEM's mentorship program. Mentors should step outside their own lived experiences and build on the perspectives that their mentees bring to the table. Do not impose external beliefs and perspectives onto mentees. Second, mentors should be willing to be vulnerable and have "difficult discussions about race" with their mentees if the mentees are interested in having the discussion.<sup>55</sup> Finally, mentors should feel comfortable engaging in self-reflection and developing their critical consciousness before engaging in such conversations with their mentees.

These findings underscore the importance of conducting one's own research and engaging in self-reflection prior to each mentorship relationship. Mentors that develop an understanding of their own barriers, privileges, and biases prior to meeting their mentee will be more equipped to assist their mentee through the same process.

## Engaging in Anti-Racist Self-Reflection

Jamie Utt and Shelly Tochluk, in their article for *Urban Education*, recommend “six areas of self-work for developing positive, anti-racist White racial identities,” which are divided into two categories: understanding oneself and accountable action in community.<sup>56</sup>

### 1. Understanding Oneself:

- a. “Analyze privilege and micro-aggressive behaviour,
- b. Explore ethnic and cultural identities,
- c. Engage with the history of white anti-racists and multiracial struggles for justice, and
- d. Develop an intersectional identity.”<sup>57</sup>

### 2. Accountable Action in the Community:

- a. “Build the white, anti-racist community and
- b. Demonstrate accountability across race.”<sup>58</sup>

Utt and Tochluk note that by embracing these six areas of self-work, educators and mentors can “develop a foundation that supports a healthier, positive, anti-racist understanding of themselves.”<sup>59</sup> For more information on the six areas of self-work, read Chart 1 in the Appendix.

# Intersectionality

## Defining Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined as “a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. Intersectionality takes into account people’s overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of the prejudices they face.”<sup>60</sup> Intersectionality maintains that every aspect of an individual’s identity contributes to their unique life experience and the barriers that they face.

The concept of intersectionality emerged in the mid-twentieth century “when Black feminists … found it difficult to identify with the issues of the mainstream (White) feminist movement.”<sup>61</sup> At the same time, Black women experienced a unique instance of “sexism while participating in the Civil Rights movement and were often shut out of leadership positions.”<sup>62</sup>

## An Example

**Cameron:** Cameron is a lesbian Latinx woman who works as a manager at a software firm. In her work environment, she not only hears whispers about her “curves,” but she also faces sexual innuendos from male coworkers due to her sexual orientation and gender.<sup>63</sup>

**Megan:** Megan is an African American woman working as a developer in the video game industry. Not only does she notice that there is a lack of African American female game characters, but she faces discrimination from her coworkers, company and even other gamers for being an African American woman in the gaming industry.<sup>64</sup>

Cameron and Megan both face discrimination, but the specific instances of discrimination that they face are different because of their unique identities. The framework of intersectionality validates both Cameron and Megan’s experiences with oppression and highlights that while their experiences are different, they both face discrimination based on their identity.

## Talking About Intersectionality

It is valuable to approach discussions on intersectionality from the context of “identities affected by intersecting power, privilege, and oppression,” as opposed to “intersecting identities.”<sup>65</sup> By placing the emphasis on the systems of oppression as opposed to individual identities, we can develop systemic solutions to oppression and barriers to success.

## The Origin of the Term 'Intersectionality'

The term 'intersectionality' was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American lawyer, pioneering scholar, and writer on civil rights, critical race theory, Black feminist legal theory, and race, racism and the law.<sup>66</sup> She is the Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law at Columbia University and is a Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of California Los Angeles.<sup>67</sup> Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality' in 1989 when she published her paper, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," in the University of Chicago Legal Forum.<sup>68</sup>

The term was adopted into mainstream vocabulary in the twenty-first century:

- In 2015, the Oxford English Dictionary officially added and defined the term.<sup>69</sup>
- During the 2017 Women's March, organizers noted how women's 'intersecting identities' meant that they were 'impacted by a multitude of social justice and human rights issues.'<sup>70</sup>

For more information, watch [this](#) TEDTalk by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term 'intersectionality'.

# Best Practices and Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this report, the following best practices are recommended in order to achieve a feminist, anti-racist approach to mentorship.

## 1. Apply a Feminist Lens to Mentorship

- a. Be aware of and be sensitive to the different supports that male and female-identifying individuals experience in the home and workplace as a result of gender-based social constructs.
- b. Engage in problem-solving exercises with mentees based on their individual needs.
- c. Encourage mentees to develop their own autonomy, independent thought and core values without imposing personal beliefs on mentees.
  - i. Ask mentees for their feedback and for their opinion on the mentorship program, on shared hobbies and interests, as well as on current events.
  - ii. Ask for them to explain their opinion and engage them in conversation about their thoughts.
- d. Promote “mutual engagement, authenticity, empowerment, and the ability to deal with difference and conflict” within the mentorship relationship.<sup>71</sup>
- e. Be dependable and consistent; listen actively to mentee’s interests without imposing opinions or values.<sup>72</sup>

## 2. Apply an Anti-Racist Lens to Mentorship

- a. Engage in regular self-reflection and interrupt our personal biases, including microaggressions.<sup>73</sup>
- b. Recognize your own intersectional identity and acknowledge the identities of others.
  - i. Understand that “racial identity cannot be disentangled from the experience of gender, sexual identity, wealth or class, citizenship, religious identity, ability or disability, body size, or any other core or peripheral aspect of social identity.”<sup>74</sup>
- c. Respect other ethnic and cultural identities. Allow mentees to define and explain their own identities.
- d. Recognize the ability for every mentor to apply an anti-racist lens regardless of race. Avoid labelling racialized program participants as ‘experts’ on anti-racist practices.
  - i. Do not place the responsibility to educate and inform communities about racism and systemic barriers solely on BIPOC individuals.<sup>75</sup>
- e. Be willing to be vulnerable and have “difficult discussions about race” with mentees if they express an interest in having that conversation.<sup>76</sup>
- f. Actively listen to the lived perspectives of people who are different from you. Communicate accountability when mistakes are made.<sup>77</sup>

### **3. Apply an Intersectional Lens to Mentorship**

- a. Recognize Difference: All experiences and identities are valid. Ask yourself how others “assert their identity” and how this “informs the issues they care most about.”<sup>78</sup>
- b. Avoid Oversimplified Language: It is important to avoid language “that seeks to define people by a singular identity.”<sup>79</sup> We can be more open to other points of view by “avoiding language that assumes our own experiences are baseline.”<sup>80</sup>
- c. Analyze the Space you Occupy: Recognize “when difference is not represented in the spaces you occupy.”<sup>81</sup>
- d. Seek Other Points of View: ore other identities and the narratives of those who are different from you. “Take the opportunity to listen; however, do not expect people with identity markers other than your own to be there or want to educate others.”<sup>82</sup>
- e. Show Up: Research different intersectionalities and “rally … for people who face different systems of oppression than you. Learn about the work that is currently being done around these topics.”<sup>83</sup>

The most important consideration for mentors is to allow their mentee to explain their own identities and intersectionality. Mentors must listen and help their mentee to set and achieve relevant goals.

# Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, “vulnerability breeds vulnerability.” When young women feel supported in their relationship with their mentor, they will be more able to achieve positive personal and professional development. Mentors will not always have the same lived experience as their mentees, however. By examining their own privilege and biases through the development of their critical consciousness, mentors will be better prepared to engage in vulnerable discussions with their mentees.

This report provided several ways in which mentors can better support their mentees through a feminist, anti-racist lens. First, mentors can adapt a feminist lens to their relationship by employing the relational-cultural theory’s “four major growth-fostering characteristics [for female relationships]: (a) mutual engagement, (b) authenticity, (c) empowerment, and (d) the ability to deal with difference or conflict.”<sup>84</sup> Mentors are encouraged to be empathetic, engaged and authentic in their relationship to provide their mentee with the psychosocial support and friendship needed to thrive.<sup>85</sup>

Second, mentors can adapt an anti-racist lens to their relationship with their mentee by engaging in anti-racist self-reflection. By “analyzing privilege and micro-aggressive behaviour, exploring ethnic and cultural identities, engaging with the history of White anti-racists and multiracial struggles for justice, and developing an intersectional identity,” mentors can better understand themselves and work to develop their own critical consciousness.<sup>86</sup> When mentors have a better understanding of themselves and their intersectionality, they can be more prepared to engage in vulnerable discussions and provide relevant advice and support to their mentees.

# Appendix

**Chart 1:** Utt and Tochluk's six areas of self-work for developing positive, anti-racist identities.

|                       | <b>Area of Self-Work</b>   | <b>Description</b>   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Understanding Oneself | 1. Analyze privilege and micro-aggressive behaviour <sup>87</sup>                                    | <p>Microaggressions are defined as “the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.”<sup>88</sup> While people who commit microaggressions are often unaware of their actions, they can still have a “tremendous impact.”<sup>89</sup></p> <p>Examples include failing to learn how to pronounce the names of students from different cultures,<sup>90</sup> or “commenting on how well an Asian American speaks English.”<sup>91</sup></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Mentors should engage in “regular self-reflection to interrupt subconscious enactments of microaggressions.”<sup>92</sup></p> |
|                       | 2. Explore ethnic and cultural identities <sup>93</sup>  | <p>By exploring ethnic and cultural identities, mentors will be better able to understand their own culture’s place in society, “own their responsibility to work for justice, and avoid enacting micro-aggressions.”<sup>94</sup></p>   |
|                       | 3. Engage with the history of white anti-racists and multiracial struggles for justice <sup>95</sup> | <p>When White teachers are unaware of White anti-racist history, they can “remain guilty and/or shameful regarding their association to racism.”<sup>96</sup></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Gain an awareness of White anti-racist history. This will “provide White teachers with a confident stance that supports healthy relationships with students of Colour.”<sup>97</sup></p>   |

|                                     |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                     | 4. Develop an intersectional identity <sup>98</sup>      | <p>"Racial identity cannot be disentangled from the experience of gender, sexual identity, wealth or class, citizenship, religious identity, ability or disability, body size, or any other core or peripheral aspect of social identity."<sup>99</sup></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Mentors should allow their mentee to feel comfortable discussing all aspects of their identity in order to support their personal growth.</p> |
| Accountable Action in the Community | 5. Build the white, anti-racist community <sup>100</sup> | <p>The duty and responsibility to educate and inform communities about racism and systemic barriers for racialized people cannot solely fall on BIPOC individuals. This creates an "unnecessary pressure in the arena of racial inequality."<sup>101</sup></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> All mentors work together "to learn about racism and address concerns about racial identity."<sup>102</sup></p>                            |
|                                     | 6. Demonstrate accountability across race <sup>103</sup> | <p>"Building trust and engaging in healthy dialogue with colleagues and students of colour" is imperative in order to create an anti-racist community.<sup>104</sup></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Mentors should "listen to the truths expressed by people of Colour" and "communicate accountability" when mistakes are made.<sup>105</sup></p>   |

# Notes

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