



VIRTUAL MENTORING – Getting Connected While Staying Apart

The Purpose

While public health officials continue to urge Canadians to practice social and physical distancing, digital nearness is more important than ever. At BBBSY we know the immense impact that a caring adult can have on a child's well-being. In an effort to reduce the negative effects of uncertainty and isolation we are introducing a new program. **Virtual Mentoring** will provide young people with virtual Mentors with whom they can connect through phone, text, and video calling applications. These matches will communicate regularly and have a weekly activity or task to work on together.

Who Can Participate?

This program is open to anyone on our current waitlist. The most important thing you need is an interest and willingness to get to know someone and build a relationship with them! Match members will also need to have access to some form of communication device (i.e. phone, computer, gaming console, tablet, etc.).

If I Become a Virtual Mentee or Mentor Can I Still Have a Big or Little?

Absolutely! This is not intended to replace a Big Brother or Big Sister relationship and you or your child will be able to stay on the waitlist for a Community-Based match once the physical distancing recommendation has been lifted.

How Will You Match Me?

As we all know, York Region is huge. Usually when we are looking at creating new matches we are bound by the restrictions of geography, but not this time! For that reason, we will be creating matches based on common interests, personality, and accessibility to technology. For example, if a Mentee only has access to Skype, we will make sure their Mentor also has Skype.



How Long Will This Last?

At this time, *Virtual Mentoring* is a temporary solution to promote connectedness and reduce the isolation that many in our community are feeling during these unprecedented times. Therefore, these matches will be short-term and will wrap up once the current health crisis is under control and staying at home is no longer necessary.

What Will We Do Together?

Each week matches will be given a set of activity ideas. They can choose to work on one of those activities, or come up with their own. This will provide the match members with a framework from which to begin a Developmental Relationship. Activity ideas may include things like; play an online game together, try a new recipe and FaceTime to see whose turns out best, pick a show you want the other person to watch and then discuss each other's choices. We will be asking the Mentors to send us a quick update at the end of the week to let us know how the activity went.

How Often Will We Connect with One Another?

We know that consistency is key in fostering trust and connectedness among match members. For this reason, spending time together on a regular basis will be important. However, we also want to be mindful that many of you may have work or school to attend to, so healthy boundaries must be put in place from the very beginning to ensure all match members feel respected. We would like to encourage matches to spend a total of 1-2 hours per week together and limit contact to 4 times a week.

What Role Does BBBSY Play?

We will facilitate a virtual match introduction meeting for all match members. During which time we will decide upon methods of communication moving forward, discuss best practices to ensure a healthy and successful match in a virtual world, and outline a monitoring schedule. Just like all of our mentoring programs, our Program Team will conduct regular phone and email check-ins with Mentors, Mentees, and the Mentees' guardians to provide support and answer any questions you may have. We will be looking to you to keep us informed on struggles and



successes and will happily pass on any exciting tips you may have to other *Virtual Mentoring* matches. As we navigate this new virtual way of getting and staying connected, we appreciate any feedback you can provide to help us enhance the program and promote a more positive experience for all involved.