



SWOVA'S PASS IT ON GIRLS PROGRAM

2016-2017 PROGRAM EVALUATION

ARBOR EDUCATIONAL & CLINICAL CONSULTING INC.
WWW.ARBOREDUCATIONAL.COM



Table of Contents

The 'Pass It On Girls' Program.....	2
'Pass It One Girls' Program Implementation	3
Evaluation Approach.....	3
2016-2017 Program and Evaluation Participants.....	3
Mentor Feedback.....	4
Training Feedback	4
Pre-Program Feedback.....	5
Post-Program Feedback	6
Reflections on Sharing Circle with the 'Pass It On Boys' Program	10
Buddy Feedback.....	14
Pre-Program Feedback.....	14
Post-Program Feedback	15
Conclusions.....	17
Recommendations	17

The 'Pass It On Girls' Program

The 'Pass It On (PIO) girls' program is an eight-month mentoring program in which high school young women mentor grade 8 girls to help prepare them for their transition to high school. In addition to mentoring for the grade 8 girls, the program integrates opportunities for the high school mentors to receive mentoring through a program coordinator. The objectives of the program are as follows:

- to provide mentorship for grade 8 girls by high school young women
- to provide structured group mentorship
- to provide leadership opportunities for young women
- to create a venue for adult women in the community to pass on their skills and expertise to the next generation
- to provide workshops on health and safety
- to educate girls and young women about their rights, how to stay safe, and how to access community supports

The program was delivered for the first time during the 2008-2009 school year and has continued to run almost every year since that time. PIO recruits young women in grades 10 to 12, who serve as 'mentors' to grade 8 girls from the middle school who become their 'buddies'. Grade 8 girls are intentionally chosen as a target group as the mentoring experience aims to help prepare them for high school through their connections with their mentors.

Mentors received three weeks of training (one session per week) in the areas of communication skills and self-awareness. Mentors continued to meet once a week with the program coordinator and engage in group activities and discussions to provide young women with a venue for engaging in conversations about relevant issues that impact their lives such as self-esteem, health and wellness, stress, conflict resolution, etc. Note that 6 additional young women, who were not formal mentors, also participated in the weekly meetings.

Over the course of eight months, mentors and buddies engaged in facilitated monthly group meetings, monthly guest speaker sessions with adults from the community, and weekly contact with buddies. In the weekly mentor-buddy meetings, the pair engaged in such activities as swimming, going to a movie, watching high school performances, going for coffee, or just hanging out at one another's homes.

Two new elements were introduced during this year. First, the PIO boys program participants had opportunities to interact with PIO girls program participants. The two groups met two times during the year to engage in a sharing circle focused on having difficult conversations that were relevant to both groups as well as have fun doing outdoor activities. Second, two workshops were presented at the middle school. These workshops were supported by school counsellors and community experts and included the topics of body image and substance use.

The culminating event of the year was entitled 'Sparkfest'. Sparkfest was created as a venue to celebrate women in the community by showcasing their artistic talents.

Mentoring Implementation

The initial meetings between mentors and buddies focused on building relationships between the two age groups through activities such as interviewing one another, teambuilding, and sharing personal stories. Three weeks were set aside for these relationship building activities in order to enable the best possible matches to be made between individual mentors and buddies. The program coordinator and mentors made the final decisions on matches. Mentors then contacted their buddy in order to begin their ongoing mentorship relationship. After matches were made, mentors and buddies were encouraged to ‘connect’ regularly as well as attend monthly mentor-buddy activities.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of the PIO program incorporates reflections on the training for mentors and pre-and post-program data from buddies and mentors, as well as reflections from mentors on their experience of the program. Given that the PIO boys program interacted with the PIO girls program this year, feedback from the sharing circles is also incorporated in the evaluation.¹

2016-2017 Program and Evaluation Participants

During the 2016-2017 school year, 17 high school mentors and 16 grade 8 buddies along with 6 additional high school young woman participated in the program – 3 regularly and 3 sporadically. One mentor dropped out of the program and one buddy moved out of the area in March 2017.

Attendance was not taken on a regular basis but according to the program coordinator, most mentors attended regularly. At any given meeting, there were approximately 13 or 14 buddies.

Evaluative data includes the following:

Evaluative Data	Number of evaluation participants
Mentor training feedback	16
Mentors Time one data	16
Mentors Time two data	15
Buddies Time one data	15
Buddies Time two data	12
Mentor program reflection (previously was a buddy)	6
Mentor program reflections (never was a PIO buddy)	9
Two stars and one wish	14

¹ Pre-and post-surveys utilized in this evaluation were developed by a previous evaluator. All other tools were developed by Arbor Educational.

Mentor Feedback

Training Feedback

Mentors were asked to complete a short feedback form after they completed their training at the beginning of the year. 16 mentors provided feedback.

Benefits of Mentoring for Buddies

First, they were asked how they saw mentoring as a way to help a younger girl. Mentors identified two key ways in which mentoring can help a younger girl.

First, being a person to whom younger girls can turn for support through listening to their experience.

“Having a peer that they may feel more comfortable talking to.”

“A removed and confidential ear to listen.”

“Having someone who listens is really important for girls that age.”

Second, being someone who can provide advice and new perspectives to younger girls as they face challenges in their life, some of which they may have already had to overcome themselves.

“It can help her to make informed decisions about situations she faces in her life.”

“Help them through struggles you went through yourself. “

“It can help them look at things in a different way. “

“... having a good role model/mentor who has been through it can be a great way to share some wisdom and give advice as well as support.”

Most Important Learning from Mentor Training

Mentors were asked to comment on the most important things learned during mentor training that would help them build a relationship with their buddy. They noted the following:

- connecting with their buddies through spending time together so that they get to know their buddy
- listening to and empathizing with their buddies
- being kind and caring
- being honest with their buddies
- keeping good boundaries with their buddies
- knowing when to reach out for help when they are not able to give advice to their buddy

Improvements to Mentor Training

Mentors have the following suggestions as to ways the training could be improved. The most noted suggestion was to incorporate more scenarios for mentors to work through in order to gain more skills that they could later apply in situations with their buddies. Two additional suggestions were:

- being mindful of people who may find it anxiety provoking to talk in front of the group
- increasing the number of young women who would like to be mentors

Overall Training Rating

Mentors were asked to rate the overall training they received in order that they be prepared to begin mentoring. 5 of the 16 mentors indicated the training was 'excellent'; the remaining 11 mentors indicated the training was 'very good'.

Support During Mentoring

Mentors provided suggestions as to supports that could help them during their time as a mentor. The key support that mentors indicated as being important was access to opportunities to discuss issues that arise during mentoring. Further to this, mentors noted that receiving honest feedback and general support for their efforts during their time as a mentor would be welcomed.

Readiness for Mentoring

Mentors were asked whether they felt ready to be in the role of a mentor. Seven of the 16 trainees indicated that they felt 'very ready'; a further eight of the 16 indicated that they felt 'pretty ready'. One mentor indicated she felt 'sort of' ready.

Pre-Program Feedback

16 mentors completed a pre-program survey prior to the beginning of mentor training. 9 of the 16 mentors had participated in the program in past years (from one to three years of past involvement). Of the 9 who had been involved, 5 had been buddies, 3 had been mentors and one young woman had been both a buddy and a mentor.

Reasons/Goals for Being a Mentor

The key reasons for young women choosing to become a mentor were:

- to be a positive role model
- to help others
- to help girls make good decisions
- to help younger girls transition to high school
- to learn about oneself, others and from others

Other noted reasons for becoming a mentor include: to make friends, open one's mind, spend time with the program coordinator and to better understand the minds of young girls.

Desired Leadership Skills

Mentors were asked what leadership skills they would like to learn through their participation in the program. The most noted skills included:

- Communication skills
- Taking initiative
- How to guide younger girls
- How to be confident in front of others

Other noted skills that mentors wanted to learn included: how to talk about difficult topics, being open with individuals from different generations, and balancing the power that comes with leadership.

Confidence in Future Role of Mentoring

Mentors were asked how confident they felt that they will be a great mentor. Mentors were asked to rate their perceived level of confidence on a Likert-scale from 1 (not at all confident) to 5 (extremely confident). 12 of the 16 mentors rated their level of confidence as a 4 or 5 indicating high levels of confidence. The remaining mentors rated their confidence as a 3, indicating moderate levels of confidence.

Concerns about Mentoring

10 of the 16 mentors indicated that they had some concerns about their future role as a mentor. The key concern was being able to form a good connection with the buddy. Other mentioned worries included: feeling confident, not communicating enough with the buddy, having limited time for mentoring due to other commitments, personal struggles with mental well-being, and not being liked by the buddy's family.

Desired Support

Mentors were asked about types of support that would be beneficial for them to receive from the project coordinator. Key support desired included:

- having open lines of communication so that questions that arise can be answered
- help with giving advice to the buddy
- encouragement in their role as a mentor
- reminders to connect with the buddy

Challenges Faced by Girls in Middle School

Mentors commented on what they saw as the biggest challenges facing girls in middle school. These included:

- body image issues
- having self-confidence/self-esteem
- pressure to fit in
- hormones affecting emotions and other puberty concerns
- pressure to be perfect

Needs of the Buddy

By far, mentors thought that the biggest need that a buddy would have in relation to a mentor was knowing that the mentor is someone you can talk to about anything. This included receiving advice, support and reassurance. Mentors commented:

"A listening, caring woman who will be able to provide insight and comfort, as well as laughs and adventures."

"Someone who can listen, someone who can hear her out and won't judge."

"Someone different than they'd usually hang with; someone to talk to about the high school."

"I think they need a friend who will be there to help them with problems that come with growing up."

"Someone to listen to her, and make her realize her capableness, power, and worth."

Post-Program Feedback

At the conclusion of the PIO program in May 2017, mentors were invited to complete a post-program survey. 15 mentors responded to several questions reflecting on their experience in the PIO program.

Reasons for Participation

Key reasons noted by mentors for joining PIO during the current year were:

- to meet new people
- to have a new experience
- wanting to spend time with the program coordinator
- having a past good experience in the program

"I love Kate and the program is something I always want to support."

"I've done it consecutively for three years and love Kate and the program."

Other noted reasons for joining the program included:

- having a chance to share one's wisdom and thoughts
- having other friends in the program
- having opportunities to deal with social anxiety
- gaining confidence
- learning about oneself

PIO's Success in Helping to Meet Goals

Mentors were asked to what degree the program helped them meet their goals (as noted above). 13 of the 15 mentors rated their work on their goals as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that almost all the mentors perceived making large gains with respect to their personal reasons/goals for joining PIO.

Challenges in High School

Mentors were asked to comment on the biggest challenges faced by girls in high school. The most noted challenges included dealing with issues related to body image and appearance as well as coping with the judgment of others. Other noted challenges included trying to fit in, stress, feeling alone, speaking up in front of friends, and competing with unrealistic ideals. Mentors were asked to indicate how much they felt the PIO program helped them deal with some of these challenges. All mentors rated the support from the program with respect to helping them cope with challenges as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that all of the mentors experienced high levels of support from the program which helped them cope more effectively. Comments related to how PIO helped in dealing with challenges included:

"Pass it on creates a wonderful, thoughtful, and loving community where everyone feels welcome and loved."

“It [PIO] shows us that everyone has these insecurities, and that nobody is thinking about you/judging you.”

“Seeing other people dealing with the same problems and seeing how they overcome them and be super positive and helpful.”

PIO Program Components

Mentors were asked to rate several components of the PIO program. The number of mentors for each rating are provided below. As can be seen, the most positive components of the program were the mentor meetings and working with the program coordinator.

PIO Component	Not at all Valuable				Extremely Valuable
		1	2	3	
Training		1	4	3	4
Weekly mentor meetings				1	13
Monthly mentor and buddy meetings			2	3	9
Relationship with buddy		1	2	5	5
Community speakers			3	5	3
Waffler (gathering with program coordinator)		1	1	1	10
Sparkfest				4	9
Special activities (e.g., yoga, dance)			1	6	3
Working with program coordinator					14

Favourite Part of PIO

By far the most positive aspects of the program for mentors were the program coordinator followed by meetings. Two mentors mentioned the relationship with their buddy.

Least Favourite Part of PIO

There were no dominant themes with respect to the least favoured part of PIO. Instead, it appeared that mentors varied a great deal in what they found to be the least positive aspects of the program. The least favourite parts noted by mentors included:

- having to speak in front of others
- not having any snacks left when coming to the meeting
- feeling guilty about not being a ‘good’ mentor
- not connecting well with the buddy

Most Inspiring Part of PIO

Mentors were asked to comment on the most inspiring parts of PIO. The two most inspiring parts of the program were the openness of the group and the program coordinator. Other noted inspiring parts of the program included: being with the group, seeing other go through similar experiences, and boys.

Most Valuable Part of PIO

Mentors indicated that the most valuable parts of the program were talking/opening up with others, friendships, the program coordinator, and learning new things.

Gains in Skills

Mentors were asked to rate four skill areas in which PIO aimed to support the development of mentors. The number of mentors who provided each rating are given in the table below. As can be seen, knowing where to get help was one of the biggest gains made in the program, followed by gaining confidence and communication skills in group situations.

Skill Area	Not much	A little	Quite a lot	A huge amount
Confidence and communication skills in group situations	1	2	6	5
Ability to stay safe in your community and personal life		4	7	2
Self-care (e.g., balanced life, good eating and sleeping habits)	1	3	6	4
Knowing how and where to get help if you have a serious problem		1	6	7

Self-Rating of Mentor Role

Mentors were asked to rate themselves as a mentor. 12 mentors responded to this question. 7 of the 12 rated themselves as a 4 or 5 based on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating a positive self-assessment of their ability to be a good mentor. The remaining 5 mentors rated themselves as a 3 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating a moderate rating of themselves as a mentor. Factors that contributed to lower ratings included:

- hard to spend time with the buddy due to busy schedules
- did not actively mentor; could have tried more
- did not have a positive relationship with the buddy

The main factor that contributed to higher ratings was having a very positive relationship with the buddy.

Benefits of Mentoring for Buddies

Mentors were asked to indicate the degree to which they thought their buddy benefited from mentoring.

- 4 of the 12 mentors rated the benefit as a 4 out of 5
- 7 of the 12 mentors rated the benefit as a 3 out of 5
- 1 of the 12 mentors rated the benefit as a 2 out of 5

Best part of mentoring for the buddy: Mentors were asked to comment on what they perceived to be the best part of mentoring for their buddy. The biggest benefits, from the perspective of the mentors, included having someone to talk to/receiving advice, getting help from the mentor, getting to know each other and connecting throughout the year.

Best part of mentoring for the mentor: Mentors also commented on what they saw as the best part of mentoring for them. Getting to know the buddy, starting conversations with their buddy and hanging out with someone younger were seen as the best parts for the mentor.

Suggestions for mentors and buddies: Thinking about the program next year, mentors had the following suggestions with respect to ways that the mentor – buddy pairings be strengthened.

- Being open
- keeping a schedule in order to meet more often
- spending more time together
- pushing one's comfort zone
- trying to choose the best match
- being consistent
- being honest with the buddy
- coping with anxiety around meeting the buddy one-on-one

Recommending PIO to Others

All mentors indicated that they would recommend the program to other high school young women. They made the following comments.

"It's an amazing program and you build beautiful relationships."

"It's a great opportunity to talk to girls our age without being judged!"

"That it's a great place to come and get stuff off your chest in a safe environment."

"Pass It On is a wonderful program to learn more about yourself and others and be supported through high school."

"Do it – if you value learning and growing from other girls and creating a supportive community"

"Kate is amazing and so are the other girls too"

"Pass It On will change you in ways you didn't think possible. I've grown more each year exponentially!"

"Because it is the highlight of my week. I'm going to miss it so much. Even though I'm shy, I felt I could open up in this group and feel safe."

Reflections on Sharing Circle with the 'Pass It On Boys' Program

14 young women provided feedback about their experience in a sharing circle with the PIO boys group. They were asked to respond to three questions about the time that they spent with the boys group.

Most Appreciated Aspects of the Sharing Circle

By far the most appreciated aspect of the sharing Circle for young women was hearing different experiences and perspectives from the conversations.

"It's great to see the difference in how they think and learning about the way they see things."

"It was cool to see other people's point of views."

In addition, several young women commented on the ease of the conversation in that they felt safe and accepted.

"I liked the openness – how we were able to be vulnerable but feels safe at the same time."

"I liked how chill it was. I expected it to be uncomfortable but it wasn't at all. I like how he didn't feel segregated."

"How amazing and included I felt. I was still open in the group and it was amazing!"

Wishes for Different Experiences

Young women were further asked what they wished would have been different about their experience in this sharing circle. Several participants indicated they wished that there was more time in this sharing circle. In addition, several women would have liked to experience more openness among the group.

"More people talking. Sometimes it felt awkward or uncomfortable."

"I wish that the boys spoke more to issues that they felt were subjective to them, like 'male' problems."

"One thing that I wish would be that I was more open and honest with my thoughts."

A small number of girls wished that more boys had participated in the sharing circles.

Suggestions for Future Circles

Key suggestions for future changes to the sharing circles were meeting more often and increasing interaction among the group:

"My suggestion would be to meet more often to encourage high levels of comfort with one another."

"Maybe make a few more times so we can grow more comfortable in talking with them."

PIO Final Reflections

Both mentors who had previously been PIO buddies and those who had not previously been involved in PIO were asked to further reflect on the program as part of the year-end evaluation.

Mentors who were PIO buddies

Mentors, who had been buddies in the past, were asked to reflect back on their experience of being a buddy. 6 mentors identified having been a buddy in the past. Among the six buddies, they rated their overall experience of being a buddy as follows.

Okay	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1 mentor	2 mentors	1 mentor	2 mentors

Challenges: Mentors were asked to identify challenges of being a buddy. Half of the mentors identified the challenge of connecting with the mentor and opening up to the mentor. Additional challenges included:

- pressure to act a certain way
- older girls acting like celebrities
- challenges with being young adolescent

Enjoyable Aspects of Being a Buddy: Mentors were asked to identify what they remember enjoying most about being a buddy. Half of the mentors indicated they enjoyed hanging out with high school girls. Additional aspects that were enjoyable included:

- having the support of the mentor

“Having her there [my mentor] and just knowing that if I wanted or needed, she would support me.”

- engaging in group activities
- growing as a person

Decision to be a Mentor: Mentors were asked for their reasons for becoming a mentor. Half of the mentors indicated that they wanted to pass forward a great experience. Further reasons for becoming a mentor included:

- wanting to make new connections
- to be the kind of mentor that they wish they would’ve had when they were younger
- to work with the program coordinator

“Kate as she is awesome in the Pass It On program is amazing.”

- to be a mentor because their older sibling had been a mentor

Program Improvements: Former buddies were asked what SWOVA could do to improve the mentoring program for buddies. Suggestions included:

- having more meetings
- more preparation for buddies before meeting mentors
- having more activities with mentors

With respect to program improvements for mentors, the only suggestion made was to ensure inclusion of everyone in the program.

“Keep its authenticity. Include all people but don’t turn it into just another SWOVA youth group.”

Mentors who were not former PIO buddies

Mentors who had not been buddies in the past were also asked to provide feedback. Nine mentors provided feedback. The key reasons for becoming a mentor included:

- having been a mentor the previous year and enjoying the experience
- anticipating the experience of being a mentor as fun
- being part of an all girls group
- the program coordinator

Additional reasons for choosing to become a mentor included:

- to improve one’s confidence
- to become a leader
- to give the guidance that mentor wished they had had at a younger age
- to help people
- to feel empowered
- to learn what middle school is like for girls
- having heard that the program is really good

Program Improvements: Girls who had not been a buddy in the program were asked to provide suggestions as to ways the PIO program could be improved for mentors. The only suggestions put forward by three mentors included: more teambuilding exercises, expanding where mentors could meet their buddies and doing a meet and greet with buddies in the form of speed dating.²

² This was incorporated into the program.

Mentors comment on the importance of the program for buddies

“Your mental health benefits so much from it and it really changes the way you see things.”

“Gaining stronger relationships with other girls.”

“Getting to know older girls at the high school and be able to talk about anything and everything without judgment.”

“You get to learn and talk with other girls about important things.”

“You make new friends and get to hear great points of view from older girls.”

“I think Pass It On is important to do because it gave me way more self-confidence and I made an amazing friend.”

“I think Pass It On is important because it makes us all have a comfortable fun place to talk about important things and taboo subjects.”

“I think Pass It On is important because it offers a comfortable place, gives you someone to talk to and really boosted my confidence as a young woman.”

Buddy Feedback

Pre-Program Feedback

15 buddies completed a survey prior to the beginning of the PIO program. They commented on their main reasons for wanting to be a buddy. By far, the biggest reason for wanting to be a buddy was to have a friend in high school. Other reasons mentioned several times included:

- a chance to have a fun experience
- getting to know new people
- having someone to talk to about things

Other noted reasons included to try something new, to get to know the high school better, and a having a positive pre-existing relationship with the program coordinator.

Desired Support

Buddies were asked to describe the support that they would like to receive from their mentor. The most noted support that buddies hoped that they could receive from their mentors included:

- someone to hang out with
- someone to talk to
- someone with whom they have a good connection
- information on what to expect in high school
- someone with whom I can be myself

All buddies indicated that they were very much looking forward to being a buddy. Most buddies indicated that they were excited and a small number indicated that they were nervous. They thought that having a buddy could help them get ready for high school (4 or 5 on a 5 point Likert scale). Several buddies commented that having a mentor can:

- help them have a friend in high school
- help them get to know the high school
- provide them with someone older to talk to about things

Challenges Faced by Girls in Middle School

Buddies were asked about what they saw as the biggest challenges facing girls in middle school. By far, the biggest challenge perceived by the girls was the judgment of others.

Concerns about Being a Buddy

Buddies were asked whether they had any concerns about being a buddy. By far, the biggest concern was worrying about whether the mentor would like them. Other noted concerns included: not being chosen as a buddy by one of the mentors, being shy, not having enough time to connect, getting along with the mentor and receiving enough support from the mentor.

Post-Program Feedback

12 buddies completed a post-program survey.³ Buddies commented that their main reasons for joining PIO was that it seemed fun, they wanted to know someone in high school, and they wanted to make new friends. Two of the buddies also indicated that their friends had told them it was a great program.

PIO's Success in Helping to Meet Goals

Buddies were asked to what degree the program helped them meet their goals (as noted above). 10 of the buddies rated their work on their goals as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that almost all the buddies perceived making large gains with respect to their personal reasons/goals for joining PIO.

Challenges for Girls in Middle School

Buddies were asked to comment on the biggest challenges faced by girls in middle school. The most noted challenges included feeling judged by others, experiencing a lack of confidence, and body image concerns. Buddies rated the support from the program with respect to helping them cope with challenges as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale. 8 buddies rated PIO as a 4 or 5 with respect to helping them cope with identified challenges, indicating high levels of support from the program to assist with challenges. 3 buddies provided a rating of 3 out of 5, indicating moderate support from the program to help cope with identified challenges. Buddies indicated that the ways in which PIO helped them included:

- gaining more confidence
- receiving good advice
- helping them make new friends

PIO Program Components

Buddies were asked to rate several components of the PIO program. Number of buddies for each rating are provided below. As can be seen, the most positive components of the program were the monthly meetings between mentors and buddies.

PIO Component	Not at all Valuable				Extremely Valuable
Monthly mentor and buddy meetings				3	8
Time with program coordinator before meetings		1	4	5	2
Relationship with mentor			4	1	7
Community speakers			1	7	0
Waffler				2	5
Sparkfest			1	2	5
Special activities (e.g., yoga, dance)	1		2	6	1

Favourite Part of the Program: Almost half of the buddies commented that the most favoured part of the program for them was their mentor. Other noted favoured parts of the program include being with friends and food.

³ Note that one survey was not fully completed.

Least Favourite Part of the Program: Very few buddies noted aspects of the program that were less than positive. Among the few that did note least favourite parts of the program, they included not having enough food, not hanging out enough and the amount of talking.

Most Inspiring Part of the Program: Buddies noted that the most inspiring parts of the program for them included:

- the advice they received from their mentor
- hearing the other's points of view
- seeing how the other struggled with similar issues
- spending time with all the buddies and mentors

Most Valuable Part of the Program: Buddies noted that the most valuable parts of the program for them included:

- making new friends
- having conversations
- feeling less alone
- hearing about life in high school
- the Waffler activity

Benefits of Mentoring for Buddies

Buddies were asked to indicate the degree to which they benefited from spending time with their mentor.

- 6 of the 12 buddies rated the benefit as a 5 out of 5
- 4 of the 12 buddies rated the benefit as a 4 out of 5
- 2 of the 12 buddies rated the benefit as a 2 out of 5

Best part of mentoring for the buddy: Buddies were asked to comment on what they perceived to be the best part of the mentoring experience. The two most beneficial aspects of mentoring were having someone older to talk to and getting to know their mentor.

Suggestions for program improvement: By far, the biggest suggestion that buddies had was to have more time with their mentor. 10 of the 12 buddies indicated this as a way the program could be improved.

Recommending PIO to Others

All buddies indicated that they would recommend the program to other grade 8 girls. They made the following comments.

"Pass It On is a super cool program where you hang out and learn with other girls."

"It is an awesome group of girls who you will have a blast hanging out with. You will get a new friend and I guarantee you will benefit so much from it! Plus, there's free food!"

"I highly recommend this program, because it gave me more self confidence."

"It definitely helps feeling less scared about high school and having a friend."

“Do this program if you wanna make friends and feel more comfortable going into high school.”

“I would say that it’s an amazing time with amazing girls and totally worth going to.”

“It’s a really great program and I benefited from it a huge amount – strongly recommend.”

Conclusions

Based on feedback from mentors and buddies, the PIO program experienced another successful year. Very clear was the strength of the program coordinator and her presence appeared to be a key driver for the success of the program. From the mentor perspective, the support they received from other mentors and from the program coordinator was experienced as the most beneficial part of the program. From the perspective of the buddies, many had positive experiences with their mentors. Overall, all enjoyed various aspects of the program. Moving forward, ongoing attention to the mentoring component, the most complex aspect of the program, will hopefully lead to continued increases in overall positive experiences for both middle school and high school girls.

Recommendations

As the PIO program is relatively small year-to-year but takes place over several years, there is a tremendous opportunity to evaluate the program using data from multiple years. As such, a key recommendation is to **develop a multi-year evaluation strategy** that is robust and takes into account consecutive years of the program so that data can be examined for a large group of mentors and buddies. By gathering data over several years using a comprehensive evaluation framework, greater insight into the program outcomes, both in terms of successes and challenges, can be achieved.

1. **Re-examine Program Goals:** Examine the program goals and activities that support the achievement of these goals for both mentors and buddies. This roadmap of goals and activities (e.g. perhaps in the form of a logic model) will assist the development of new activities and a comprehensive evaluation framework.
2. **Include More Role Plays and Scenarios in Training:** Based on feedback from mentors, increasing the use of scenarios and role-plays in the training is recommended. This would allow for mentors to potentially gain more confidence in working through various situations that have arisen in the past years of the program.
3. **Track Participant Engagement:** Moving forward, it is suggested that detailed attendance records be kept for both mentors and buddies so that accurate participation rates can be used in the evaluation. Participation rates may provide useful insights as to level of dosage required in order for program participants to experience benefits from the program.
4. **Evaluate Matching Success Over Time:** Incorporate robust measures in the matching process and the evaluation to examine the relationships between mentors and buddies. This is important given the research on the potential benefits of mentoring as well as the potential harms of mentoring should matches not be supportive. By examining matching over time, patterns of characteristics of strong matches may be better understood.
5. **Increase Support for Mentor-Buddy Pairs:** Given that the mentoring is the program component that is the most challenging, examining ways to increase supports to strengthen pairs is

recommended. It may be that moving to increased group mentoring (twice a month) may assist in strengthening the overall experience for both mentors and buddies.