

# 2SLGBTQIA+ Mentorship Model Options for the Queer Atlantic Business Hub

## Background

The Queer Atlantic Business Hub is launching in Spring 2026 to provide backbone support to queer and trans businesses across New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, rooted in equity, cultural humility, bilingual practice, and community connection.

To inform its development, an environmental scan was completed in 2025, engaging queer and trans entrepreneurs and business owners across the Atlantic provinces through a community engagement survey, key-informant interviews, and analysis of pre-existing research data. A strong interest and need for queer-centric mentoring emerged across all regions, with a recommendation that the Queer Atlantic Business Hub prioritize a multi-layered mentorship system.

In response to findings, this document outlines three program models that could be explored further for implementation. As part of the process to identify and outline the models, existing queer and non-queer business mentorship programs were explored. The document ends with some next steps for consideration.

## Methodology

To develop this document, the following initial steps were taken:

- The environmental scan was reviewed to understand research participant needs and interests in support in general and mentoring opportunities in particular. This was done to inform design principles, equity considerations, and model identification for further consideration.
- A jurisdictional scan of provincial queer chambers of business and the national queer chamber of business was conducted to map and explore current regional and national mentorship programs on offer to 2SLGBTQIA+ business communities across Canada and to identify leading practice that the Queer Atlantic Business Hub could potentially learn from.

From an initial scan of publicly available information about mentorship programs, it was determined that the dominant mentorship model currently being offered through queer

business support groups is the dyad mentor model (model 1 outlined below). Variances in program offerings were noted and mapped and a composite model drawing from all sources was developed as an outline for the Queer Atlantic Business Hub.

Because there were no other queer-centric mentoring models discovered in this phase of the scan, further research was conducted to explore and identify additional models that could be adapted to a queer and trans context and would respond to priorities and needs identified in the existing environmental scan.

Although they did not appear to be offered through any of Canada's queer-focused business support organizations, both a peer mentor circle model (model 2 outlined below) and a flash mentoring model (model 3 outlined below) were identified for potential consideration. These models are commonly offered within organizations to support learnings amongst colleagues and quick-insight learning for earlier career employees. These two models complement the more traditional one-to-one dyad model and meet aspects of needs and interests identified by research participants in the environmental scan.

Through a review process of this document with a selected number of queer-focused organizations and groups, it was revealed that both a peer mentor model and flash mentoring (also known as speed mentoring) have been tested by queer business support groups in other jurisdictions in Canada. This insight confirms that the recommended models outlined in this document are part of leading-edge practice.

## **How to approach this document**

The rest of this document outlines the following:

- Design principles and equity considerations for any mentorship model that the Queer Atlantic Business Hub decides to pursue.
- The structure and core components of three mentor models that can be adapted for the Atlantic region.

It is important to note that any mentorship program the Queer Atlantic Business Hub proceeds to develop should be rooted in the context. Detailed development of any program will involve infusing the design principles and equity considerations outlined below through each model, and adapting components of the model to fit applicant/participant interests and preferences.

Resources available to the Queer Atlantic Business Hub will be a key factor in how big or complex the mentorship model(s) become. Some initial considerations/potential next steps are outlined at the end of this document.

## Design principles

The program models outlined identify general core components and considerations. However, based on findings from the environmental scan and general best practice in program design, detailed development of any of the models for the Atlantic region context should be centred around the following principles:

- **Community-centred:** Content and focus of mentorship programs and events will be driven by the interests and needs of intended participants. Community consultation will be a central pillar of any detailed program design process.
- **Culturally safe:** Mentorship programs/events will be designed to be trauma-informed, inclusive, and free from discrimination. Training and self-reflection tools will be built into mentoring programs to increase participant awareness and competency to practice cultural safety in their participation.
- **Adaptable:** Any mentorship model developed and implemented will enable streams by sectors, regions, and identities if desired by mentees.
- **Accessible:** All stages of the mentorship programs/events will be consciously developed to address and remove barriers to participation.

## Equity considerations

Considering equity needs and concerns emerging from the environmental scan, the following should be considered by the Queer Atlantic Business Hub as part of mentorship program development and implementation:

- **Language:** All mentorship programs and events offered will be designed and offered in both English and French.
- **Intersectionality:** Where participation in programs is limited, priority consideration will be given to 2SLGBTQIA+ community members who hold equity-deservedness through intersectional identities.
- **Neurodiversity:** All mentorship programs will be designed to be accessible and supportive of neurodivergent needs. This may include program structure that allows for flexible participation, minimizes sensory overload, enables movement and offers clear, direct, and recorded information as requested or desired.

- **Mobility:** To address travel and mobility barriers to participation, all mentoring programs will be offered with an online participation option.
- **Cost:** Cost coverage/reimbursement will be offered to mentees and mentors who may have financial barriers to participation in programs/events. This may include the cost of travel, accommodation, and food for in-person meetings, or ensuring access to cost-free internet and equipment usage for participants who participate remotely.

## Model 1: Dyad Mentor Model

### Overview

The dyad mentoring model is the most common and traditional approach to professional mentorship, characterized by a 1-1 relationship between two individuals: A more experienced mentor and less experienced mentee. The model is focused on the premise that the mentor can help guide and support the mentee's professional development by drawing on their longer history of lived and professional experience and resulting insight and wisdom. This approach to mentoring is offered through Canada's national, and almost every provincial, queer chamber of commerce.

Dyad mentoring programs are primarily relationship-led, and are designed to be flexible and participant-driven. For this reason, it is commonly articulated by program operators that both mentors and mentee participants should be comfortable guiding their own engagement and learnings.

Usually the relationship in a dyad mentoring program spans six to 12 months. Mentors and mentees usually meet at least once per month for the duration of the program.

Dyad mentoring programs can be offered virtually or in-person, and can be broken into sector-specific, identity-based or geographical streams. They are usually offered free of cost.

### General scope of focus

Mentees participating in a dyad mentorship program may seek support for a wide range of professional or business-related goals. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Growing or refining a business idea
- Launching a new business or growing an existing business
- Developing strategies to network and connect with others in their sector

- Managing growth, change, or burnout
- Leadership and confidence-building

Examples of queer-focused areas of support for mentees may include:

- Balancing and managing visibility in the sector
- Balancing values, identity, and business goals as a 2SLGBTQIA+ person

Mentees are not necessarily expected to have fully defined goals at the time of their application, but are expected to demonstrate a commitment to receiving feedback, goal-setting, and active participation in the mentorship relationship.

## **Intended audience**

Because the dyad mentoring model is focused on providing a less experienced (junior) mentee with guidance from a person with more lived and professional experience, mentees targeted are typically in the earlier stages of their career or business pursuit.

For the purposes of the Queer Atlantic Business Hub establishing a multi-layered mentorship system, this model may best be targeted towards new (less than 2 years of active experience) entrepreneur mentees. Further narrowing of focus would be dependent on mentee interest in clustering based on sector, identity, and/or geography.

## **Eligibility requirements**

Eligibility for queer-focused business dyad mentorship programs generally include that all applicants self-identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, that they be 18+ years of age, be a resident of the region, and be able to commit a minimum number of hours per month throughout the program for meetings and follow-ups.

While all mentee applicants are usually required to have an interest or some experience in entrepreneurship or starting their own business, mentor eligibility can be expanded to include 2SLGBTQIA+ professionals who are not entrepreneurs, but who have extensive professional experience through private, government or non-profit sectors. Similarly, eligibility for mentors can be expanded to include non-2SLGBTQIA+ allies who want to support new/emerging queer entrepreneurs. The parameters for mentor eligibility should be determined by the interests and needs of mentees.

## **Program structure and cycle**

The core components of a dyad mentoring program usually involve the following:

### **1: Application**

In the application phase, interested parties submit applications to the program, identifying themselves as seeking support (mentees) or offering support (mentors).

Application forms ideally provide opportunity for mentees to identify any sector-specific, identity-based, or geographic preferences for their mentor. They are also asked to share information about where they are in their business journey and any priority areas they are seeking support for.

## **2: Matching**

Matching can be mentee-led or admin-led.

Mentee-led matching means that mentees can choose their mentors from a pool of possible matches. Admin-led matching means the host organization chooses mentoring pairs based on information submitted by both mentees and mentors.

## **3: Mentorship**

Once participants are paired, they are directly connected to start their work together. Pairs decide how often to meet and what goals to focus on.

## **4: Support**

The host organization's role is generally to support, not manage, the relationship. Basic program support commonly provided by host organizations includes:

- The provision of a program handbook, outlining program expectations, guiding questions for initial meetings, and a code of conduct for participants;
- Light check-ins with mentors and mentees throughout the process;
- Conducting a program evaluation at the end of the program to understand participant experiences and suggestions for improvements.

## **General session structure**

Both the duration and the content of each one-to-one mentoring session depend completely on the individual arrangement between the mentoring pair. However, basic elements of any mentoring session would likely include:

- Opening: A check-in on how both parties are doing, a catch up on what has happened since the last meeting
- Confirmation on the purpose of the session and agreement on what will be discussed or explored during the meeting
- Mentoring Discussion: Exploration and dialogue about the topic/issue of focus and identification of any next steps the mentee can take (if any)
- Closing: Agreeing on next date to connect

## Additional program offerings

Optional enhancements to the model can include formal group launch and wrap-up of the program as well as training workshops and networking sessions that bring the program cohort together throughout the duration of the program.

Training workshop topics can be informed by surveying program participants for interest. Networking sessions can be held virtually or in-person depending on participant locations.

## Model strengths and limitations

Model strengths	Model limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Traditional dyad mentorship has the potential to offer mentees highly individualized support tailored to meet their needs.</li><li>● The model is led by participants, and is not intensive in terms of staff support once matches are made.</li><li>● Online formats of dyad mentoring can address geographical barriers to connect mentees who may live in more remote areas with an experienced mentor to support their journey.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A single mentor may not possess the full suite of knowledge or perspectives a mentee needs to be able to reach their goals. For this reason, additional components offered via training workshops and group networking are recommended to help fill this potential gap.</li></ul>

## Design requirements

Host organizations interested in running a dyad mentoring program needs to design and organize, at a minimum:

- A detailed program plan, confirming size, scope, features, and supports to be offered.
- A communication plan and platform to host program information.
- A clear application and matching process (including application tools) to match mentee and mentor interests as much as is possible.
- A program package and participant handbook to support self-directed learning.
- A staff resource and process to conduct check-ins with participants and to organize group workshops and networking sessions as needed/wanted.
- An off-ramp process if pairings don't work out.

- Evaluation to receive feedback.

Resource requirements may include some consulting support to design the program in detail, designated staff time to support outreach and program operations, and a budget for facilitators if information sessions are planned as part of the model.

## **Fit for the Atlantic Canada 2SLGBTQIA+ business community**

Based on findings from the environmental scan, this model would be a strong fit to meet community interest and needs as identified in the environmental scan.

Key needs this model could strongly address:

- A desire for connections and advice from more experienced queer business owners
- A relational approach to mentoring and learning
- Interest in mentor matching based on sector, identity, or geography
- Flexibility to meet virtually or in-person depending on participant capacity and interest

If this program were to be launched by the Queer Atlantic Business Hub, it should be offered in French and English, as highlighted by consultation participants.

## **Resources**

[BC Queer Business Mentorship Model](#)

[Manitoba Queer Chamber of Commerce Emerge Mentorship Model](#)

[LGBT Great Mentor Toolkit](#)

[LGBT Great Mentee Toolkit](#)

## **Model 2: Peer mentor circle model**

### **Overview**

A peer mentoring circle is a structured group model where participants with similar levels of experience meet regularly to provide mutual support, share expertise, and foster professional and personal development together.

Unlike traditional one-to-one mentoring, every participant in a peer mentor circle acts as both mentor and mentee – both offering insight and receiving learning – creating a ‘flat’ hierarchy that encourages collective learning. This can be a good-fit approach for participants with a similar level of experience, and who work in the same sector, hold similar identities, and/or live in similar geographical contexts.

Peer mentor circle programs usually run for six to 12 months and participants usually gather at least once per month for the duration of the program. Meetups can happen virtually or in person.

## **General scope of focus**

Peer mentorship participants may seek support from each other for a wide range of topics or issues related to their experiences as 2SLGBTQIA+ business owners/entrepreneurs. The group itself is key in deciding what issues or topics are of most relevance and importance.

To help a group identify issues they may want to focus on, participants can be asked to identify priority issues and learning interests as part of their application, or to collectively brainstorm a list at the start of their first circle.

Agenda format for peer circles can include an item for discussion that has been identified as a collective challenge/interest for discussion as well as a 'hot seat' item, whereby one circle member brings an issue or challenge they are navigating to the group for collective input or feedback. In this way, both collective interests and individual needs can be met through gatherings.

## **Intended audience**

Peer mentoring can benefit people with similar levels of experience in any stage of the entrepreneurship journey and career.

For the purposes of the Queer Atlantic Business Hub establishing a multi-layered mentorship system, this model may best be targeted towards entrepreneur participants with two to five years of business experience. Further narrowing of focus would be dependent on mentee interest in clustering based on sector, identity, and/or geography.

## **Eligibility**

General eligibility for queer focused peer mentor circle programs generally include that all applicants self-identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, that they be 18+ years of age, be a resident of the region, and be able to commit a minimum number of hours per month throughout the program for meetings and followups.

Because the peer circle model is focused on clustering participants with similar levels of experience together, eligibility criteria can also be defined by stage of business or years of being in practice.

## **Program structure and cycle**

The core components of a peer mentoring circle program involve the following:

### **1: Application**

In the application phase, interested parties submit applications to the program, identifying their interest in participation.

Application forms ideally provide opportunity for participants to identify any sector-specific, identity-based, or geographic preferences for circle participation. They are also asked to share information about where they are in their business journey and any priority areas they are seeking support for.

## **2: Grouping**

The host organization groups applicants into similar circle cohorts based on stage of business and on sectors, identities, and/or geographical preferences.

## **3: Mentor Circles**

Once groups are established, participants are directly connected to start their work together. The first circle should be attended by host organization staff to orient members to the approach, answer questions, and support initial identification of shared interest for future sessions.

## **4: Support**

The host organization's role is generally to support, not manage, the group circle work.

Basic program support commonly provided by host organizations includes:

- The provision of a program handbook, outlining program expectations, suggested format for meetings, and a code of conduct for participants;
- An assigned facilitator to convene each peer group, support discussion, and provide coordination between meetings;
- Light check-ins with circle members throughout the process;
- Conducting a program evaluation at the end of the program to understand participant experiences and suggestions for improvements.

## **Session structure**

Both the duration and the content of each peer session depends completely on the interests and needs of the peer group in question. However, a basic structure for sessions would include:

- Check-in: A greeting and light check-in question on how all parties are doing. The rotating facilitator-participant chooses the check-in question. Peer group members choose the check-in questions in rotation.
- Collective Challenge/Item of Interest: Exploration and dialogue about the topic/issue of focus and resource sharing about the topic/issue of focus
- Hot Seat: One participant presents on an issue they would like feedback on and group members provide thoughts/feedback

- Closing: Confirmation of next facilitator-participant and confirmation of next meeting date

## Model strengths and limitations

Model strengths	Model limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peer mentor circles are rooted in mutual growth and reciprocity, and have the potential to offer participants a supportive and relational space tailored to meet their shared needs.</li> <li>● The absence of a hierarchy can foster a space for open communication and vulnerability without fear of judgment.</li> <li>● More introverted or quieter participants who may struggle more in a one-to-one setting can benefit from active listening and learning through the process, and participate in ways that feel comfortable for them.</li> <li>● There is potential for informal and ongoing support networks to develop as an outcome for some participants, leading to learning and development beyond the program's duration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Group dynamics can be complicated and a self-facilitated group risks one or a few members dominating discussion and direction of meetings. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that a dedicated facilitator is in place to support peer circle meetings. If this is not possible due to resource constraints, at a minimum, guidance on structure and process should be developed as part of the program handbook and orientation session.</li> <li>● Because mentor circle participants usually have a similar level of experience, more experienced business insights are missing from this approach.</li> </ul>

## Design requirements

Host organizations interested in running a peer mentor circle program need to design and organize, at a minimum:

- A detailed program plan, confirming size, scope, features, and supports to be offered.
- A communications plan and platform to host program information.
- A clear application and grouping process to match participant experience and interests as much as is possible.
- A program package and participant handbook to support structure of group meetings and self-directed learning.
- A facilitated kick-off intro circle for each cohort to support future discussions.
- A staff resource and process to conduct check ins with participants and to organize cohort workshops and networking sessions as needed and wanted.

- Evaluation to receive feedback.

Resource requirements may include some consulting support to design the program in detail, designated staff time to support outreach and program operations, and a budget for group facilitators if circle participants are uncomfortable with a self-led process.

## **Resources**

[See The Change Peer Mentor Toolkit](#)

[MENTOR Designing and Implementing a Group Mentoring Program Guide](#)

## **Fit for the Atlantic Canada 2SLGBTQIA+ business community**

Based on findings from the environmental scan, this model would be a strong fit to meet community interest and needs as identified in the environmental scan.

Key needs this model could strongly address:

- A desire for community and shared problem-solving
- A relational and reciprocal mentoring arrangement
- Interest in mentor matching based on sector, identity, or geography

If this program were to be launched, it should be offered in French and English, as highlighted by consultation participants.

## **Model 3: Flash mentoring model**

### **Overview**

Flash mentoring is a series of short-term or one-off mentoring sessions, commonly organized as part of a broader event.

Sometimes referred to as a form of business speed-dating, flash mentoring provides an opportunity for mentees to engage numerous mentors to receive one-time, tangible advice and feedback regarding a specific issue or area of business. Events can be virtual or in-person.

Flash mentoring can target mentees who may have similar learning interests for matched conversations with a series of subject matter experts. It may be most suitable for aspiring entrepreneurs, as it is limited to providing quick insights or tips for consideration rather than deeper or more nuanced advice.

## General scope of focus

Flash mentoring participants may seek support for a wide range of topics or issues related to their experiences as 2SLGBTQIA+ business owners/entrepreneurs, but because the very nature of this approach is short and limited, the support being sought needs to be tangible, practical, and focused on 'next steps' action.

Some potential topics that mentors can advise about at flash-mentoring events include:

- Feedback to a business concept or idea
- Accessing funds: Financial advice for new or early-stage entrepreneurs
- Tactics for building or expanding a customer base
- Networking for business growth

## Intended audience

Flash mentoring can benefit aspiring, new, or moderately experienced entrepreneurs and business owners.

For the purposes of the Queer Atlantic Business Hub establishing a multi-layered mentorship system, this model may best be targeted towards aspiring (not yet established) entrepreneurs. Further narrowing of focus would be dependent on mentee interest in clustering based on sector, identity, and/or geography.

## Eligibility

General eligibility for queer focused flash mentor events generally include that all mentee attendees self-identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, that they be 18+ years of age, be a resident of the region, and have questions and a need for advice regarding the areas identified for the event. Depending on the priority learning topics identified for a flash mentoring event, mentors can be drawn from entrepreneur, private, public or non-profit sectors.

## Event cycle

The core components of running a flash mentoring event involve the following:

### 1: Design

In the event-design phase, the target mentee audience/focus of the event is clarified, the scale of the event (i.e. number of attendees) is identified, and an agenda is built.

It is decided in this phase if the event will be offered in person or online. If an in-person event is being planned, space booking and logistics need to be taken care of.

Once an agenda and logistics are finalized, the event is promoted and outreach and recruitment of panelists and flash mentors takes place.

## 2: Event

The host organization or a hired facilitator guides participants through the event.

## 3. Follow-Up

Feedback about the event is gathered from attendees to understand what worked well about the event, and where improvements could be made for future flash mentoring events.

## Session structure

Flash mentoring may be best blended into an event that also includes speakers or an information session to draw in more interest. In this way, mentoring can become a key component of a broader event and learning on 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurship/business ownership.

Depending on the size of the event, the flash-mentoring component can be conducted one to one or in small groups with each mentor.

A sample agenda for a flash mentoring event targeting 20 entrepreneur-curious 2SLGBTQIA+ youth is outlined below.

Welcome and Ice Breaker (15 mins)

- Organizer welcomes attendees and gives brief overview of the event ahead
- A rapid ice-breaker question for all mentees: Share your name and what excites you about becoming an entrepreneur

Flash Panel (45 mins)

- A panel of three young queer entrepreneurs share their story about becoming an entrepreneur, their biggest learnings, and advice for youth considering starting their own business

Break (15 mins)

Flash Mentoring Break-Out 1 (60 mins)

- Mentees are split into four teams of five and rotate to two of the following 30-minute mentor huddles
  - o Developing a business concept or idea
  - o Money fundamentals: Financial advice for aspiring entrepreneurs
  - o Tactics for building or expanding a customer base
  - o Networking for business launch and growth
- Each huddle starts with an introduction by the mentor, then mentees are asked to share their questions for advice and feedback

Break (15 mins)

Flash mentoring Break-Out 2 (60 mins)

- Mentees return to their team and rotate to the remaining two mentor huddles

- o Developing a business concept or idea
- o Accessing funds: Financial advice for new or early-stage entrepreneurs
- o Tactics for building or expanding a customer base
- o Networking for business growth
- Each huddle starts with an introduction by the mentor, then mentees are asked to share their question for advice and feedback

Closing (15 mins)

- Attendees regroup for closing comments by organizers
- Mentees are asked to share how they are feeling at the end of the event in one word
- Organizers briefly share next steps: A follow-up survey will be shared with everyone to collect feedback and suggestions for future events.

## Model strengths and limitations

Model strengths	Model limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flash mentor events are one-time/short-term commitments from mentees and mentors, making it more manageable for both parties if they are unsure about a longer-term need or interest.</li> <li>● Mentees connect with multiple mentors quickly, fostering a wide range of perspectives and knowledge-sharing that one mentor may not hold.</li> <li>● Flash mentoring events can serve as a 'pipeline' or recruitment drive for longer-term mentoring relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flash mentoring does not enable deep relationship building found in ongoing mentoring programs</li> <li>● Short sessions can only scratch the surface, potentially leading to advice that lacks context or nuance.</li> <li>● Once the event ends, mentees are left to make sense of the feedback they receive, without an ongoing channel for clarification or further questions/advice.</li> </ul>

## Design requirements

Host organizations interested in running a flash mentoring event need to design and organize, at a minimum:

- A detailed event plan, confirming size, scope, features, and supports to be offered.
- Physical space or virtual space set up to facilitate the flow and structure of the event.
- A communications and outreach plan to recruit mentors and speakers.

- A communications and registration process to recruit mentees.
- A staff resource or hired facilitator to steward the event on the day.
- Evaluation to receive feedback.

Resource requirements may include some consulting support to design the event in detail, designated staff time to support event planning and outreach, and a budget for panelists and an event facilitator.

## **Resources**

[IE University Flash Mentoring Toolkit](#)

### **Fit for the Atlantic Canada 2SLGBTQIA+ business community**

Based on findings from the environmental scan, this model could meet some community interest and needs as identified in the environmental scan.

Key needs this model could address:

- A need for quick targeted feedback about a range of business-related issues

If this form of mentorship were to be launched, it should be offered in both French and English, as highlighted by consultation participants.

### **Next step considerations for the Queer Atlantic Business Hub**

One of the key recommendations for the Queer Atlantic Business Hub is to prioritize a multi-layered mentorship system. In response to this recommendation, this report identifies three potential models for further exploration and consideration. Each varies in focus, complexity, and extent to which they meet the needs identified by queer and trans entrepreneurs in the environmental scan report.

The dyad mentorship model is the most traditional form of mentoring and most commonly offered through various queer business organizations across Canada. If this were to be considered for implementation, it could be tested as a small pilot first to minimize resources required. A 10-pair basic pilot could be developed and run, with the goal of prototyping tools and a structure that can be iterated for expansion at a later date. Recruitment for this pilot could be done targeting a geographic or demographic subset of research participants who have already been engaged to inform the environmental scan.

The peer mentor circle model is an approach that directly responds to the need identified in the environmental scan for a supportive and relational way of learning

together. This approach has been tested on a small scale by some existing queer business support organizations in Canada and would be the opportunity for the Hub to develop something highly context-driven by Atlantic region interests and needs and at the same time be networked into a broader national context. If this were to be considered for implementation, it could also be tested as a small pilot first. One peer mentor circle series could be developed and run, with a focus on similarly experienced entrepreneurs from one sector, who could be recruited from research participants already engaged.

The flash mentoring model is an approach that allows mentees to receive quick one-time feedback from a range of experienced mentors, and focuses on breadth rather than depth. This would require the least ongoing resources or support to organize. This could be quickly tested as an online, one-time pilot for a small group of 10 entrepreneur-curious participants to test an agenda and mechanics for potential future events.

The timing and extent to which the Queer Atlantic Business Hub pursues any or all of the above depends heavily on resources and staff capacity to proceed. If there is some, albeit limited, capacity to test mentor models in 2026-27, it may be most realistic to:

- Design and test one flash mentoring event for a small group of entrepreneur-curious mentees with the rationale that it would not require ongoing resource commitments; and
- Design and test one peer-mentor circle series with the rationale that a group cohort rather than multiple 1-1 pairings will reduce staff support needed.

Any mentorship pilot chosen by the Hub to test in 2026-27 can be used as a platform to promote and connect participants to information sessions, one-time workshops, and broader networking events that the Hub organizes and runs throughout the year.

## **Appendix A: Mentor Models**

### **Provincial/regional programs focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ mentoring:**

#### **Queer Business BC (QBBC)**

##### **Emerge Program**

QBBC currently offers a 6-month, no-cost dyad (1-1) mentorship matching program to connect 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs, professionals and community leaders across the province.

This program is not scoped/limited to entrepreneurs only. Mentees must be active QBBC members, but mentors can work in the corporate or non-profit sectors.

QBBC facilitates the initial match, provides mentorship resource kits and tools, hosts two optional community connector events, and conducts light check-ins to ensure alignment and gather feedback from participants. Program participants are also encouraged to attend any and all of a series of 101-themed workshops, networking and speaker events that QBBC offers throughout the year to its members.

The organization has a website which includes an outline of the program, application forms and FAQs.

More information can be found here: <https://queerbusinessbc.ca/mentorship/>

### **Alberta Queer Chamber of Commerce (AQCC) Inspire and Innovate Program**

AQCC currently offers an 8-month, no-cost dyad (1-1) mentorship matching program to connect 2SLGBTQIA+ aspiring and early career entrepreneurs for the next steps in their business journey.

This program is focused on matching mentors and mentees. Mentees are invited to join additional seminars focused on business fundamentals and to attend in-person networking events in Calgary and Edmonton.

The organization has a webpage which includes a basic outline of the program and application forms.

More information can be found here: <https://ab-lgbt.com/mentorship-program/>

### **Manitoba Queer Chamber of Commerce (MQCC) Emerge Program**

MQCC currently offers a 6-month, no-cost multi-pronged mentorship program to support 2SLGBTQIA+ aspiring and new entrepreneurs who are seeking advice and support.

This program offers workshops, networking sessions and group discussions in addition to regular 1-1 mentorship support. The program is offered with both virtual and in-person options to participate.

The organization has a webpage which includes detailed program information, a detailed program agenda and FAQs for mentors and mentees.

More information can be found here: <https://mb-lgbt.biz/emerger/>

### **Quebec Queer Chamber of Commerce Mentorship Program**

QQCC offers a dyad 1-1 mentorship program to support 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs earlier in their careers to develop their businesses and build community.

The range of potential topics outlined as suitable for the program include both business advice and hard skills, and soft-skills/personal development topics such as finding work-life balance and a focus on wellbeing. Mentors are required to undergo training in mentoring techniques before they are accepted to the program.

There is no mention of the mentorship program offering workshops/group networking or speaker events to participants.

More information can be found here: <https://www.cclgbtq.org/fr/mentorat>

### **Ontario Queer Chamber of Commerce (OQCC)**

OQCC offers a range of formal and informal networking and workshops through its regional chapters. There is no mentor program information available on its website.

## **National programs focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ Mentoring**

### **Canadian Queer Chamber of Commerce (CQCC) OUT for Business Mentorship Program**

OUT for Business is Canada's only national mentorship program for 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs who are seeking support to start or grow their business.

The program runs for a 10-month cycle, whereby mentees and mentors meet monthly for 1-1 sessions and support. The program also offers tailored educational programming and opportunities to learn from others in the program.

Mentors can be entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs—people who work in corporate or non-profit sectors.

The organization has a webpage which includes detailed information about the program, eligibility and program requirements, benefits to participation and testimonials from past graduates.

More information can be found here: <https://queerchamber.ca/out-for-business/>

### **Pride At Work Canada Thrive Leadership Program**

Thrive is a 10-week virtual group mentoring program offered to queer and trans leaders across Canada. The program offers weekly virtual sessions, collaborative group study and self-directed work focused on unlocking the cohort's potential as out leaders.

This is a fee-based program, but scholarships are available for applicants who are self-employed or who work for a non-profit.

The organization has a webpage with information for interested applicants and a detailed program schedule.

More information can be found here: <https://prideatwork.ca/programs/thrive/>

### **Global/International programs focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ Mentoring LGBT Great Mentoring Program**

This global program connects mentees with mentors (2SLGBTQIA+ and allies) across different organizations and regions around the world. The program also serves as a reverse mentoring opportunity for mentors who may not belong to the queer or trans community to learn more about lived experience as a 2SLGBTQIA+ employee or entrepreneur.

The program annually supports over 400 participants from over 100 organizations across 18 countries.

More information can be found here: <https://www.lgbtgreat.com/Mentoring>

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