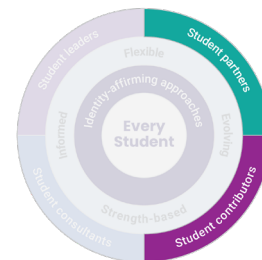


# Rebound Mentorship Program



Students as partners

Students as contributors

<b>Students' grades</b>	7-8 and 11-12
<b>School board</b>	Algoma District School Board
<b>Staff contact</b>	Darryl Fillmore, <a href="mailto:fillmod@adsb.on.ca">fillmod@adsb.on.ca</a> ; Andraya MacMillan, <a href="mailto:program@reboundonline.com">program@reboundonline.com</a>
<b>Initiative period</b>	February to June each year, since 2017
<b>Caring adults involved</b>	Facilitators from Algoma Family Services

## OVERVIEW

The Rebound program is a four-month program that was designed as a preventative measure to address substance use and addictions, focusing on topics related to social emotional learning, such as problem-solving, effective communication skills, and managing difficult emotions. The core feature of the program involves grade 7 and 8 students working in small groups alongside grade 11 and 12 student mentors. Supported by adult facilitators from community partnerships, mentors facilitate smaller group discussions at individual tables. Mentors also have opportunities to facilitate large group discussions.

Adult facilitators are responsible for facilitating the program. Their role involves supporting the large group during meetings, debriefing with mentors after each meeting, and gathering feedback. Student mentors complete a two-day training session at the beginning of the program and are required to engage in individual coursework that includes introspective exercises to promote personal growth and self-awareness throughout the program. One unique aspect of the Rebound Mentorship Program is its alignment with curriculum content. This alignment ensures that mentors receive a credit (HHG 4M – Human Development Throughout the Lifespan) for their participation.

Adult facilitators deliver presentations to students about the program, its duration, times, location, expectations, activities, and topics that will be discussed. Student mentors can self-nominate themselves to join the program or are nominated by guidance staff. Students with an interest in pursuing social services, teaching, social work, psychology, or other related careers are encouraged to participate.



Grade 7 and 8 students can sign up for the program by completing a registration form available online or in discussion with their teachers, counsellors, or student services. Some staff may select students they believe are a good fit for the program and would benefit from attending. For the most part, it is a first come, first served approach. The number of grade 11 and 12 mentors available determines how many grade 7 and 8 students will be in the program.

Over the years, the program has undergone several iterations, including periods of being conducted in person and online. The program has been offered to grade 7 and 8 students as an after-school session or as a part of their class time. However, it ultimately landed as an in person, after-school format due to the enhanced relationships associated with being in person and the challenges in aligning secondary school and elementary school schedules, respectively.

The program's next phase involves developing a Reach Ahead Program, allowing grade 8 students to earn credits for their secondary school education. Furthermore, the Rebound Mentorship Program fosters continuity by including mentors who were once program participants in grades 7 and 8, enabling them to give back to the community as mentors in grades 11 and 12.

Grade 7 and 8 students are contributors to the initiative as they influence table discussions and offer feedback to shape the program, engaging with both the process and its outcomes. Grade 11 and 12 mentors are partners in this initiative as they are engaged through all stages in the program, working with adults to facilitate this initiative and providing feedback to shape it.

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## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

### From grade 7 and 8 students, what did you like about the program?

- “I liked that you could talk about anything you needed to, and everyone was really nice.”
- “I like how we can share things and that we get to go into breakout rooms.”
- “The ‘serious’ topics can be discussed with other young people who are at an ‘arm’s length.’”

### Reflections from grade 12 mentors:

- “It taught me to be more compassionate, as well as a multitude of strategies for coping, refusal, and goal setting. As well, I learnt that I’m not as un-empathetic as I thought, and that in the right environment I can become a leader.”
- “The mentoring experience really helped me come out of my shell. Normally, I am good with talking in front of a crowd, but I was somewhat insecure about leading a group. This course and experience really changed that and has helped with some of the anxiety.”
- “Being a mentor helped me learn new skills and gain a deeper understanding of how children think and learn. I also learned how to communicate more effectively, which will help me with my future goals of working with children/adolescents.”

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## STAFF PERSPECTIVE

- The collaboration between the two organizations is noteworthy, particularly the influential role played by our Rebound facilitators in supporting the development of the credit program.
- The input from students, conveyed through mentors, has significantly influenced the progression of the program. As they learn and experience, so do we.
- Our mentors benefit from the sessions they lead, applying skills and content knowledge to their own lives. This is a recurring theme in discussions with mentors, especially in areas such as goal setting and communication.
- The connection between mentors and students extends beyond Rebound sessions into the school environment. The 7/8s interact with their mentors in hallways, assemblies, and other settings, further fostering a sense of community.

