1) Introduction

- Hello, my name is Chris Ruffell, and I am a first-year master's student in the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences program
- Over the last 4 months, I have had the privilege of working with my friend, Dr. Andrew Johnson, on a research project concerning the benefits of peer mentoring, and the best practices for designing and implementing a peer mentorship program
- Over the next few minutes, I will briefly cover some of our findings

2) Overview of Peer Mentoring

- So, what is peer mentorship exactly? According to Grossman, "Mentorship is a mutually beneficial, non-evaluative relationship between a more experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced person (protégé) that is caring, collaborative, and respectful." (Grossman, 2014; Johnson & Ridley, 2008; Zachary, 2005).
- The strategy really took off in the 1970s, when businesspeople and researchers began recognizing the vital role of mentoring. Now, mentoring has made its way into other large industries, such as tech and healthcare
- In general, some benefits of peer mentoring include: a greater sense of support, improved mental health, better interpersonal skills, and cost-effective implementation

3) My Background/Our First Program

- Peer mentoring first appeared on my radar 2 years ago, when I was serving my first term as President of the Health Studies Students' Association (the student council which represents Health Studies students)
- Through speaking with friends and associates, in addition to reflecting on the challenges I faced with transitioning to university, we identified a need for additional first-year support within Health Sciences
- Subsequently, we took action and implemented a very basic program, where the extent of our work was matching mentors with mentees
- Although enrollment numbers pleasantly surprised us and the informal feedback was positive, the program left a lot to be desired

4) Lit Review

- As such, the main objectives of my USRI have been to conduct a literature review on the best practices for designing and implementing a peer mentorship program, and incorporating these findings into the program that we have
- The 3 studies which have been most informative are as follows:
  i) An Integrative Review of Peer Mentorship Programs for Undergraduate Nursing Students – Wong, et al. Covers the target areas (academic, social, professional, mental health, and personal skills) and challenges (such as lack of preparation for mentors and matching of mentors and mentees)
  ii) A Peer Mentorship Program Boosts Student Retention – Jacobs, et al. Discusses the common reasons that students seek mentorship, as well as guidance on setting up the mentee-mentor relationship

     iii)   Lastly, A Systematic Review of Graduate Student Peer Mentorship in Academia – Loronzetti, et al. Was effective at highlighting the academic, psychological, social, and career benefits that can arise from a well-designed program

5) Need Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Interviews

- We also learned from the literature that there appears to be a lack of programs designed in partnership with students; rather most programs were designed solely by school administration
- To overcome this within our own program, we intend to conduct a "needs assessment", where we will invite past mentors and mentees to submit their feedback via Qualtrics surveys
- My literature review also showed that evaluation of programs was a mixed bag across the programs that have been studied
- Our program evaluation phase will include baseline and end-of-program Qualtrics surveys, interviews with mentees and mentors, and statistical analysis of our findings in R

6) Summary of Changes/Improvements

- To summarize, here is a list of the improvements we intend to make to our peer mentorship program this September, using information gathered during the USRI:

- Inclusion of a needs assessment to incorporate actual student feedback in the process
- Training for mentors to improve the quality of their mentoring, as well as their professional growth from the program
- Monthly learning sessions to increase first-year students' awareness of resources, improve academic abilities, and bolster engagement
- Implementation of multiple forms of evaluation to capture the effects of the program

7) Closing Remarks

- Well, I hope that I've shed some light on the concept of peer mentoring and its benefits
- I'd like to thank my Supervisor, Dr. Andrew Johnson for all his help, as well as the USRI selection committee for providing me with this opportunity
- Thanks for watching