

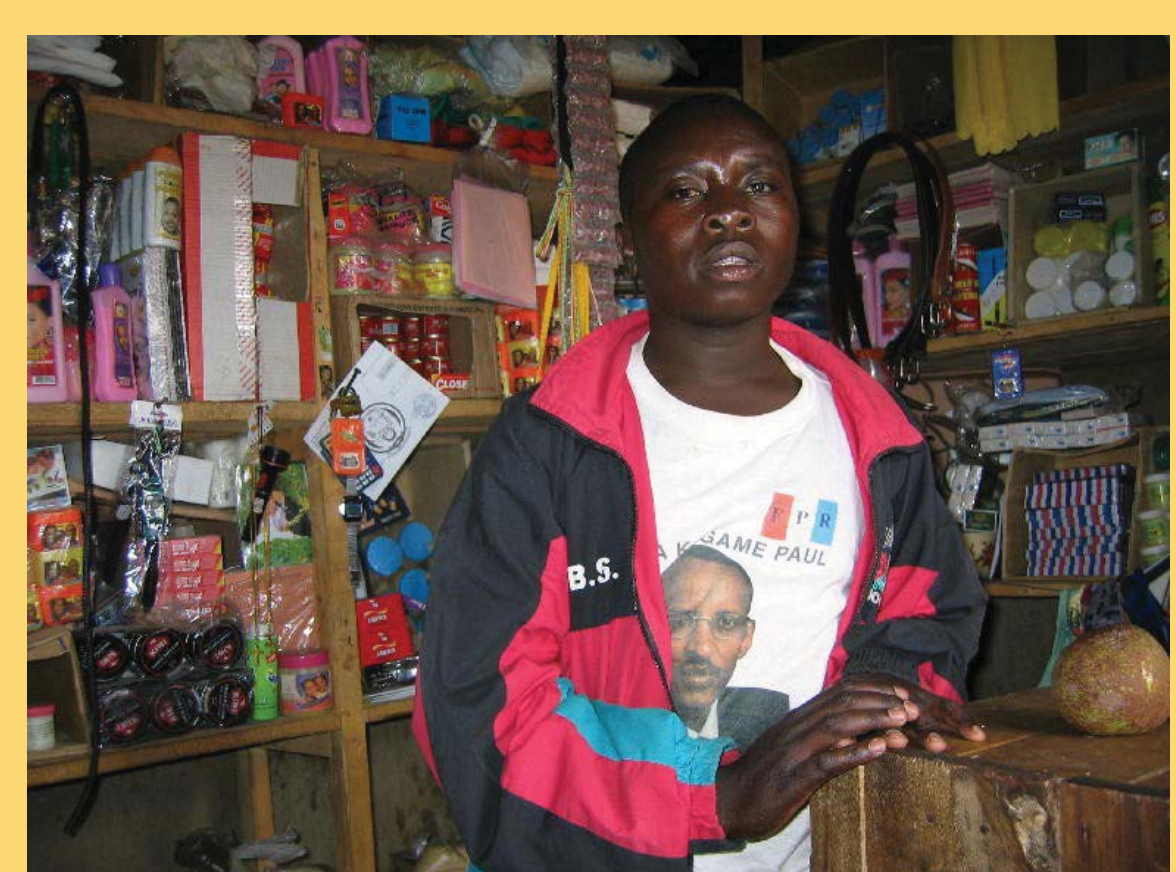
# Impact of Mentoring on the Psychosocial Well-being of Vulnerable Youth: Results from a Longitudinal Evaluation in Rwanda

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## Conclusion

**An adult mentorship program is a scalable approach to improving psychosocial outcomes among vulnerable youth.**

Support to vulnerable youth was provided by community volunteers, with modest levels of investment. World Vision provided training and regular monitoring of mentors as well as incentives, public recognition and emotional support. Support to a relatively small number of mentors resulted in impacts to a large number of youth.



A 21-year old head of household in Rwanda in the store he rents to provide income for his three siblings.

## Intervention

Through regular home visits, trained adult volunteers developed a stable, caring relationship with children and youth in their local community who were living without an adult caregiver. The mentors monitored the well-being of children and youth; gave love, attention and encouragement to youth, provided guidance and transferred life skills, and helped to ensure their health and safety. This intervention model is intended to strengthen the supportive environment for children's healthy growth and development, and mitigate the psychological impacts of disrupted caregiving structures.

## Results

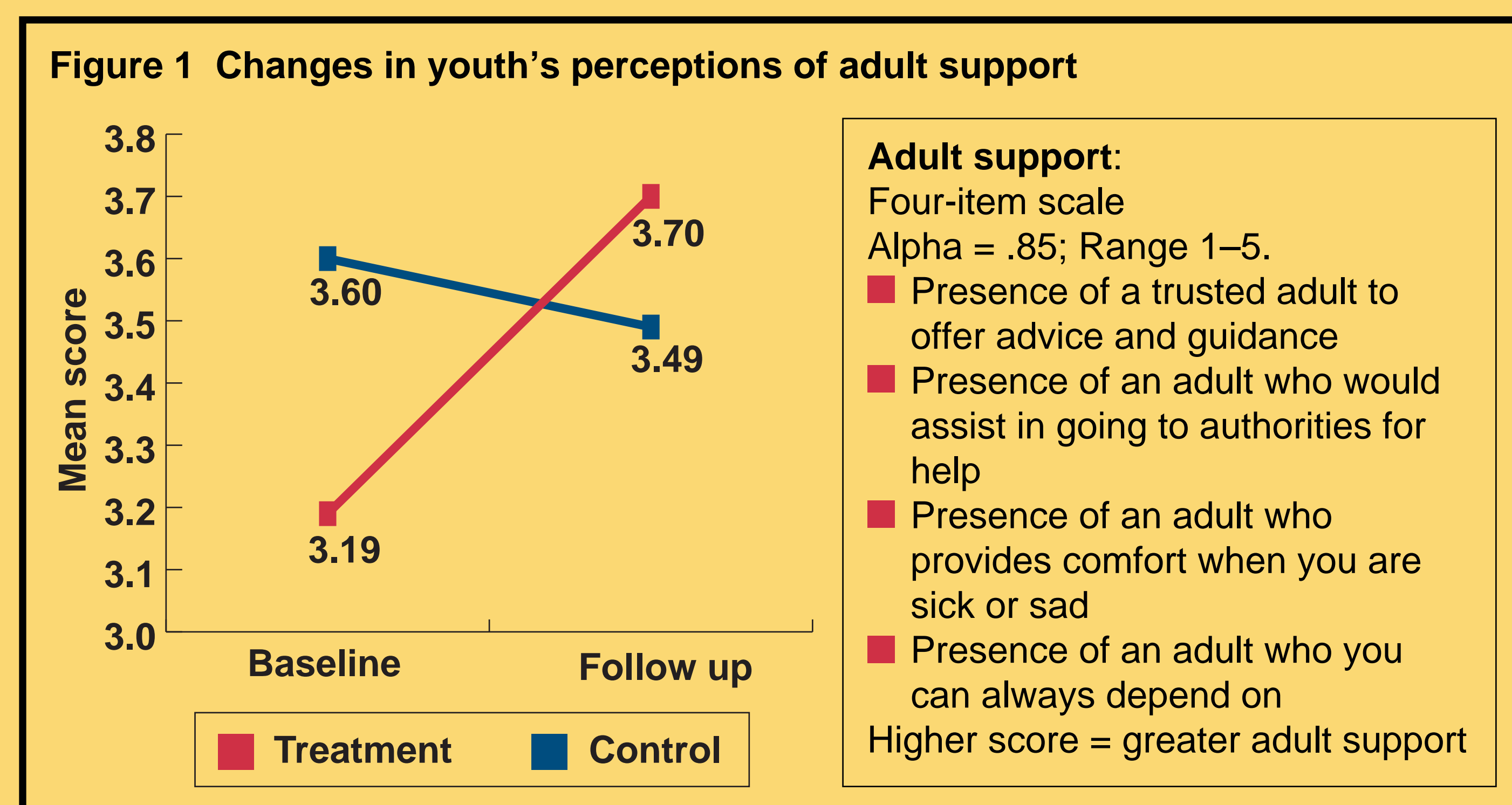
The mentoring program increased the support systems of children and improved their psychological health.

### Increased Adult Support

*Because most of the mentors have families of their own and are responsible for their household, they teach us and give us an example. So we hope that we will become good family providers and have a strong household like theirs.*

Female, 19 years

- During the study period, youth's perception of adult support increased significantly in the intervention group, while it decreased slightly (not significantly) in the comparison group (see Figure 1).
- Evidence of an intervention effect persisted after controlling for important background variables.

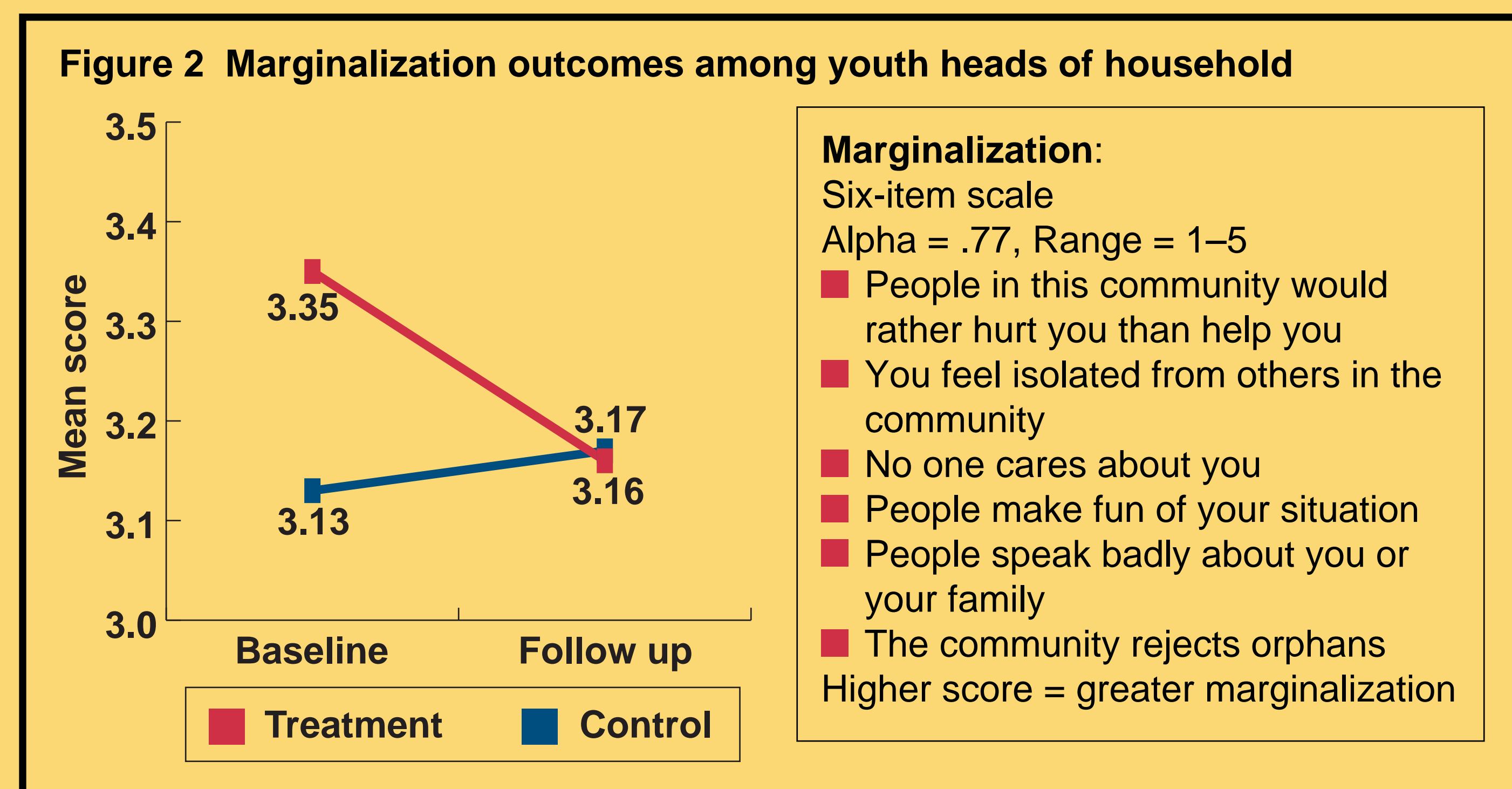


### Decreased Marginalization

*I took the time to go to the neighbors to ask them to stop chasing them. Now they give them a place in their parties or other events to the point where the youth can now lend or borrow money from them. The neighbors gave them their trust and the children also don't resent them anymore.*

Mentor

- Marginalization decreased significantly in the intervention group, while it did not change at all in the comparison group (see Figure 2).
- Again, an intervention effect was still evident after controlling for background variables.



## Methods

Quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of the adult mentoring program on the psychosocial well-being of youth living without adult care. Two of the four districts in the former Gikongoro province—Karaba and Nyamagabe—received the mentoring program in addition to a basic needs program. The other two districts—Mudosomwa and Nyraguru—served as the comparison group: the basic needs program continued in these districts throughout the study, and the mentoring intervention was rolled out after completion of the follow-up survey.

**Study sample:** Quantitative baseline data were collected in March–April of 2004 with 692 youth-heads of household aged 24 and under, and the follow-up survey was conducted two years later (18 months after the intervention began) in March–April of 2006 with 593 youth-heads of households.

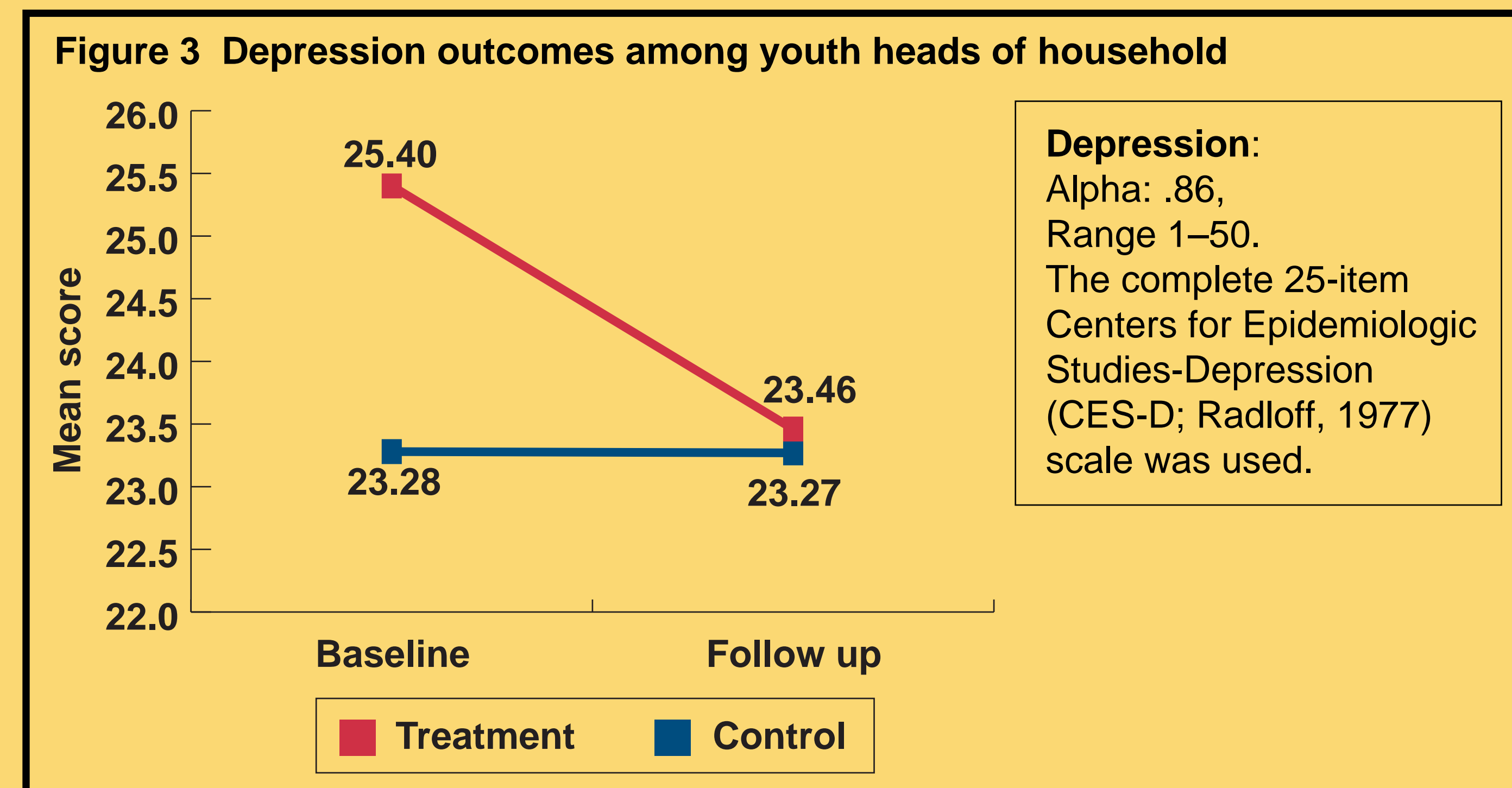
**Analyses:** Cross sectional analyses were conducted. Regression models were used to test the hypothesis that the intervention group changed more than the comparison group. If the interaction was significant, we used post hoc tests to compare the groups at each time and to assess change for each group. Lastly, for each of the five outcomes we assessed the impact of the mentorship program after controlling for important background characteristics, including demographic variables, health status, indicators of economic status (including receipt of basic needs services from WVR) and whether or not the head of the household had a parent die in the genocide.

### Decreased Symptoms of Depression

*Before, we had no hope for the future. After being advised we felt courageous. And today we feel that we will live, even if we will meet some problems, we will be able to solve them. This program helped us a lot.*

Male, 17 years

- Symptoms of depression decreased significantly in the intervention group, while they remained the same in the comparison group (see Figure 3).
- These intervention effects persisted after controlling for background variables.



### Stabilization of Grief

*Mentors are there for us. We don't feel lonely anymore and we feel like normal children.*

Male, 20 years

- The level of grief increased for the comparison group, but did not change for the intervention group (see Figure 4).
- This effect remained when controlling for background variables.

