



AMHCA Mentor Handbook

*For students and new professionals
For members who wish to help guide students and new professionals*

AMHCA invites you to take part in the Mentor Program by implementing the program among your state chapter by using the materials we provide and following the suggested guidelines. Your state may already have a mentor program and you may wish to incorporate more structure, take on more marketing efforts, or add an evaluation process to measure the program's effectiveness. We invite you to use this information for the stage in which your mentor program currently exists.

The AMHCA Mentor Program

Mission & Purpose

The goal of the AMHCA Mentor Program is to facilitate the development and enhancement of mentor relationships at the state level. The purpose of the Mentor program is to bring student and pre-licensed members together with licensed professional counselors to help them navigate their professional development as counselors.

Program

It is our intention that each state chapter will examine its interest in and ability to implement a mentor program locally. State chapters may utilize any and all of the materials presented here and adapt them as needed within the overall program guidelines. All program participants will be expected to abide by the AMHCA Code of Ethics and comply with the AMHCA Mentor Program guidelines.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a structured and trusted relationship that, in this case, matches new professionals with more accomplished ones with the goal of guiding, supporting, and encouraging the development of the mentee.

The classic mentoring story appears in Homer's Odyssey, wherein Telemachus guides young Mentor. Many mentoring resources and research focuses on adults mentoring youth. Effective mentoring, like counseling, places an importance on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Mutual trust, respect, commitment, and collegiality are important to the relationship and the process.

Perhaps most essential in the process is the mentor's unselfish sharing of his or her uniquely acquired wisdom and his or her ability to help the mentee integrate and develop his or her own unique skills and knowledge within the practice of their shared profession.

Mentor Handbook, Connecticut Counseling Association

What Mentoring is Not

Mentoring is not counseling or psychotherapy. Mentoring is not supervision. The boundary between mentoring professional development and providing counseling for personal issues is important. Naturally personal issues may arise in the mentoring relationship. Counseling graduate students and new professionals face stressors that require counseling not mentoring. The mentor may find it necessary to refer the mentee to another individual for counseling. It is not suggested the mentor serve as the mentee's counselor.

What is a Mentor?

Mentor: a wise and trusted counselor or teacher (www.dictionary.com)

Mentors are counselors and counselor educators that take part in an intentional relationship with a counseling graduate student member or pre-licensed member.

Who can be a Mentor?

Members of AMHCA and/or its local chapters may volunteer to be mentors in their state. It is suggested that mentors review the program guidelines (below) and understand their role.

What is a Mentee?

A mentee is a member of AMHCA or their state AMHCA chapter and must meet one of the following: enrolled in a counseling graduate program, post-master's in training, employed as a new counselor, or counseling in a practice area new to them.

Guidelines

1. The mentor/mentee are to be members in good standing of their state AMHCA chapter.
2. The mentor/mentee are expected to be knowledgeable of and abide by the AMHCA Code of Ethics.
3. Participation in the mentor program is voluntary. No compensation will be provided
4. nor will hours of experience be granted.
5. The mentee's supervision is separate from the mentor program and mentors agree to not interfere or intervene in the mentee's supervision.

Program Design & Planning

Depending on the needs of student and pre-licensed members in your state, the mentoring program may offer unique and valuable guidance for mentees. You may find that the mentor program is one of the benefits that your state offers which attracts student members. Graduate students report that there is a gap in the guidance and support they may find at the university. Often graduate students find that neither an academic advisor nor student to student mentoring will offer access to a licensed professional counselor who can help answer questions.

Advisory Group

Consider whether your state chapter's mentoring program will be run by one or more volunteers or will you utilize an advisory committee.

Orientation Plan

Plan a time to meet with mentors and mentees to provide a program orientation. This orientation might include:

- Overview of program
- Goals and objectives of program
- Roles and expectations of mentors and mentees
- Eligibility
- Benefits and rewards for both mentors and mentees
- Program policies (confidentiality, mentoring is not supervision nor therapy)
- Program contacts (be sure mentors and mentees can reach someone should they need assistance when first establishing their relationship).

Commitment and time frame: you may consider establishing guidelines for the mentor and mentee until they have established how they might work together. For example, a six month to one year time frame will give the two some parameters with which to work. An open-ended mentor/mentee arrangement may lead to fatigue for both parties.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring your mentor program will ensure its success. You may wish to develop a tracking system for ongoing oversight. Consider the use and periodic review of written records such as sign-up forms to match mentors and mentees along with information that they submit regarding progress of the mentoring match. Develop a rationale that works for your chapter given the level of interest in the program. An email or telephone follow up after the initial mentor/mentee match will provide an opportunity to gather feedback as well as re-assignment if necessary. Periodic feedback survey's can aid your mentor program by capturing relevant information such as interaction or activity level. Keeping the communication between the mentor/mentee and the chapter is critical. The appendix includes sample evaluation forms.

Disclaimer

In order to limit risk, consider adding the following disclaimer to your chapter's materials:

AMHCA's Mentor Program aims to facilitate licensed (clinical) members and pre-licensed (student/paraprofessional) members to share information and knowledge regarding the profession of counseling.

Although the credentials, qualifications, and/or other information regarding the program participants may be provided to AMHCA and/or its affiliated chapters, AMHCA does not make any representations as to the qualifications or the competence of the Mentor Program participants. In addition, AMHCA does not recommend or endorse the participants or the service they provide.

A Final Word: The Benefits of Mentoring

The unique relationship that mentoring affords graduate students and new counselors cannot be understated. The benefits of mentoring include:

- Mentors help develop your professional skills, confidence, and professional development
- Mentors aid with psychosocial development
- Mentors assist in maintaining and enhancing mentee's quality of life

Mentoring may also benefit your AMHCA chapter by helping identify, cultivate, and engage emerging leaders.

For more information contact AMHCA at (800) 326-2642.

Resources

Building mentorships for success, gradPSYCH, January 2005, 3(1). American Psychological Association of Graduate Students.

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, CAMFT.

Connecticut Counseling Association and Fred Clark, *Mentor Handbook*

Johnson, W. B. & Huwe, J. M. (2003). *Getting mentored in graduate school*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

National Mentoring Partnership, www.mentoring.org

Appendix I

Evaluation Mechanism

Mentoring is an intentional relationship structured for a specific length of time around mutually agreed upon goals. Evaluating the experience for both the mentor and the mentee is a valuable tool for mutual learning.¹ Your chapter’s mentor coordinator may wish to distribute the following form to participants in the mentor program. The form can be filled out independently by the mentor and the mentee or together. This form can also be used by the mentor/mentee as a launching point for each meeting, starting with the first item listed.

<p>Evaluating Our Mentoring Relationship</p> <p>Mentor: _____ Mentee: _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Date of mentoring partnership: _____</p> <p>Meetings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When and under what circumstances did we get together? 2. What subjects or topics do we typically discuss in our meetings? 3. What objectives are we currently working on? What is our progress to date in achieving these objectives? <p>Relationship</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is going particularly well in our mentoring relationship right now? 2. What has been our greatest challenge in our mentoring partnership so far? 3. What do we need to work at to improve our mentoring relationship? 4. What assistance could we use? <p>Learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are we learning ourselves? Each other? The mentoring relationship? 2. What is being learned? What are of the conditions that promote that learning? 3. What are some of the personal insights? What would I do differently?

¹ Information from this form quoted in: Zachary, L.J. (2000). *The Mentor’s Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. p. 126.

Appendix II

Mentor Checklist

The following questions may be useful for mentors, primarily, and for mentees, when periodically evaluating their readiness to proceed.²

- Am I providing adequate support to facilitate the learning of my mentee?
- Have we identified sufficient and varied opportunities for learning?
- Are we continuing to build and maintain a productive relationship?
- Is the quality of our mentoring interaction satisfactory?
- Are we continuously working on improving the quality of the mentoring interaction?
- Have we put in place a variety of mechanisms to ensure feedback?
- Is the feedback I am giving thoughtful, candid, and constructive?
- Do we make time to evaluate our partnership regularly?

² Zachary, L.J. (2000). *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. p. 142.