



Mentoring Program Handbook

Thank you for your interest in the CCA Mentoring Program. This handbook has been created to help orient you to the expectations of the program and provide some ideas and resources that might be helpful to you as a mentor or mentee.

OVERVIEW

The Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA) Mentorship Program is designed with the intention of cultivating relationships as well as strengthening and empowering its participants. The program provides the opportunity for early counseling professionals to be mentored by accomplished, experienced professional counselors who share similar interests, experiences, and goals.

The CCA Mentorship Program has an overarching goal to foster structured, trusting, and collaborative relationships between early professional counselors and seasoned professional counselors. The goal of the mentorship relationship is to advance and improve the counseling profession while fostering counselor career development.

The CCA Mentorship Program seeks mentors who will guide, support, and encourage mentees to further develop and enhance their professional counselor identity and career development journey. The key to a good mentoring relationship and successful experience is a united commitment by the mentor and mentee to share mutual interests, effectively communicate, and reach a mutual agreement regarding the overall goals and expectations.

PURPOSE

The CCA Mentoring Program is a leadership development opportunity designed to support the CCA mission statement *“to support and advocate for the counselors and counseling profession through promoting professional identity, providing opportunities for professional development and networking, and offering resources to better support those we serve.”* The purpose is to engage early career professionals with seasoned career professionals who share similar interests through meaningful conversations, the achievement of mutually agreed upon goals, and a shared wisdom between the mentor and mentee that supports continuous career development and lifelong learning.

AIM

CCA envisions that early career professionals who are CCA members should have access to a mentor to help them thrive in their career journey and benefit from continued support and involvement in their local professional association.

GOALS OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM

- To develop a group of CCA mentors from all CCA divisions who will be available to assist in the professional development of CCA members.

- To provide individual mentors upon request to the CCA members who meet certain requirements.
- To provide appropriate support to our mentor group.
- To develop productive relationships with counselor educators and trainers such that they will welcome and promote our mentoring program with their graduates.
- To foster a counseling community that invites the exchange of ideas, practice, and scholarship.
- Facilitate professional development and learning that align with career goals and aspirations.
- Promote the mission and vision of the CCA organization.

REQUIREMENTS

- Mentors must hold an advanced degree (master's level or higher) and have a minimum of five years of experience in professional counseling.
- Mentees must be CCA first- or second-year new professionals in good standing, isolated counselors, or CCA members transitioning to a new area of interest.
- The CCA Mentorship Program team reviews each interest form and carefully matches mentors and mentees based on their preferences, skills, interests, demographics, and availability.
- Mentors and mentees will be supplied with one another's contact information, any other supplemental information provided by either party, and a copy of the CCA Mentorship Program guidelines.
- The program is ideally designed for mentors and mentees to meet once a month for approximately 45-60 minutes per session. Mentors and mentees will decide what works best for them.
- Mentors and mentees will be asked to fill out a brief program evaluation at the midpoint and conclusion of the program. No additional reports are required.
- Mentors and mentees understand that this is a voluntary opportunity; therefore, no compensation will be provided for participation.

The mentor will be working to help the mentee develop professionally, but the mentee's clinical and work supervision is a separate entity. **The mentor is not intended to replace—or supplement—the mentee's formal supervision.**

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The mentoring relationship must remain professional and respectful for all participants at all times.
- CCA will invite members to be mentors and accept applications from mentees then review each to make matches based on preferences, skills, interests, demographics, and availability.
- CCA will supply each participant with the Mentoring Program Handbook.
- CCA will assess the satisfaction of the Mentoring Program through feedback from all participants.
- CCA is not responsible for ethical practice or malpractice.
- Mentors and mentees will exchange contact information and any other supplemental information to aid the connection.
- Mentors and mentees will meet either virtually, in person, via telephone, or any combination that meets their needs.
- Mentors and mentees will contact CCA if either decides to terminate participation.
- Mentors and mentees will be asked to fill out a brief program evaluation twice (both early on and at the conclusion of the program). No additional reports are required, although feedback is welcome at any time.
- Mentors and mentees will use available resources, including those provided by the program and by CCA, to strive for the success of the relationship.
- Mentors and mentees understand that this is a voluntary opportunity; therefore, no compensation will be provided for participation, and no fees will be collected.
- All communication among participants and CCA will be strictly confidential unless the other party needs to be notified to resolve an outstanding issue or cooperate in a transitional process. All personal information revealed within the context of this mentor/mentee relationship should be kept in the strictest confidence.

DISCLAIMERS

- CCA offers the Mentoring Program as a pilot program for 2024-2025, without guaranteeing any future programs, but with the utmost hope to continue.
- CCA does not guarantee any outcome for any participant.
- Mentors and mentees who participate in the program release CCA from any and all liability from damages or other claims and agree to hold CCA harmless from any injury or illness, mental or physical, related to this relationship and/or the activities therein.
- Mentors will be working to help the mentee develop professionally, but the mentee's clinical and work supervision is a separate entity. The mentor is not intended to replace- or supplement- the mentee's formal supervision.

- **Both mentors and mentees understand that this is not clinical supervision; the mentor assumes no responsibility for the mentee's professional behavior and clients.** Furthermore, these mentoring sessions should be held in a way that respects clients' confidentiality at all times by refraining from sharing any identifiable client information.
- CCA is not responsible for goals, outcomes, termination, progress or lack thereof, or anything not stated directly here.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The CCA Mentoring Program will be launched at the Fall Conference in November of 2024, and the gathering of prospective mentors and mentees will begin, followed by the matching process! Mentors and mentees will be provided the opportunity to complete a CCA mentor or mentee application if they meet the eligibility requirements. The information from the completed application forms will be used to match mentees with mentors.

CCA will contact all participants via email and supply the mentor and mentee with the Mentoring Program Handbook, one another's contact information, any other supplemental information provided by the mentor or mentee, and general suggestions for making the most out of their mentoring experience.

It is recommended that mentors and mentees meet at least every two weeks for the first two months to help establish a good rapport. Monthly thereafter would suffice, or any time frame agreed upon by the mentor and mentee that matches their schedules and goals.

Mentors and mentees will receive training, orientation, and best practices for the program via video conferencing (or recording) from CCA.

Each participant will complete the first feedback form six months after receiving the email from CCA introducing the mentor and mentee to each other. A final evaluation will be due after eleven months into the mentoring program. These forms are included in this handbook.

CCA is available via email if, at any time, the mentor or mentee has concerns, questions, or feedback related to the program or process.

MENTORING BENEFITS

Mentoring affords unique benefits to its participants that are limitless depending on the effort put forth by the mentor and the mentee.

WHO ARE CCA MENTORS?

CCA mentors are seasoned (with at least five years of experience) counselors and counselor educators drawn from all CCA divisions who serve on a volunteer basis who have been invited and agreed to participate in the CCA Mentoring Program. Mentoring Program committee members and CCA past and present leadership support new mentors.

MENTOR BENEFITS

- Acknowledgement and recognition as a leader in the field of counseling
- A sense of fulfillment and personal/professional satisfaction by giving back to the profession- a proud aspect of your professional legacy

- Enhance leadership, coaching, and feedback skills
- Increase social connection/social capital
- Fortify connections to your local professional state organization, CCA
- Continued professional development and learning
 - Fosters reflective practices
 - Encourages an open mindset (versus a fixed mindset)
 - Exposure to new perspectives, theories, and paradigms through a reciprocal learning environment

WHO ARE CCA MENTEES?

Mentees are CCA members who meet one of the following criteria:

- 1) Employed as new counselors,
- 2) Employed as isolated counselors (e.g., in single counselor settings)
- 3) Counseling in an area that is new to them.

MENTEE BENEFITS

- Improved professional skills, confidence, and career development.
- Valuable insights, tips, and resources from established career professionals.
- Greater awareness of one's own value system, including awareness of the need for and value of trust.
- Exposure to varied perspectives on counseling other than those gained from formal classroom work and internship settings
- Expanded professional networks.
- Fortify connections to your local professional state organization, CCA.
- Potential progression into leadership roles in CCA, such as committee members, Governing Council, or the Executive Board.
- Enhanced quality of professional and personal lives:
 - Boosts self-esteem, encourages positive risk-taking
 - Improves awareness and being open to new perspectives
 - Increases professional knowledge and resources
 - Reduces stress - *knowing you are not alone*
 - Strengthens skill sets and provides alerts to skills taken for granted

WHAT IS MENTORING?

The term mentoring is derived from the nurturing relationship described in Homer's Odyssey between Mentor and Telemachus, Odysseus's son. Webster defined a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide." Mentoring literature also suggests other possible mentor roles: teacher, advocate, guide, confidant, emotional and moral supporter, tutor, master, sponsor, model, coach, and friend.

The literature also identifies the concepts of mutual trust, respect, commitment, collegiality, synergy, awareness, and holism as central to the mentoring process. No matter what the specific focus of your mentoring is, your attitude toward the mentee will be of primary importance.

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.

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The mentoring partnership is an agreement between two people sharing experiences and expertise that involves active listening, role modeling, setting clear boundaries, applying analytical/critical thinking skills, and providing honest feedback to help with personal and professional development.

The CCA Mentoring Program matches professionals in various fields of counseling who are early in their own career development, transitioning to a new area of practice, or isolated counselors (mentees) with seasoned professionals (mentors) to provide inspiration and empowerment through meaningful conversations and collaborative goal-setting. The relationship is considered one-to-one mentoring, which is popular within various organizations. Resources are provided to aid the mentor/mentee relationship (see list on page 9).

The mentoring relationship must remain professional and respectful for both participants at all times. You may terminate your relationship with your mentor/mentee at any time. Should you develop any concerns about your mentor/mentee relationship, please contact Dr. Evans Zalewski, CCA Mentorship Program Committee Co-Chair, at slzalewski@ccsu.edu.

TYPES OF MENTORSHIPS

One-to-one mentoring is popular within organizations that have a specific career path or cross-functionalization of workplace responsibilities for members of the workforce. Within the public and corporate sectors, these mentoring programs are common when an employee first enters the organization and when new skills and knowledge need to be acquired or preserved for succession planning.

Group mentoring is another way to provide formal mentoring of professionals. Group mentoring has the advantage of enabling an organization to provide mentoring to more mentees than can be accommodated in a one-to-one matching program. In group mentoring, one or two mentors normally work with a group of mentees that have something in common (e.g., new middle managers) or wish to pursue a common need (e.g., those interested in advancing a career in management).

Reverse mentoring is where experienced professionals are paired with new professionals most often from a different generation. The senior person gains a new perspective about the future generation and access to new professionals within the organization, and the new professional gains career advice and the opportunity to interact with seasoned professionals. Reverse mentoring also lends itself to bringing together cross-cultural, cross-gender experiences and closing intergenerational gaps.

Informal mentoring is something that “just happens.” There is no formal program or meetings to attend. It usually occurs between two people whose chemistry is compatible. One person takes on the role of mentor or teacher, and the other takes on the role of mentee or protégé.

Similar to an employment life cycle, mentoring relationships take on a life cycle that is dependent on the type of structured or nonstructured program used

WHAT MENTORING IS NOT

Mentoring is not counseling or psychotherapy for mentees' personal issues. Regardless of the varied paths mentoring relationships might take, participants must continually be aware of the boundary between mentoring professional development and providing therapy for personal issues. Given the stress counseling practice may place on the mentee, the mentee may consciously or unconsciously seek help from the mentor, which falls within the personal counseling domain. Should this occur, the CCA mentor should avoid providing personal counseling. However, he or she may discuss with the mentee the issue of mentoring versus personal counseling and assist the mentee, if requested, in seeking appropriate counseling support.

Mentoring is not clinical or administrative supervision. Mentees who are working towards their license should continue to have and utilize an appropriate clinical supervisor for issues pertaining to their work with clients.

MENTOR ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Mentoring Program services are advertised on the CCA website (<https://ccacounseling.com>), In social media (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Connecticut-Counseling-Association-CCA/190978350936898>), in CCA divisional newsletters, at CCA meetings, and through our natural linkage with the Connecticut Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors, a CCA division. Mentors are assigned by the Mentoring Committee to mentees primarily based on the criteria of the mentee's intended area of counseling, the mentee's perceived needs, mentor time availability, and geographic locations of the mentor and mentee (if their preferred method of meeting is in person). Each mentee submits an interest questionnaire before assignment. The Mentoring Program Coordinator is responsible for keeping records of all assignments.

SOME SUGGESTED MENTORING STRATEGIES

Pose these questions to yourself: What gaps can I help fill in my mentee's professional development that are not covered in formal counselor education programs or through his or her work/internship environment? What important knowledge or skill did I lack when I completed my counselor training and education that I can now pass on to my mentee?

While CCA mentors might have some good answers to the preceding questions, they also have the task of filling the immediate, perceived needs of the mentee. These needs will be a part of the contract developed between you and the mentee.

During your first meeting, you should establish the initial goals of your relationship, the means of communication (in person, phone, email, skype, facetime), and the frequency of communication.

As you respond to your mentee's needs, you will be:

- Sharing ideas and experiences
- Providing reliable advice and encouragement
- Providing job hunt support and perhaps a job reference
- Giving advice on social, political, and ethical protocol, including the use of the internet and social media, and referring your mentee to the appropriate resources for more information (i.e., ACA Code of Ethics)
- Providing resources for information you do not have
- Sharing your career history, failures, and successes
- Provide appropriate guidance to your mentee to understand the profession and his/her place in it.

PROGRAM RESOURCES PROVIDED

Page 10... Visuals on the Mentorship Lifecycle

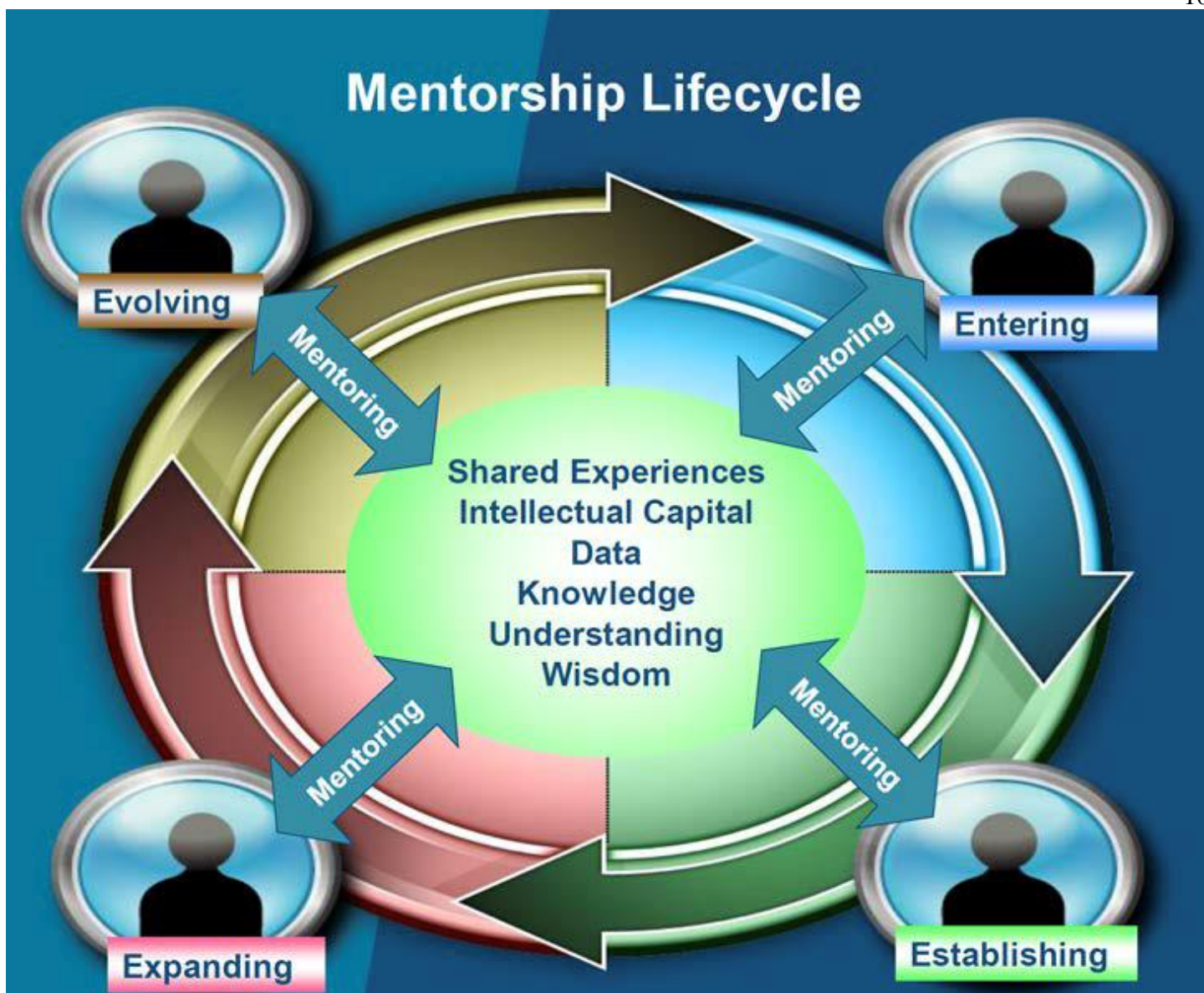
Page 12... Mentoring conversation starters and questions are included in this Handbook.

Page 13... SMART goals reminder

Page 14... Worksheet for developing goals. *It is up to the mentors and mentees to work together to define their appropriate goals for the relationship.*

Page 15... Informational resource links on mentorship.

Page 16... A FAQ's reference section.



MENTORSHIP LIFECYCLE

Mentor Relationship Lifecycle	Mentor Role: Intellectual Capital Contributed	Mentee Role: Intellectual Capital Needed
Entering	Seasoned professional counselors are immediately accessible to others to share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Knowledge and skills · Fresh Perspectives · Latest Research and Trends 	Early Professional Counselors have access to mentors to gain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Knowledge · Cultural Wisdom · Relational Networks
Establishing	Seasoned professional counselors extend their value to the mentee by sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Subject Matter Expertise · Accumulated Understanding · Cultural Wisdom 	Early professional counselors have access to mentors to gain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fresh Approaches to Old Issues · Broader Corporate Understanding · Cross-Discipline Networks
Expanding	Expanding (leadership) abilities are refined through sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Best Practices · Lessons Learned · Emergent Expertise 	Expanding access to mentors (leaders) to gain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Competencies · Organizational Skills · Career Focus
Evolving	Evolved Counselor Leaders (Mentors) give back to the profession by sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Knowledge & Experience · Self-Actualized Wisdom · Best practices in self-care & work/life balance strategies 	Evolving mentees apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Perspectives · Shared & Learned Wisdom · Self-care and wellness strategies · And More

Conversation Starters

Mentee: Questions to ask your Mentor:

- Why did you pursue becoming a mentor?
- What do you like best about being a career professional/mentor/leader?
- What challenges do you face in your practice/agency/ organization/school?
- Why is it important to you to be a CCA member?
- What do you think are the greatest challenges facing our profession today?
- What do you think are the greatest successes in our field?
- What are important considerations when working with people from diverse backgrounds?
- How do you stay motivated?
- Who or what are some of the most important resources that you use to guide you in your role?
- What leadership books or theories have most influenced your ideas and thoughts?
- What CCA activities/resources/webpages do you most recommend and why?
- Who are the personal and professional individuals who have inspired and connected with you?
- How do you strike a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?
- How do you think career professionals can advocate for the profession?
- What are your professional goals and dreams (short term and long term)?
- What is the one action you have taken that has accounted for most of your success?
- How do you handle professional obstacles and roadblocks?
- What advice do you have for me as I continue forward in our profession?

Mentor: Questions to ask your Mentee

- How did your role as a counseling professional begin to develop? How is it going now?
- What questions do you have about your future? About the future of the profession?
- How can I support you in your work environment?
- How can I support you as a member of CCA?
- What counseling books or theories have influenced your ideas and thoughts?
- What aspirations or previous leadership experience do you have? What did you like or dislike about it?
- How would you describe your strengths and struggles?
- What obstacles have you faced?
- Talk about your time-management skills as a working professional.
- How do you stay motivated?
- How are you doing in terms of working toward your professional goals? How can I help you reach those goals?
- Have any of your experiences thus far inspired new goals or initiatives?
- What CCA activities/resources/webpages are you already familiar with?
- What are your most rewarding growth areas? Most challenging?
- How can you connect your strengths and skills with your areas most in need?
- Who else can help you with your development as a career professional?

SMART Goals Worksheet

Specific: What is your goal?

Measured: How will you track your progress?

Attainable: How can it be accomplished?

Relevant: How is it relevant to your career goals and the mentoring relationship?

Time bound: When will it be accomplished?

Goal Development Worksheet

“What do I want to accomplish?”

A goal is a statement of a desired outcome or accomplishment which is specific, observable, and realistic. Based on your career pathway, write some goals for the next one, two, and three years.

1. What I want to accomplish by this time next year is . . .

2. What I want to accomplish by the end of the second year is . . .

3. What I want to accomplish by the end of the third year is . . .

4. The barriers or obstacles (e.g., time, money, commitments) I might face as I strive to meet my goals may include...

5. What can I do to overcome these barriers or obstacles? What resources are available to help me?

Informational Resource Links on Mentorship

[8 Tips for an Amazing Mentor Relationship](#)

This Forbes article offers advice on how to get the most out of your mentorship experience. It also includes insights from successful professionals who have seen the benefits of mentorship firsthand.

[9 Tips for Mentees: Developing a Successful Mentoring Relationship](#)

What happens after you find a mentor? Learn nine habits that will help you be a successful mentee.

[12 Keys for a Successful Mentor-Mentee Relationship](#)

Thrive Global, a startup dedicated to reducing stress and improving wellness, shares 12 tips for developing an effective mentor-mentee relationship.

[Start, Build, & Establish a Successful Mentor-Mentee Relationship](#)

This article includes practical insights, the GROW model, and the stages of the relationship.

Mentoring Program FAQs

What is the purpose and goal of the CCA Mentorship Program?

The program has been designed to build relationships, empower its participants, and ideally create a path toward career development and leadership within the profession. The program provides the opportunity for newer professionals to be mentored by accomplished, experienced counselors who share similar interests, specialties, and career goals.

The goal of the CCA Mentorship Program is for new counseling professionals to have access to a professional counselor-leader mentor who provides support and encouragement and empowers them to develop and grow as counseling professionals.

Who do I contact if I have a question about the ACA Mentorship Program?

Questions or concerns regarding the mentorship program can be emailed to the CCA Mentorship Program committee Co-Chair at slzalewski@ccsu.edu. Please allow 24-48 business hours for correspondence.

What are the qualifications to serve as a mentor?

Mentors must meet the following criteria:

- Professional counselors (i.e., practitioners and counselor educators)
- Current CCA members in good standing
- A minimum of a master's degree in counseling or a related profession
- Relevant certifications or licenses
- A minimum of five years of pertinent professional experience

They should also understand that this is a voluntary opportunity, and no compensation will be provided for participation.

What are the requirements for being selected as a mentee?

Mentees must be current CCA members in good standing.

Mentees are CCA members who meet one of the following criteria:

1. Employed as new counselors,
2. Employed as isolated counselors (e.g.: in single counselor settings)
3. Counseling in an area that is new to them.

Mentees should also understand that this is a voluntary opportunity, and no compensation will be provided for participation.

Can the mentorship relationship serve as supervision?

No. The mentor will be working to help the mentee develop professionally, but the mentee's clinical and work supervision is a separate entity. The mentor is not intended to replace—or supplement—the mentee's formal supervision.

What if I feel the mentorship partnering is a mismatch?

The mentoring relationship must remain professional and respectful for both parties at all times. Should you develop any issues or concerns about your mentor-mentee relationship, or should you wish to terminate your relationship with your mentor/mentee, please contact the CCA Mentorship Program team at slzalewski@ccsu.edu as soon as possible.

What resources and materials will mentors and mentees receive?

Participants will receive (a) a CCA Mentorship Program Handbook with information and resources on the mentorship program, (b) CCA Mentorship Program orientation training, and (c) midterm and final program evaluations on the CCA Mentorship Program.