



New MENTOR

Welcome & Orientation Packet

Congratulations on becoming a Mentor Level member of *MentorCONNECT*, the first global online eating disorders mentoring community!

Your *MentorCONNECT* Leadership Team has compiled some helpful information to get you off to the right start and help you make the most of your mentoring experience.

This information packet is brief, but it is very important for you to review ALL of the information here before beginning to work with your mentee(s)!

Included you will find:

1. What it Means to Join at the Mentor Level on MentorCONNECT
2. The “Mentor Model” as Outlined in “Beating Ana”
3. All About the MentorCONNECT Forums
4. Making a Mentoring Match
5. ASAP TO DO: New Mentoring Team “Immediate Action Plan”
6. ONGOING TO DO: Mentoring Team “Assessment Plan”
7. Reporting Abuse
8. Mentoring Boundaries Guidelines
9. New Mentoring Team Introduction Basics
10. Mentoring FAQ
11. Mentor Guidelines
12. REQUIRED: Monthly Mentor Surveys
13. REQUIRED: Mentor2Mentor (M2M) Program Overview
14. Additional Leadership-Level Volunteer Opportunities on MentorCONNECT

Who to contact with questions:

-Membership and Orientation, MC Forums Questions: Jeanette@mentorconnect-ed.org

-Mentoring Match Questions: Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org

It is great to have you as a part of this growing community!

With all our best,

Shannon Cutts
Executive Director, **MentorCONNECT**



What it Means to Join at the Mentor Level on MentorCONNECT

As a Mentor Level member, you embody to our many Mentee Level members that recovery truly IS possible.

As such, it is important to be **ready, willing, and able** to model the pro-recovery guidelines and rules that make MentorCONNECT the uniquely supportive community that we are.

Mentor Level members are encouraged to enter into their volunteer service with outside sources for ongoing personal recovery support already in place. We ask that all of our mentors commit to taking on a leadership role in the community rather than using the group mentoring resources we offer for personal ongoing recovery support. If you feel you still need a great deal of personal recovery support and wish to use MentorCONNECT in that way, then we ask you to re-evaluate whether now is the right time to serve as one of our caring volunteer mentors.

However, it is always acceptable for Mentor Level members to also match privately with a mentor themselves for extra one-on-one support. If you are interested in this option, please contact Vic Avon, our Mentoring Match Coordinator, for help with making a match. Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org

If you have any questions about what it means to serve as a Mentor Level member, please don't hesitate to contact Jeanette, our Director of Member Services, at jeanette@mentorconnect-ed.org

Thank you again for the priceless gift of hope you offer through volunteering as a mentor here on MentorCONNECT!



The “Mentor Model” as Outlined in “Beating Ana”

Beating Ana is the official mentoring text that outlines how MentorCONNECT applies mentoring to an eating disorders recovery setting.

Important definitions from **Beating Ana**:

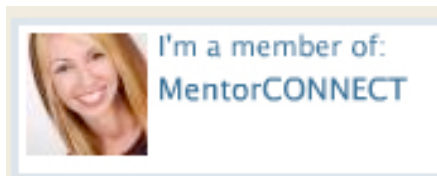
Mentor: a trusted guide who has knowledge and experience in a certain area, and is willing and able to share it.

Mentee: a person in need of guidance and instruction, and is willing to receive it.

The Mentor Model: the voluntary, ongoing, interactive relationship between mentor and mentee (giver and receiver), for the sole purpose of facilitating progress in recovery



All About the MentorCONNECT Forums



The MentorCONNECT Forums is the place where your mentees will gather regularly for extra peer and group support. You can find the Forums at www.mentorconnect-edforums.org.

All of our caring volunteer mentors will receive an invitation to join the Forums as well, and we encourage you to accept.

Your mentees are still in the midst of their recovery journey, and will still often struggle on a daily basis with issues like distinguishing the voice of recovery from the voice of their eating disorder.

This is why we invite all of our mentors to take an active leadership role on the Forums in addition to your private mentoring matches. We encourage you to watch this short video tour to learn more about everything the Forums has to offer: <http://www.mentorconnect-ed.org/mctour/>

Our members join to meet YOU – MentorCONNECT’s recovered mentor members. They want to hear your stories of how you did it, they want to know you, they want as much exposure to you as possible, and they want to connect with you regularly so that they always remember that recovery is possible. We also have several great leadership-level volunteer opportunities on the Forums that we will address a bit later in this training.

So please consider adding Forums participation to your mentor duties, both to support your personal mentees and to set a positive example for all recovering members of MentorCONNECT. If you did not receive a Forums invitation, or are having trouble activating your invitation or logging in, please send an email to Jeanette, our Director of Member Services, at Jeanette@mentorconnect-ed.org and she will help you get set up to participate.



Making a Mentoring Match

We encourage our mentees to take the initiative to match directly with a mentor. Experience has shown that proactive mentees who select their own mentor have the highest probability of getting the most out of the mentoring partnership.

Now that you are a *MentorCONNECT* mentor, your information is available to our mentee members on the private, password-protected **Find A Mentor page** that only our Mentee Level members can access.

You should start to receive inquiries from prospective mentees shortly. All inquiries will come to you from Vic Avon, our Mentoring Match Coordinator. When you receive an inquiry, we ask that each of our mentors:

1. Respond to all inquiries within 3 business days (even if it is just to say “I got your request and am considering it, and I will get back with you shortly with my answer”)
2. Accept no more than three mentees to ensure adequate time to nurture and grow a quality partnership with each mentee
3. Accept a match request only with a mentee of your same gender unless otherwise cleared by your Mentor2Mentor (M2M) Mentor Supervisor (more on the M2M program a bit later in this training guide)

If you need help deciding which mentee(s) to work with, Vic Avon, our Mentoring Match Coordinator, is always happy to help. His email is: Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org

VERY IMPORTANT: When you have accepted up to three mentees and are not available to work with additional mentees, please send an email to Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org so we can change your status to “Full” and take your information off of the Find A Mentor page.



New Mentoring Team “Immediate Action Plan”

Dear *MentorCONNECT* Mentor-Mentee Team,

You have embarked upon a very exciting adventure in your new mentoring matchup!

To ensure that your partnership gets off to a great start, we recommend you take the following steps right away.

1. Decide when, where, how, and how often you will talk. Discuss these questions:
 - *What days/times are you available for mentoring work?*
 - *How often can I contact you?*
 - *How often can I expect to hear back from you?*
 - *Do you prefer to work by email, phone, text, or other communication method?*
2. Thoroughly review this **Mentee Orientation Packet** together to ensure you have a good working knowledge of each partner’s role and responsibilities in a mentoring context
3. Ensure you both have an active **Community Forums** profiles set up so that you can both use the private, secure, confidential email system and participate in group mentoring activities as a team (if you did not receive an invitation to join contact Jeanette at Jeanette@mentorconnect-ed.org and she will issue you one)
4. Review the **Forums Agreement**, **Pro-Recovery Communications Policy**, and **Moderation Policy** together (found here: www.mentorconnect-ed.org/mcresources or inside the MC Forums)
5. Discuss the procedure you will both for communicating with each other use should either of you decide to pause or end the partnership



Mentoring Team Assessment Plan

Dear *MentorCONNECT* Mentor-Mentee Team,

As you progress in your partnership, we suggest that you schedule periodic times to reconvene as a team and assess the efficacy of the matchup.

While there are any number of ways that a mentoring team may do this, we would like to suggest one option that may be helpful for you and your mentoring teammate to follow.

With this **Assessment Plan***, you will proceed as follows:

1. Pick a regular recurring assessment time. This could be every quarter, every half year, three times per year, once per year, or another schedule as you best see fit
2. Mark your recurring assessment time on your mutual calendars, and agree to convene regularly on that date to discuss openly, honestly, and without judgment your mutual degree of satisfaction with the partnership
3. You may also wish to use the Assessment Questionnaire below to assist you with the conversation

Mentoring Team Assessment Questionnaire

Directions: For each team member, mark your individual satisfaction level from 1 to 10, with 1=very dissatisfied and 10=very satisfied. Then discuss your answers with your teammate.

How satisfied are you with the frequency of your communications?

How satisfied are you with the method (phone, email, in person, text, etc.) of your communications?

How satisfied are you with the content of your communications?

How beneficial mentorship is to helping you achieve your recovery/service goals?

What (if anything) could help to improve your satisfaction with the partnership?

***For Extra Assistance**

We hope this Assessment Plan will be useful to you as you continue your mentoring partnership. Please contact your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor or the Mentoring Matchup Coordinator for extra assistance.



Reporting Abuse

From time to time, a mentee may disclose past or ongoing abuse to their mentor. Abuse can be neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional.

Disclosing abuse is infrequent, but it does occur here on MentorCONNECT.

When it happens, it is the mentor's responsibility to report the abuse to the appropriate authorities if the mentee is a minor now, or was a minor at the time the abuse allegedly occurred. For general purposes, a "minor" is an individual who has not yet turned 18.

Should your mentee disclose past or ongoing abuse to you that fits the description above, please get in touch with your Mentor2Mentor (M2M) Supervisor immediately (more on the M2M program a bit later in this training guide).

We will guide you in locating the proper authorities in your mentee's place of residence to report the suspected abuse to.



A Word on Boundaries from Thom Rutledge

Like Shannon and the other members of *MentorConnect*'s leadership & advisory board, I am very grateful to you for your willingness to become a part of this important work by serving as a caring volunteer *MentorCONNECT* mentor.

We want you to feel free to develop your mentoring relationships in the ways that are comfortable and effective for you and your mentee(s). One thing that 30 years experience with helping people recover has taught me is that **establishing clear and reasonable expectations** at the beginning of any relationship intended to provide guidance and support is **essential**.

First Steps for Setting Boundaries:

- In introducing yourself as a Mentor, be direct and assertive in communicating a structure for your mentoring relationship
- In other words, do not hesitate to be the **leader** in this relationship
- Think about how you prefer to do your mentoring:
 - Do you prefer communicating via telephone, email, forums email/chat, in person? Of course, you may do any or all of the above, but there is nothing wrong with saying on the front end how you prefer to communicate
 - Think about how often you want to be available for contact with your mentee, and communicate your availability clearly at the start of your mentoring relationship. If you can respond within 48 hours, say so. If you set a guideline but are unable to respond in depth by the timeline for any reason, be sure to send a short note to your mentee letting them know you received their communication and will be back in touch very soon
 - As you know from reading our guidelines, you are not volunteering to be constantly accessible to your mentee. In fact, establishing limits to your availability is part of what makes for an effective helping relationship
 - *MentorCONNECT* is not intended to function as a crisis hotline. If your mentee(s) need immediate support, please tell them to call 9-1-1

The Importance of Setting Clear Boundaries:

- Knowing the boundaries for the relationship helps to encourage mentees to make the most of their time in communication with you.
- You will choose where to place your own boundaries, but here is an example that might help you in your own team boundary-setting meeting:

The way that I work as a mentor is that we will choose a time to talk on the phone, for 30 minutes to an hour, once or twice a week. We can be flexible about exactly when we do this, but let's start by setting specific day(s) and time(s) to do this weekly, so we can both put it on our schedules and know we have guaranteed time to connect each week. We will use the time of the call(s) to check in generally with how you are doing, but we will also focus on some exercises that I will suggest for you. Beyond our weekly phone conversations, if you want to check in with me via email or text once per day, you can do that. I won't necessarily respond in detail to each check in, but the information you will be giving me will help direct us for our weekly phone calls.



A Word on Boundaries from Thom Rutledge, *cont.*

- As you know, we require our Mentors to set aside one hour per week minimum per mentee, but you are welcome to set aside more time for your mentee(s) as your schedule permits --- again, clear communication about your availability is key to building trust
- You may also consider doing a question and answer email exchange that is more open ended. If you do something like this, it is important that you let your mentee know that you may not be responding to every question she asks immediately
- Once again, we do strongly recommend that you be clear that your relationship is not about responding to emergencies, that your mentee needs to be sure that s/he has professional resources and/or others in her support system for responding to crises
- If s/he does not have this, then you can offer your support and encouragement to her to do this early on as you build your mentoring relationship
- It is very important that you not inadvertently get into a relationship with your mentee in which you are perceived as her one and only support

Managing Exceptions to Your Agreed-Upon Structure:

- We want to emphasize that we want you to consider what will feel best for you, and all of the guidelines provided by *MentorCONNECT* for your use in structuring your mentoring relationship(s) are just that – guidelines
- It is also smart to let your mentee know that there may from time to time be exceptions to the structure you establish. For instance, when you have unexpected circumstances in your life, that you may be less available for short periods of time

It is important to establish with your mentee(s) that you have a life of your own, and that you practice what you teach: self-care.

A Final Word of Encouragement:

How you structure your mentoring relationships will no doubt change over time, as you learn more about yourself and the people you are mentoring. I do not want you to misunderstand any of what I am saying to be about establishing rigid, inflexible boundaries. Of course, we want you to be flexible. We also want you to remember that being a mentor is as much a learning experience as is being a mentee is. The same is true for me, even as I write this to you. We are all in this together; we are all classmates in The University of Recovery. Corny, but true.



Thom Rutledge for the *MentorCONNECT* Advisory Team



Mentor-Mentee Introduction Basics

Communications Basics

The rules of good communications are simple. Learning and practicing these communications basics gives any partnership the potential to be great.

NOTE: Since *MentorCONNECT* mentoring is primarily conducted online, these basics are even more important to ensure the effectiveness of your partnership!

1. Listening skills: Listen to what the other person is saying. It is often helpful to repeat back what you have heard from the other person before responding to make sure you have understood correctly
2. Speaking skills: Email and phone communications cut out 90% of how we “hear” each other – nonverbally through visual and body language cues. So spend time considering what you say, or type, to ensure clarity and minimize miscommunication
3. Conflict resolution skills: From time to time, miscommunication may occur. Stay calm. Backtrack to discover where the misunderstanding first began. Using your listening and speaking skills, work from that point forward to clear up any confusion

Getting To Know You

It is important to spend time getting to know your mentee(s). You may wish to share some time just chatting about favorite books, movies, or personal recovery milestones as a precursor to deeper conversations.

You can use the questions below as ice-breakers:

- *What are your favorite recovery books or movies and why?*
- *Can you share a bit more about your personal recovery story and goals?*
- *Who are your personal recovery heroes or role models and why?*
- *What are your favorite recovery websites and why?*
- *What is your current support system?*
- *Why did you want to seek a mentor?*

Communications Parameters & Boundaries:

It is also important to outline parameters and boundaries so you both feel safe and secure in communicating with each other.

You can use the questions below to set parameters and boundaries:

- *What days/times are you available for mentoring work?*
- *How often would you like to make contact?*
- *How often can I expect to hear back from you?*
- *Do you prefer to work by email, phone, text, or some combination thereof?*



Mentoring FAQ

This may be the first time you have ever served as an eating disorders mentor to someone who is struggling and needs to know that recovery is possible. Below are some frequently asked questions from other mentors that can help you make the most of your mentoring partnership.

MentorCONNECT has both male and female mentor and mentee members. Can I accept a mentee who is not my same gender?

We only offer same-gender mentor-mentee matching opportunities. If you are contacted by a prospective mentee who is not your gender for any reason, please redirect them to the MC Leadership Team for assistance with making a mentoring match.

How often do mentors and mentees communicate each week?

It really depends on the team. You will set up those expectations in your initial Communications Parameters & Boundaries discussion. If your availability changes, be sure to let your mentee(s) know!

What types of communications do mentoring teams use?

It depends on the team. You and your mentee(s) will decide what form of contact is best.

How can I help my mentee?

We have heard all kinds of wonderful stories from our mentee members, who mention how helpful it is to have their mentor's accountability, to have someone to talk to, to receive positive encouragement and inspiration, to have additional support in between therapy and treatment sessions, to have someone who knows what it is like to be in recovery and understands....and the list just goes on and on.

I have questions about my mentoring partnership. Who should I ask?

Through the Mentor2Mentor (M2M) Program, you will be matched with a more experienced mentor who is there to help and guide you, answer questions, brainstorm for troubleshooting issues, and share personal experiences of mentoring. You will hear from your Mentor Match at least once per month, but are also welcome to contact them more often as the need arises. You may also send an email to our Mentoring Match Coordinator, Vic, at Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org if you need additional support.



Mentoring FAQ, continued

My mentee hasn't contacted me. Should I keep waiting?

We do encourage our mentors to wait for their mentee(s) to make contact. However, if it has been more than a week, definitely try to make contact. If you try twice to make contact and get no response, be sure to tell your Mentor match.

My mentee contacts me often but s/he doesn't seem to be making any progress. Am I doing something wrong?

It is unlikely. Sometimes a mentee just needs more help and support than mentoring can offer. If you are feeling frustrated or concerned, please let your Mentor Match know, and you will be contacted by the Leadership Team to discuss and address any concerns.

My mentee has asked me for money or other personal assistance beyond the scope of our mentoring partnership – what should I do?

MentorCONNECT does not support or condone these types of requests. Members who solicit money from other members in any context will be banned from further participation in the community. Please be advised that you offer assistance at your own risk and MentorCONNECT can not be held liable for any transactions you voluntarily enter into.

I feel like my mentee and I are not a good match and I want to switch mentees. How can I do that?

Mentoring is not an exact science – it is a relationship like any other, and there needs to be a certain “chemistry” in order for it to grow and thrive. If you feel like you would benefit from switching mentees, the first thing you need to do is inform the MC Leadership Team of your decision by contacting Vic Avon at Vic@mentorconnect-ed.org and wait for approval to proceed. Next, you should inform your current mentee. It is also important for closure to share that you feel the mentee would benefit from matching with a different mentor, and that you are ending the match only because you believe it is in the best interests of your mentee. Only after you have informed your current mentee may you seek a new match. And as always you must inform the MC Leadership Team as soon as you have re-matched.

I have experienced a change in situation and need to take a break from mentoring.

We understand that sometimes life happens. For the sake of closure, we ask that our mentoring teams to speak directly when one or both parties wish to end the partnership. If you need any assistance in ending your mentoring match, please let your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor know.



Mentor Guidelines

It is important for you to be aware of what mentoring is, and what it isn't. We have included the Mentor Guidelines here for your review. Please refer back to these guidelines if you have any questions or concerns as your mentoring partnership proceeds.

Guidelines for Mentors

- **Refrain** from volunteering to serve as a mentor until you are in strong recovery (at least one year largely free from symptoms of disordered eating behaviors and attendant unhealthy coping patterns)
- **Before beginning to serve as a mentor**, be clear and honest with yourself about your motivations for doing so. Do not rush yourself through your own recovery because you wish to help others!
- **The wise and effective mentor will first and always be a mentee as well.** Find your balance between giving out of the fullness of what you have learned and earned through your own recovery, and continuing to receive centering guidance and instruction from those ahead of you on the recovery path
- Safeguard your own recovery and **DO NOT TAKE ON MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE!** If the mentor-mentee relationship requires more time and/or energy than you are able to offer, redirect your mentee(s) to find a more appropriate match
- **Be very clear** with your mentee(s) about the time commitment you can make. If you are only available via email or phone, say so. If you are only available on certain days, say so. If certain topics fall outside your area of experience, refrain from offering feedback in those areas
- **Be willing to halt or end the relationship** if at any time it appears that your mentee is no longer willing to actively work towards recovery, or if the relationship itself becomes a detriment to the mentee's progress in recovery, or to your own continued strong recovery
- **Require** all mentee(s) who are minors to obtain parental permission before entering into a mentoring relationship
- **Do not attempt** to supersede or replace other treatment options or team members – seek to be a complement to any structure already in place and encourage mentee(s) to build a full support network
- **Use caution** when making recommendations outside of any training or expertise you may have. Partner with other treatment professionals or guide mentee(s) to seek additional assistance
- **Clearly communicate** to mentee(s) that any insight/feedback you offer as a mentor is NOT meant to replace the advice and care of a medical professional
- **Focus on troubleshooting** for daily living and recovery-related issues as they arise
- **Share your personal story only as one example** - remember that each person's story is unique
- **Strive above all** to awaken the wise and confident healer within your mentee(s)
- **Be** committed, available, open and honest, patient, kind, and willing to be wrong
- **Remember what it was like** for you during your own recovery, and adjust recommendations/expectations accordingly
- Remember that the **#1 healer** is unconditional love
- Faithful, consistent, positive feedback is **key**
- **De-personalize the process** - focus on achieving desired results more than on adoption of specific suggestions
- **In the presence of triggers, proceed with caution** - instead of becoming overly involved in discussions of numbers, weight, etc., pinpoint what those topics may represent and how to address those underlying issues successfully
- Remember the mentor-mentee relationship is **voluntary** and that it is the mentee's job to make good use of the opportunity
- **Avoid** any attempt to coerce mentee(s) into wanting to heal or doing the work. Instead, emphasize the benefits of recovery as you have experienced them



Monthly Mentor Surveys

Each month, you will receive a short survey to assess your experience of serving as a *MentorCONNECT* mentor. This survey gives the Leadership Team and Mentor2Mentor Supervisor valuable information about how your mentoring partnership is proceeding.

The survey will be sent to you via email. It will ask basic questions and should not take more than 3-5 minutes to complete.

Completing the survey in a timely manner (within 1 week of receipt) is a requirement for all *MentorCONNECT* mentor members, so please express any concerns you may have about your ability to complete the survey by sending an email to your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor right away (see next page).

Survey questions may include but are not limited to the following:

- *Requests to update contact information*
- *The name(s) of your mentee(s)*
- *Which mentee(s) you heard from within the previous 30 days*
- *What is going well*
- *What is not going well*
- *Any concerns or questions that you have*
- *How can we help and support you more effectively*
- *Are you available to take on new mentee(s)*
- *Are you interested in other leadership-level volunteer opportunities on MentorCONNECT*



Mentor2Mentor (M2M) Program

As a new *MentorCONNECT* mentor, you will be matched with a more experienced mentor member who will support you as you begin serving as a mentor.

You will be contacted by your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor within the first week of being approved to serve as a volunteer mentor. Your match will share contact information and be on hand to answer any questions you have and help you get oriented to the community.

Following the initial contact, you are free to contact your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor whenever you have questions, concerns, or simply need to brainstorm.

Even if you do not find the need to contact your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor, you will be contacted a minimum of once per month via email. At that time, your match will collect information about how your mentoring experience is going and discuss any concerns you raised in the previous month's Mentor Survey.

Responding to your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor once per month via email is a requirement for all *MentorCONNECT* mentor members, so please express any concerns you may have about your ability to participate in the Mentor2Mentor Program by sending an email to your Mentor2Mentor Supervisor as outlined in your welcome email:

Andrea Roe: Andrea@mentorconnect-ed.org

Cheryl Kerrigan: Cheryl@mentorconnect-ed.org



Additional Leadership-Level Volunteer Opportunities on MentorCONNECT

In addition to your service as one of MentorCONNECT's caring volunteer mentors, there are several other rewarding leadership-level volunteer opportunities that contribute to making MentorCONNECT the pro-recovery support community that we are.

Our Mentee and General Support Level members joined MentorCONNECT for one reason – **YOU**.

They want to hear from you.

Whether it is through writing a weekly blog inside the Forums, helping to moderate the blogs or groups, co-leading one of the weekly chat support groups, facilitating an online study group, or becoming a Mentor2Mentor Supervisor yourself once you have some mentoring experience under your belt, what makes MentorCONNECT work is the strong recovered presence YOU bring to the community!

We do ask that all new Mentor Level members take time to get oriented and acclimated to your new community and establish your mentoring partnerships **before** taking on additional volunteer responsibilities.

However, once you are ready to volunteer, please know your service is much needed and appreciated by all!

For more information about current leadership-level volunteer opportunities on MentorCONNECT, please send an email to Jeanette@mentorconnect-ed.org or indicate your interest on your Monthly Mentor Survey form.

Thank you! 😊