



## **Best Practices Guide for Chapter Mentorship Programs**

### **Chi Sigma Iota International Chapter Development Committee**

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Much of the information in this Guide has been taken from [csi-net.org](http://csi-net.org). Please check the website for updates!

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## Introduction

Welcome to Chi Sigma Iota's resource on establishing or enhancing your chapter's mentorship program. CSI mentorship programs provide an effective means for sparking and continuing meaningful interactions among your CSI members. The connections created through mentorship enable learning about CSI, peer support towards excellence in counseling, and beyond. Mentorship programs serve as a catalyst for energy and investment within a CSI chapter and foster support networks and relationships with a CSI chapter that remain even after students have graduated. This guide can be helpful whether or not you already have a mentorship program. Thus, if you are starting a mentorship program, you will find helpful information to build your mentorship program from the ground up. However, even if you have a long established mentorship program, you may find some additional tools, information, or resources that are helpful to you.

The authors of this guide start out by defining and discussing the purpose of a mentorship program. The nature of the mentoring relationship is described as well as the key components to a CSI chapter mentorship program. Readers of this guide will also find sections depicting the roles and responsibilities of both mentor and mentee. General parameters for matching mentors and mentees are presented along with examples of events that allow mentors and mentees to interact. Additionally, the authors have included a section on CSI mentorship for online counseling programs that have a CSI chapter. Be sure to check out the appendices for this guide which include forms ranging from a mentorship agreement to a sample survey for evaluating the effectiveness of your mentorship program.

This guide is largely based upon the [Chapter Mentorship Program PowerPoint presentation](#) located at [csi-net.org > Chapters > Development > Chapter Training Modules](#).

## The Purpose of a Mentorship Program

First, chapters must identify the purposes behind the mentorship program. In doing so, it might be helpful for your CSI chapter and mentorship leaders to reflect and identify the purposes of your mentorship program as it relates to your chapter. Mentorship programs commonly fulfill the purpose of:

- Assisting and supporting new/transitioning members. For instance, new inductees to CSI may learn the most about the benefits and involvement in CSI through their mentors. Also, students approaching graduation may receive support from an alumni member who is already working as a professional counselor.
- Leadership development and training. New CSI members commonly learn about leadership opportunities and skills through modeling and information provided by their mentors.
- Cultivating student wellness and reducing stress. The mentor-mentee relationship

can provide a positive outlet for the student and an opportunity to normalize the challenges the student experiences. Further, the mentorship program can collaborate with social and wellness committees from the chapter to encourage mentors and mentees to meet as a part of social or wellness events.

What other purposes might your mentorship program have for your CSI chapter? In reflecting on this question, consider the needs of your chapter that you have noticed informally through conversations with CSI members or formally through needs assessments you may have conducted in your chapter.

## The Purpose of a Mentor

Mentorship, for the purpose of this guide, involves a senior member of an organization providing support and guidance to a junior or new member. Firstly, the purpose of a mentor is to offer support and encouragement to promote professional development. Secondly, a mentor provides role modeling of professional behavior. In order to be fully effective in actualizing this purpose, mentors should incorporate the following guidelines:

- Be responsive to the mentee's needs in a timely manner. Much of the benefit from the mentoring relationship stems from the mentee receiving the right support at the right time.
- Be actively involved with various advocacy efforts. Mentorship offers opportunities for involvement in advocacy efforts and the modeling of advocacy behaviors.
- Be actively involved with other compatible endeavors (e.g., publishing, research, etc.). Research mentorship is imperative in developing critical consumers of counseling literature and the skills necessary to become ethical and effective researchers.

## The Mentoring Relationship

- Expectations need to be set for both mentors and mentees prior to beginning the mentoring relationship. These may include: Time commitment and availability, work expectations, or skills required, and transportation or other logistical needs. Hence, chapter leaders in charge of mentoring can consider options including informational emails to mentors and mentees regarding expectations and/or develop mentorship forms that describe expectations while allowing mentor and mentee to address additional details (e.g., availability, acceptable means of communication, etc.).
- Mentors and mentees should work collaboratively to determine meaning and common goals. Specific attention should be paid so that each individual's needs are met. This process can be formalized via mentorship agreements or documents such as Appendix 5. It can be helpful to have an initial mentor-mentee social in which you provide space for goals and expectations to be discussed.

- Practice proper ethics. Mentorship ethics are similar to those of professional counseling in which boundaries and expectations need to be set, and ethical guidelines and principles should be followed.

## Formality

How formal should mentorship programs be?

- *Formal programs* involve structure and very detailed attention from the local CSI chapter. Examples of formal mentorship program components include using an application process and having a mentors meeting to provide information and question/answer time for mentors about being an effective mentor, expectations for mentorship, ethical mentoring, etc. Formal mentorship can also entail having a mentor-mentee launch event to facilitate a first meeting of mentor and mentee. Mentorship events such as socials occur throughout the semester and are often sponsored by the local CSI chapter.
- *Informal programs* are flexible, which can be supported by local CSI chapter leaders. This can involve email reminders about events that can be opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet and the encouragement of purposeful mentor-mentee interaction, as needed.

Whether your mentorship program is formal or informal, discussions about financing mentorship should take place among chapter leaders. The culture of the CSI chapter and purposes behind the mentorship program help to dictate how formal or informal a chapter's mentorship program should be.

## Characteristics of a Mentor

The "characteristics of a mentor" listed below should be presented to all potential CSI mentors prior to them beginning their service as mentors (Appendix 1). The bullet points below clarify the qualities of an effective mentor, the purpose of mentorship, the nature of the mentoring relationship, and guidelines for successful mentorship.

An effective mentor:

- Has knowledge of, and is actively involved in, their CSI chapter activities.
- Is knowledgeable of CSI International opportunities (e.g., grants, leadership and/or service involvement, awards, essay contests, etc.).
- Understands the developmental nature of professional identity and leadership
- Exemplifies and role models servant leadership.
- Is knowledgeable of ethical codes and encourages ethical behavior among colleagues and mentees.
- Understands potential power differentials in mentor-mentee relationship.
- Makes time to meet with mentees and commit to attending to their needs.
- Remains committed to the mentorship process until goals are met or process is achieved.

- Has ongoing conversations about goals and expectations for the mentorship process, understands that the goals for mentorship are for the mentee's development, and serves as a supportive catalyst for the mentee's development.
- Is aware of, sensitive to, and has conversations related to cultural differences in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Provides information about opportunities within CSI.
- Provides feedback to the mentee and is open to reciprocal feedback.
- Recognizes personal limitations, discusses these with mentees, works from his or her strengths, and seeks consultation and/or continuing education as necessary.

## Characteristics of a Mentee

The “characteristics of a mentee” listed below highlight expectations of mentees so that their experience can be maximized. This list should be disseminated prior to beginning a mentor-mentee relationship (Appendix 2).

A mentee:

- Is an engaged CSI member who strives to become connected to and active in their CSI chapter and in CSI International.
- Gains knowledge of CSI's Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan, and *Principles and Practices of Leadership Excellence*.
- Is open and receptive to feedback and is willing to follow ethical suggestions offered by mentor.
- Discusses conflicts with mentor.
- Is aware of, sensitive to, and has conversations related to cultural differences in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Clearly states goals and needs from the mentor throughout the mentorship process.
- Understands her or his own limitations and seeks to strengthen growth areas through the relationship with the mentor.

## Mentor and Mentee Matching

As your local chapter and/or mentorship committee meets, there are several questions to consider when establishing your mentor-mentee pairings for the year.

- Who may be potentially matched? Be sure to allot adequate time to identify mentors and persons seeking a mentor. This may involve disseminating information about your mentorship program to your potential mentors and mentees.
- Who are the potential/available mentors and mentees? Remember the mentorship definition in identifying your mentors and mentees. In other words, your mentors should be CSI members who are more “senior” in the organization when compared to their mentees.
- Which types of pairings best serve the purpose? If your purpose is leadership mentoring, then you will want to look for experienced leaders in the organization who wish to pair with junior members seeking to learn and develop leadership skills. For mentorship of new members, you may wish to have senior CSI student

members, or with experienced CSI members, you may seek CSI chapter alumni and professional members who are interested in mentoring. For new professional members, you may seek more experienced alumni mentors.

- Does level of pairing matter? Pairing should be based on purpose. Hence if mentoring is focused on providing information to new master's level CSI members and aiding them in academic excellence as a master's student, pairing MA students with other MA students may be most helpful. However, these decisions may differ depending on the purpose of your mentorship program. For example, MA students interested in pursuing their PhD in counseling may benefit greatly from being paired with a PhD level mentor.
- Time and Proximity
  - How much time is necessary for success and how much time do both parties have available? This is often a matter to be determined between the mentor and mentee. Having a formal mentorship document, like the mentorship agreement in Appendix 5, or an organized event in which mentor and mentee can outline frequency and duration of meetings as well as goals can be helpful.
  - Does scheduling or proximity serve as a barrier to certain arrangements or pairings? Again, having organized events or including alternatives for mentors and mentees to navigate barriers can be helpful. For example, facilitate mentors and mentees identifying agreed upon means of communication if meeting in person is difficult such as phone, Skype, email, etc.
  - What available resources does the chapter have before, during, or after chapter meetings that are available for mentorship activities? Are there social organizations that might support a mentorship program? CSI chapter meeting time can be spent discussing collaborations between the Mentorship Committee and other committees (such as overlapping a Social Committee or Professional Development Committee event with a mentorship event). Organizing formal mentorship events can also be discussed in CSI meetings along with budgeting for the mentorship program.

Depending on the purpose of your pairing, you may consider matching mentors and mentees by comparing mentor interests and mentee needs. A Mentor and Mentee checklist is provided in Appendices 3 and 4.

### Multiple Relationships

Mentorship must be conducted in an ethical fashion. Multiple relationships (mentors and mentees who have a personal or professional relationship prior to or concurrent to the mentoring relationship) are one potential barrier to ethical mentorship. Multiple relationships have the potential to cause harm to the mentee or mentor because of factors including the risk of abuse of power by a mentor in a position of influence relative to the mentee, risk of distress, etc.

It is important to note that:

- Multiple relationships may be unavoidable in counselor training programs.
- Attention should be paid to the types of multiple relationships that could exist between mentors and mentees with the intent to avoid uncomfortable situations.
- Mentors should be instructed to avoid coercion and/or taking advantage of their mentees.
- Multiple relationships should be defined and explained to mentors and mentees.
- It is important for chapter leaders to educate mentors and mentees about how to communicate with each other and with mentorship program leaders if they have concerns about a multiple relationship related to mentoring.

## Mentorship Event Considerations

- Hold regular mentorship meetings. Each chapter can select the frequency of meetings that best fits its mentorship program. Mentorship meetings can also be formal (organized and financially supported by your chapter) or informal (left to the discretion of the mentor-mentee pair). Holding at least one mentorship meeting sponsored and/or organized by the chapter should be considered, as this can be helpful in initiating mentoring relationships.
- Mentorship events can be formal or informal and can mirror goals set by the mentorship program.
- It is important to discuss financial needs to planned events with the chapter executive board. Make sure the mentorship program is an item included in the chapter budget, if funding is required.
- [Chapter Development and Statewide/Regional Networking Grants](#) may be available to support mentorship initiatives via [csi-net.org](http://csi-net.org) > Research and Grants > Chapter Grants.
- Alternative resources may be available on the chapter's campus. The chapter's department or other graduate student organizations may be able to assist in the planning process (e.g., materials for the event, monetary support, etc.).
- Collaboration with other committees is encouraged and may enhance chapter goals (e.g., working with the Social Committee and/or Wellness Committee to plan a mentorship social event focused on managing program stress).
- Mentorship event themes can include:
  - Membership (e.g., a Pizza Social for new members and mentor pairs)
  - Advocacy (e.g., an Advocacy Day visit to the state legislature)
  - Alumni Initiatives (e.g., a Shadow Event for alumni mentors and second-year mentees)
  - Research (e.g., a Brainstorming Group for new research ideas and initiatives between mentor pairs)



## Developing and Maintaining a Distance Mentorship Program

- Resource Webinar – The webinar host utilizes this format to allowing members to “dial in” to a specific and intentional meeting for the purposes of:
  - Introducing the mentorship program.
  - Providing detailed information about the program and the matching process.
  - Sharing literature and other pertinent information about the mentorship process and the benefits of mentoring.
  - Having mentors and mentees see and understand the value of online connections.
  - Engaging in group discussions and providing support around areas of need and challenge.
- Presentation Webinar – The chapter could utilize this format to provide quality content programming as a means of keeping members connected and involved. Chi Sigma Iota provides an outstanding model of how to present webinars that are timely and insightful. Chapters should make every opportunity to utilize this resource as a model of how to structure a webinar to be informative and engaging.
- Mentor/mentee social media gatherings
  - The creative chapter can use a variety of social media platforms to host social gatherings.

## Evaluation

- All programs, either formal or informal, should be regularly reviewed to determine if they are meeting their objectives.
- Surveys, interviews, and/or other methods can be employed with mentorship pairs to understand how the chapter can support or change existing programs. See Appendix 8 for a Sample Evaluation.
- Chapters should regularly consider how the purposes of the program are being served or if directions need to change over time.

## For More Information

- If you have any additional questions about developing a Chapter Mentorship Program, please contact Dr. Julia Whisenhunt, CSI Chapter Development Committee Chair, at [jwhisenh@westga.edu](mailto:jwhisenh@westga.edu).

## Appendix 1: Characteristics of a Mentor Handout

The “characteristics of a mentor” list below should be presented to all potential CSI mentors prior to them beginning their service as mentors. The points below clarify the qualities of an effective mentor, the purpose of mentorship, the nature of the mentoring relationship, and guidelines for successful mentorship.

An effective mentor:

- Has knowledge of, and is actively involved in, their CSI chapter activities.
- Is knowledgeable of opportunities within CSI International (e.g., grants, leadership and/or service involvement, awards, essay contests, etc.).
- Understands the developmental nature of professional identity and leadership.
- Exemplifies and role models servant leadership.
- Is knowledgeable of ethical codes and encourages ethical behavior among colleagues and mentees.
- Understands potential power differentials in mentor-mentee relationship.
- Makes time to meet with mentees and commit to attending to their needs.
- Remains committed to the mentorship process until goals are met or process is achieved.
- Has ongoing conversations about goals and expectations for the mentorship process, understands that the goals for mentorship are for the mentee’s development, and serves as a supportive catalyst for the mentee’s development.
- Is aware of, sensitive to, and has conversations related to cultural differences in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Provides information about CSI opportunities.
- Provides feedback to the mentee and is open to reciprocal feedback.
- Recognizes personal limitations, discusses these with mentees, works from his/her strengths, and seeks consultation and/or continuing education as necessary.

## Appendix 2: Characteristics of a Mentee Handout

The “characteristics of a mentee” listed below highlight expectations of mentees so that their experience can be maximized. This list should be disseminated prior to beginning a mentor-mentee relationship.

A mentee:

- Is an engaged CSI member who strives to become connected to and active in their CSI chapter and in CSI International.
- Gains knowledge of CSI’s Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan, and *Principles and Practices of Leadership Excellence*.
- Is open and receptive to feedback and is willing to follow ethical suggestions offered by the mentor.
- Discusses conflicts with the mentor.
- Is aware of, sensitive to, and has conversations related to cultural differences in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Clearly states goals and needs from the mentor throughout the mentorship process.
- Understands her or his own limitations and seeks to strengthen growth areas through relationship with the mentor.

## Appendix 3: Mentor Interests Checklist

### CSI Mentor Interests Checklist

Mentor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 - 5 rate the level of interest you have for assisting a mentee in each of the provided domains. Ratings on the scale are as follows:

(1) Completely Disinterested, (2) Slightly Interested, (3) Interested, (4) Very Interested, (5) This is a Priority

<b>Counselor Identity</b>	
Developing a professional identity	
Theoretical orientation	
Identifying a client population of interest	
Deciding whether to return to school	
Beliefs and values	
Ethics	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Cultural Competency</b>	
Developing multicultural competence	
Recognizing and understanding barriers	
How to address diversity with an individual from a different background	
Understanding and working through bias	
Coming to understand one's own culture	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Professional Development</b>	
Networking opportunities/organizational involvement	
Setting up a private practice	
Continued education	
Marketability	
Licensure, credentialing, et cetera	
Advocacy efforts	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Student Concerns</b>	
Scholarship, grant opportunities	
Research	
What happens after graduation?	
Dissertation/Master's thesis	
Finding publication opportunities	

Avoiding burnout in graduate school	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Work/Life Balance</b>	
Avoiding burnout	
Balancing professional and personal life responsibilities	
Goal-setting and task management	
Life skills (e.g., conflict resolution, confidence-building, time management)	
Self-care	
Other (please explain)	

Use this space to include any comments or other topics you would like to explore with a mentee that were not provided in this checklist:

## Appendix 4: Mentee Needs Checklist

### CSI Mentee Needs Checklist

Mentee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 - 5 rate the level of interest you have for addressing each of the following concerns. Ratings on the scale are as follows:

(1) Completely Disinterested, (2) Slightly Interested, (3) Interested, (4) Very Interested, (5) This is a Priority

<b>Counselor Identity</b>	
Developing a professional identity	
Theoretical orientation	
Identifying a client population of interest	
Deciding whether to return to school	
Beliefs and values	
Ethics	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Cultural Competency</b>	
Developing multicultural competence	
Recognizing and understanding barriers	
How to address diversity with an individual from a different background	
Understanding and working through bias	
Coming to understand one's own culture	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Professional Development</b>	
Networking opportunities/organizational involvement	
Setting up a private practice	
Continued education	
Marketability	
Licensure, credentialing, et cetera	
Advocacy efforts	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Student Concerns</b>	
Scholarship, grant opportunities	
Research	
What happens after graduation?	
Dissertation/Master's thesis	

Finding publication opportunities	
Avoiding burnout in graduate school	
Other (please explain)	

<b>Work/Life Balance</b>	
Avoiding burnout	
Balancing professional and personal life responsibilities	
Goal-setting and task management	
Life skills (e.g., conflict resolution, confidence-building, time management)	
Self-care	
Other (please explain)	

Use this space to include any comments or other topics you would like to address that were not provided in this checklist:

## Appendix 5: Sample Mentorship Agreement

### Mentorship Agreement

The mentoring relationship is a mutual relational learning process aimed at providing both the mentor and the mentee with opportunities for personal and professional growth. This could entail but is not limited to opportunities for the identification and development of areas of desired growth. The purpose of this agreement is to establish potential areas for exploration and to gain an understanding of how this process and relationship could develop.

#### Expectations of the Mentoring Process and Relationship

Mentoring is a relational experience that is both multifaceted and multidimensional. With that in mind, it is imperative that we agree to openly discuss expectations of the relationship as they will impact each of us and influence our growth. To that end, I initially expect that we will openly discuss:

1. How we can establish a mutually beneficial relationship and dialogue?

2. The frequency of our contact:

a. How often will we meet?

b. Day(s)/Time(s) of the week that are best.

c. How long will our meetings last?

d. Will we be meeting via email, Skype, etc.?

3. The domain focus of our relationship (counselor identity, cultural competency, professional development, student concerns, work-life balance, other) and how that can evolve over time.

a. Specific areas of interest

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Emergencies happen, so if the mentor or mentee are unable to keep a meeting date, an advance call/email will be made to reschedule.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mentor \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Mentee \_\_\_\_\_ Date



## Appendix 6: Getting to Know You Questionnaire

**The purpose of gathering this information is to provide your mentor with some information about you! You can use this form as a discussion tool or complete it before you have your first mentorship meeting.**

Year in Your Counseling Program:

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Length of Time as a CSI Member:

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What got you interested in the field of counseling?

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Which classes are your favorites and why?

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What are the extracurricular activities in which you participate?

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What is it about CSI that is exciting to you?

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What past experience do you have with CSI?

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What do you want to learn more about in terms of CSI and leadership?

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What are your personal and professional goals for the next year?

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What do you hope to gain from this mentoring relationship?

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## Appendix 7: Sample Discussion Questions for Mentorship Meetings

**Note: These could be sent out monthly with an email prompting/encouraging discussion.**

### Mentee Questions:

- Why did you pursue an education in counseling?
- What do you like best about being a counselor-in-training?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- If you could go back in time, what would you have done differently so far as a graduate student?
- Why is it important to you to be a CSI member?
- How do you stay up-to-date with current research and practice issues in counseling?
- What are skills that have proven to be important in school and/or internship that perhaps you did not anticipate needing?
- Who or what are some of your most important resources that you use to guide you?
- What books or theories have most influenced your ideas and thoughts?
- Who are your personal and professional mentors and why are these people able to inspire and connect with you?
- What has been helpful for you in identifying what you want to do post-graduation?
- How did you go about the job search process?
- How do you strike a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?
- How do you think counselors can advocate for professional counseling?
- 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 obstacles and roadblocks that arise as a counselor-in-training?

### Mentor Questions:

- Discuss upcoming or previously attended CSI activities and “take-aways” from these experiences.
- How are you doing in terms of working towards your mentoring goals we established earlier in our relationship? How can I support you in reaching those goals?
- What has been most helpful about the mentorship process so far? What changes can be made to make this process most helpful to you?
- What resources are you wanting at this time?
- What questions do you have about CSI?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced as a counselor-in-training since our last meeting/contact?
- What successes (big or small) have you had personally or as a counselor-in-training since our last meeting/contact?
- How can I be helpful to you?

## Appendix 8: Sample Mentorship Program Evaluation Survey

### Evaluation of Mentorship Experience (Sample Form)

(Chapters: You are encouraged to edit this form to meet your needs.)

**Instructions: Using a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.**

	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
1. The purpose of the mentorship experience was made clear to me by the mentorship program.					
2. The purpose of the mentorship experience was made clear to me by my mentor.					
3. I was able to discuss my objectives for the mentorship experience with my mentor.					
4. I was paired with a mentor who was a good fit for helping me meet my objectives for the mentorship experience.					
5. My objectives as a mentee were met by the mentorship experience.					
6. My CSI chapter provided opportunities for my mentor and I to spend time together.					
7. The frequency of contact with my mentor was ideal.					
8. The quality of interactions with my mentor was satisfactory.					
9. Overall, my experience as a mentee was satisfactory.					

10. I am glad I chose to participate in the mentorship program.					
11. I would recommend this mentorship program to others.					

**Please respond to the following questions to the best of your ability.**

12. What was most helpful about your mentorship experience?

13. What was least helpful about your mentorship experience?

14. What suggestions do you have for improving the mentorship program?