



**Chi Sigma Iota
Counseling Academic and Professional
Honor Society International**

**CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program
Best Practices Guide**

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CSI Mission Statement

The [mission of Chi Sigma Iota](#) is to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership and excellence in Counseling, to encourage the pursuit of personal excellence by members,

and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the profession of Counseling.

CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program Overview

The CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program reflects the Society's commitment to support Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFAs) as they help their chapters further CSI's mission. The program provides opportunities for CFAs to foster meaningful professional relationships with new and seasoned Chapter Faculty Advisors through mentorship, resource sharing, and community building in order to support CFA wellness and retention, chapter productivity, and connection within the network of Chapter Faculty Advisors at a national and international level.

This manual is a practical guide for the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program. It is designed to assist mentors, mentees, and program leaders by outlining the philosophy, expectations, best practices, and resources that support effective mentoring relationships. While offering structure and consistency, this guide also recognizes that meaningful mentorship is relationship-centered and should remain flexible enough to accommodate the unique goals, experiences, and needs of each CFA.

CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program Oversight

The CSI Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFA) Committee sponsors to ensure the mentorship program operates ethically, inclusively, intentionally, and in alignment with the mission and values of the Society. A CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program Sub-Committee will be formed to support this initiative each year, with a Coordinator or Coordinators designated as the primary contact(s).

CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program Participation

Program Goals

1. Support the successful onboarding, transition, and ongoing development of new Chapter Faculty Advisors within Chi Sigma Iota.
2. Foster meaningful mentoring relationships that encourage collaboration, connection, leadership growth, and professional support among CFAs.
3. Promote the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices related to chapter leadership, student engagement, and advisor responsibilities.
4. Strengthen a supportive and inclusive network of CFAs that encourages communication, wellness, innovation, and sustainability in servant leadership roles.

5. Consistent with [CSI's Principles and Practices of Leadership Excellence](#) (PPLEs), cultivate ethical, student-centered, and culturally responsive servant leadership practices that enhance the vitality and future growth of CSI chapters.

Mentorship Philosophy

The CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program is grounded in the belief that professional growth occurs through authentic relationships, support, encouragement, and shared experiences.

Mentorship within this program is intended to be:

- Developmental rather than supervisory
- Collaborative rather than hierarchical
- Supportive rather than evaluative
- Flexible and individualized to participant needs
- Inclusive and respectful of diverse identities, experiences, and backgrounds

Mentors are not expected to “have all the answers,” but rather to serve as supportive guides, listeners, encouragers, and connectors to resources.

Membership and Participation

Mentors are active CSI members who have served as CFAs with at least 1 (one) year of prior professional experience in this role (present or past).

Mentees are active CSI members who have served as CFAs and are new to the role, or who are experienced CFAs who desire additional support.

Both mentors and mentees should demonstrate professionalism, reliability, strong interpersonal skills, ethical awareness, and respect for diversity. Participation is voluntary for all individuals involved. Modeling servant leadership, mentors serve without expectation of compensation.

Pairing Considerations

Potential pairing considerations may include:

- Chapter size, longevity, and needs
- Professional interests
- Career goals
- Leadership involvement
- Demographic preferences (when requested)
- Online or hybrid program format
- Geographic location
- Communication style preferences
- Shared lived experiences or identities

Upon completion of the “Getting To Know You” form, the CFA Committee will attempt to make thoughtful pairings while recognizing that no pairing is guaranteed to be a perfect match.

Program Expectations and Time Commitment

Program Expectations

Mentors are encouraged to initiate early contact, maintain respectful communication, provide encouragement, share resources, model professionalism, and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Mentees are encouraged to engage actively, communicate needs openly, respect mentors' time, and seek growth opportunities.

Anticipated Program Timeline

The CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program will operate throughout the CSI fiscal year (May 1 - April 30), with recruitment beginning in August, mentorship program launch meeting in September, and ongoing engagement continuing through the end of the CSI fiscal year on April 30. Mentorship pairs should actively engage between October 1 - April 30, after the launch event. The anticipated annual schedule is outlined below.

1. Call for Participation: August 15 - September 7

The **Call for Participation** will open on **August 15** for CSI members interested in participating as either mentors or mentees.

- The initial participation deadline will be **August 31**.
- A final reminder and extended opportunity to participate will be provided, with a **hard deadline of September 7**. *Submissions received after September 7 may not be considered for the current mentorship cycle.*
- The program will be promoted through CSI social media channels and direct email communication to Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFAs).
- Interested mentors and mentees must complete the appropriate "Getting to Know You" form as part of their participation request.
- The form will gather information about participants' backgrounds, experiences, interests, goals, areas of expertise or desired support, and preferences to assist the committee in making thoughtful mentorship matches.
- Information regarding the anticipated "Mentorship Launch Meeting," including the date, time, and virtual meeting location, will be included in Call for Participation communications whenever possible so participants can plan accordingly.

2. Mentor - Mentee Matching: September

Following the September 7 hard deadline, the CFA Mentorship Committee will have approximately **two weeks** to review submitted "Getting to Know You" forms and develop mentor - mentee matches.

Matches will be made intentionally based on the information provided by participants. The committee will consider factors such as professional interests, mentorship goals, experience, areas of desired support, and identified preferences. While the committee will make every effort to honor participant preferences, specific matches cannot be guaranteed.

Mentor - mentee matches will be formally announced as part of the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Launch Meeting, which will be held virtually between September 27 - 30 of each year. This date is in anticipation of the start of Mentorship Relationship on October 1.

3. Mentorship Launch: September 27 - 30

The virtual Mentorship Launch Meeting will serve as the formal beginning of the mentorship experience. During this meeting:

- Mentor - mentee matches will be introduced.
- Participants will receive an overview of the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program, including its purpose, structure, and expectations.
- Mentors and mentees will receive resources and guidance for establishing a productive mentorship relationship.
- Participants will be encouraged to discuss communication preferences, expectations, goals, and an anticipated meeting schedule with their mentorship partner after the meeting.
- Time will be provided, when feasible, for mentor - mentee pairs to connect and begin planning their work together.

Following the Launch Meeting, mentor - mentee pairs will be responsible for maintaining communication and engaging in the mentorship relationship throughout the service year.

4. Ongoing Mentorship & Support: October - April

Mentorship pairs will continue their work together throughout the remainder of the CSI service year. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to communicate regularly and determine a meeting schedule that is realistic and mutually beneficial.

Throughout the year, the CFA Mentorship Committee will support participants by:

- Providing periodic email communication, reminders, and mentorship prompts.
- Sharing resources, discussion topics, and professional development materials that mentors and mentees may use within their meetings.
- Providing guidance or support if questions or concerns arise within a mentorship pairing.
- Hosting at least one large-group CFA CONNECT mentorship event during the fall semester and one during the spring semester. These events may include social connection opportunities, informational sessions, facilitated discussions, networking opportunities, or professional development activities.

Large-group programming is intended to supplement (and not replace) the individualized mentor - mentee relationship.

5. Program Conclusion & Evaluation: By April 30

The formal CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program cycle will conclude on or before **April 30**, corresponding with the end of the CSI fiscal year.

At the conclusion of the program:

- Mentors and mentees who participated in the program will receive a letter recognizing their participation in CFA CONNECT.
- All participants will receive an electronic program evaluation and will be encouraged to provide feedback regarding their mentorship experience.
- Evaluation data will be reviewed by the CFA Mentorship Committee to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations for future mentorship cycles.
- Mentors and mentees may choose to remain professionally connected after the formal program concludes; however, continued participation beyond April 30 is voluntary and falls outside the formal CFA CONNECT program cycle.

Feedback gathered at the conclusion of each mentorship cycle will be used to strengthen the program and inform planning for the following service year.

Communication Expectations

Participants may connect in ways that best meet their needs, including:

- Text messaging
- Email
- Video conferencing
- Phone calls
- In-person meetings
- Group meet-up events

Participants are encouraged to maintain regular contact throughout the academic year and develop a schedule of communication/interaction that works best within their mentorship pairing. **Participants should aim for at least one interaction per month, at minimum.**

Suggested Program Activities

- Mentor “Meet-Up” events
- Networking opportunities
- Professional development workshops
- Wellness check-ins
- Leadership discussions

- Study/support groups
- Internship and career preparation conversations
- End-of-semester reflection activities

Recognition and Benefits

Participation in the mentorship program may provide:

- Servant leadership development opportunities
- Networking and community building
- Enhanced communication skills
- Professional Counselor Identity growth
- Resume/CV enhancement
- Letter or certificate of participation
- Increased chapter engagement and member retention

Additional Mentor/Mentee Resources Available as Appendices below

CFA CONNECT Program Management

CFA Committee Responsibility for the Program

Participation in the mentorship program may provide

- Provide overall oversight and guidance for the mentorship program
- Review and update mentorship procedures and materials annually
- Ensure mentorship practices align with CSI's PPLEs, Counseling ethics, and professional dispositions
- Recruit mentors and mentees
- Promote program through CSI social media, E-News, the *Exemplar*, and other
- Support mentor training and orientation efforts
- Monitor program effectiveness and participant engagement
- Address concerns, conflicts, or barriers within mentorship pairings when needed
- Review participant feedback and identify opportunities for growth
- Promote inclusive and culturally responsive mentorship practices

Ethical and Professional Considerations

Mentorship relationships should reflect the ethical values of the Counseling profession and Chi Sigma Iota, including respect, inclusion, confidentiality, professional boundaries, cultural humility, professional advocacy, and wellness promotion.

Mentors should avoid functioning as counselors, supervisors, or academic evaluators within the mentorship relationship.

Concerns involving safety, discrimination, harassment, ethical violations, or significant student distress should be shared in a timely manner with the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program Coordinator, CFA Committee Chairperson, and CSI Mission Coordinator.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The CFA Committee should periodically review participation rates, pairing effectiveness, student feedback, mentor and mentee satisfaction, program strengths and barriers, and recommendations for future improvement. Data gathered may inform annual revisions to mentorship processes, training materials, and program structure.

Reporting Structure

A designated CFA CONNECT Mentorship Coordinator(s) will oversee recruitment, pairings, communication, event coordination, feedback collection, and annual reporting. The Coordinator(s) will report back to the CSI Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFA) Committee, which meets monthly. The CSI CFA Committee reports directly to the CSI Executive Council.

Seeking Support Within the Mentorship Relationship

While the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program is designed to foster meaningful, supportive, and mutually beneficial relationships, mentorship experiences may occasionally present challenges. Differences in communication styles, schedules, expectations, professional experiences, or personal circumstances can sometimes create barriers to an effective mentoring relationship. Experiencing these challenges does not necessarily indicate that the mentorship has been unsuccessful, and they often present opportunities for growth, clarification, and open dialogue.

Both mentors and mentees are encouraged to approach concerns with curiosity, professionalism, and respect. Whenever appropriate, the first step should be a direct and honest conversation between the mentor and mentee to clarify expectations, discuss concerns, and collaboratively identify potential solutions. Many challenges can be resolved through open communication and a shared commitment to the mentoring relationship.

If concerns persist or either individual feels uncomfortable addressing the issue independently, mentors and mentees are encouraged to seek guidance from the CFA CONNECT Program Coordinator(s) first, and as a second option (as needed), the CFA Committee Chairperson. Support may include consultation, problem-solving, clarification of program expectations, additional resources, or, when appropriate, reassignment to a different mentoring partnership. Requests for assistance will be handled respectfully.

The purpose of seeking support is not to assign blame but to ensure that both participants experience a productive, supportive mentoring relationship aligned with the goals of the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program.

Best Practices for Addressing Concerns

When challenges arise, mentors and mentees are encouraged to:

- Assume positive intent and approach conversations with curiosity rather than judgment.
- Address concerns early before small issues become larger challenges.
- Communicate respectfully, honestly, and professionally.
- Clarify expectations regarding communication, availability, and mentoring goals.
- Recognize that mentorship relationships naturally evolve over time and may require periodic adjustments.
- If concerns cannot be resolved collaboratively, seek consultation from CFA CONNECT Program Coordinator(s) first and then the CFA Committee Chairperson and CSI Mission Coordinator.
- Requesting support or a different mentoring match is viewed as a commitment to the success of the program...not as a failure of either individual.

Unresponsive Mentor or Mentee

If a mentor or mentee has made reasonable attempts to contact their mentorship partner and has not received a response, they should notify the CFA CONNECT Program Coordinator(s) rather than allowing the connection to lapse without follow-up. The Coordinator(s) will attempt to contact the unresponsive participant and determine whether they are able to continue in the program. If the participant remains unresponsive or is unable to continue, the Coordinator(s) will work with the remaining participant to identify an appropriate next step, which may include reassignment to another mentor or mentee when feasible. **Participants are encouraged to communicate promptly with both their mentorship partner and the committee if circumstances arise that affect their ability to participate OR if their preferred method of communication has changed.**

A Shared Commitment

The CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program is built on trust, mutual respect, and continuous learning. Just as CFAs encourage chapter members to seek consultation and supervision throughout their professional development, mentors and mentees are encouraged to model those same values by seeking support when needed. Healthy mentorship relationships are strengthened through open communication, flexibility, and a shared commitment to one another's success.

Appendix A: CSI CFA CONNECT Mentoring Partnership Agreement

CSI CFA CONNECT Mentoring Partnership Agreement

Our Mentoring Partnership

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring partnership through the CSI CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program. This relationship is intended to be developmental, collaborative, supportive, and mutually beneficial. It is not supervisory or evaluative in nature.

The purpose of CFA CONNECT is to foster meaningful professional relationships among Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFAs), strengthen confidence and effectiveness in the CFA role, encourage the exchange of knowledge and resources, and support ethical, student-centered, culturally responsive, and sustainable chapter leadership.

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to approach the relationship with curiosity, openness, flexibility, and mutual respect. Both individuals contribute knowledge and experience to the partnership and share responsibility for making the mentoring relationship meaningful.

The formal CFA CONNECT service year runs from **October 1 through April 30**. Mentors and mentees are expected to **maintain regular and meaningful contact throughout the program year, including at least one (1) interaction per month** (e.g., email, meeting, text, call, attend an event together, etc.). Each pair should determine a frequency and method of communication that is realistic and beneficial for both individuals.

Communication Plan

During our mentoring relationship, we agree that our primary method(s) of communication will be:

We anticipate connecting approximately:

Days/times that generally work best for us:

Our meetings or conversations will generally last:

We will primarily connect through:

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Video conferencing
- ☐ Text/messaging
- ☐ In person
- ☐ Other: _____

Our next planned contact will be:

Goals for Our Mentoring Partnership

Together, identify 1-2 goals or areas of focus for your mentoring relationship. Goals may evolve throughout the year as needs, interests, or circumstances change.

Goal/Focus Area 1:

Goal/Focus Area 2:

Potential areas of focus may include CFA role development, chapter leadership, member engagement and leadership development, chapter programming, membership and recruitment, chapter operations, Professional Counselor Identity, CSI resources, servant leadership challenges, work-life integration, or other areas identified by the mentoring pair.

Role of the Mentor

As a CFA CONNECT mentor, I agree to:

- Initiate contact with my mentee early in the mentoring relationship and help establish a welcoming connection.

- Provide encouragement, perspective, and support related to the CFA role and chapter leadership.
- Share relevant experiences, strategies, resources, and lessons learned while recognizing that each chapter and institution is unique.
- Support the mentee in identifying goals, considering options, and developing confidence in their own leadership and decision-making.
- Help the mentee identify relevant CSI policies, as needed, to ensure chapter processes comply with the Society's requirements.
- Assist the mentee in identifying chapter processes, timelines, etc. that align with CSI requirements for members and chapters.
- Model ethical, professional, inclusive, and student-centered leadership.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and recognize when a question or concern should be referred to CSI leadership or another appropriate resource.
- Communicate respectfully and make a reasonable effort to respond and remain engaged throughout the program year.

Role of the Mentee

As a CFA CONNECT mentee, I agree to:

- Participate actively in the mentoring relationship and communicate my goals, questions, needs, and areas in which I would like support.
- Respond to mentor outreach and make a reasonable effort to participate in mutually scheduled conversations.
- Respect my mentor's time and communicate as early as possible when plans or availability change.
- Be open to feedback, new perspectives, resources, and opportunities for professional growth.
- Take ownership of my development by following through on goals, resources, or action steps identified through the mentoring relationship.
- Communicate openly if my mentoring needs change or if I experience challenges within the mentoring partnership.

Shared Expectations

Together, we agree to:

- Treat one another with professionalism, respect, and consideration.
- Maintain reasonable confidentiality regarding personal or professional information shared within the mentoring relationship, recognizing that confidentiality cannot extend to information that must appropriately be referred or addressed through CSI or institutional channels.

- Honor one another's time by communicating about cancellations, changes in availability, or periods when participation may be limited.
- Recognize that mentoring is collaborative rather than supervisory; mentors provide guidance and perspective but are not responsible for making decisions on behalf of mentees or their chapters.
- Periodically revisit our goals and adjust the mentoring relationship as needed.
- Communicate directly with one another if concerns or difficulties arise.

If Communication Breaks Down

If either mentor or mentee becomes unresponsive, the other participant should make at least one follow-up attempt using the agreed-upon communication method. If communication cannot be reestablished or either participant is unable to continue in the program, the participant should contact the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Coordinator(s). The CFA Mentorship Coordinator(s) will provide support and, when appropriate and feasible, explore rematching or other options for continued participation.

Partnership Commitment

By signing below, we acknowledge that we have discussed our goals, communication preferences, roles, and expectations for participation in the CSI CFA CONNECT Mentorship Program. We understand that this agreement is intended to guide our mentoring relationship and may be revisited or adjusted throughout the program year as needed.

Mentor: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentee: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Upon completion, please submit a copy of this agreement to the CFA CONNECT Mentorship Coordinator using the contact information provided by the CFA Mentorship Committee.

Appendix B: *MENTOR Resources*

Suggested Discussion Topics & Conversation Starters

Purpose: Intentional conversations are the foundation of effective mentoring. Use these prompts to deepen relationships rather than simply exchange information.

Discussion Starters:

Phase 1: Building the Relationship (Months 1–2)

- Getting to know one another
- Expectations
- Goal setting
- Communication
- Understanding the chapter

Phase 2: Growing Together (Months 3–6)

- Problem-solving
- Student leadership
- Programming that aligns with CSI policies and requirements
- Wellness
- Difficult conversations
- Professional Counselor Identity

Phase 3: Looking Back & Looking Forward (Final Months)

- Reflection
- Celebrating accomplishments
- Lessons learned
- Transition planning
- Continuing the professional relationship
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Paying mentorship forward

Conversation Starters

- What inspired you to become a CFA?
- What is one recent success worth celebrating?
- What challenge has been occupying your attention?
- How are your chapter leaders developing?
- What support would make the biggest difference this month?
- What is one professional goal outside of CSI?

First Meeting Checklist

Purpose

The first meeting sets the tone for trust, expectations, and partnership.

Toolkit

- Share professional backgrounds and leadership journeys.
- Clarify preferred communication methods.
- Discuss confidentiality and boundaries.
- Identify mentoring goals.
- Schedule future meetings.
- Exchange resources.
- Confirm one action item for each person.

Tips

- Create psychological safety early.
- Focus on the relationship before tasks.

Reflection: *How will you know your mentee left the meeting feeling supported?*

Notes

Goal-Setting Worksheet

Purpose

Transform broad hopes into meaningful, measurable mentoring goals.

Toolkit

- Professional growth goal
- Chapter development goal
- Leadership goal
- Networking goal
- Wellness goal
- Resources needed
- Target date
- Progress updates

SMART Reminder

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Reflection

Which goal will have the greatest impact over the next year?

Notes

Mentorship Reflection Questions

Purpose

Use these questions quarterly to encourage continuous growth.

Toolkit

- What am I most proud of?
- Where have I grown as a servant leader?
- What challenge remains unresolved?
- How has my chapter changed?
- What support do I still need?
- What is my next priority?

Reflection: *What is one insight you want to carry forward?*

Notes

Difficult Conversation Guide

Purpose

Healthy mentoring includes honest, respectful conversations.

Toolkit

- Assume positive intent.
- Describe observations, not assumptions.
- Invite the other perspective.
- Collaboratively explore solutions.
- Agree on clear next steps.
- Follow up.

Helpful Script

- 'Can we talk about something I've noticed?'
- 'Help me understand your perspective.'
- 'What solution feels realistic to you?'

Reflection: *How can empathy and accountability coexist?*

Notes

Active Listening & Coaching Strategies

Purpose

Mentors coach best by listening deeply and asking thoughtful questions.

Toolkit

- Use open-ended questions.
- Reflect and summarize.
- Validate before advising.
- Embrace silence.
- Highlight strengths.
- Encourage self-generated solutions.
- Establish accountability.

Powerful Questions

- What have you already tried?
- What feels most important?
- What would success look like?
- What support do you need from me?

Reflection: *Did your mentee leave with greater clarity than when they arrived?*

Notes:

Appendix C: *MENTEE* Resources

Goal-Setting Worksheet

Purpose

Clarify your goals for the mentoring relationship and revisit them throughout the year.

Professional Development

Knowledge/skills to strengthen: _____

Leadership goal: _____

Networking goal: _____

Wellness goal: _____

Chapter Development

Chapter priorities: _____

Top three goals:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Success Indicators

How will you know this mentoring relationship has been successful?

Notes

Reflection Journal Prompts

Purpose

Use these prompts before and after mentoring meetings.

Before the Meeting

- What has gone well?
- What challenges am I facing?
- What feedback am I hoping to receive?
- What questions do I want to ask?

After the Meeting

- What was my biggest takeaway?
- What action will I take next?
- What strengths were highlighted?
- What questions remain?

End-of-Semester Reflection

- How have I grown?
- What am I proud of?
- What goals remain?

Meeting Planning Template

Purpose

Prepare intentionally for each mentoring conversation.

Mentorship Meeting Agenda

Date: _____ Meeting #: _____

Participants: _____

Topics to Discuss:

- Chapter operations:
- Leadership:
- Recruitment:
- Programming:
- CSI policies and/or requirements to clarify:
- Wellness:
- Networking:
- Other: _____

Questions for My Mentor

1.

2.

3.

Action Items

Action | Due Date

Suggested Questions to Ask Your Mentor

Purpose

Thoughtful questions help create meaningful conversations.

Leadership

- What do you wish you had known as a new CFA?
- How has your leadership style evolved?

Chapter Development

- How do you keep members engaged? Is this different for student members compared to alumni members?
- What chapter traditions have been most successful?

Professional Growth

- How has CSI impacted your career?
- What opportunities should I pursue?

Wellness

- How do you avoid burnout?
- What boundaries have helped you most?

Mentorship Progress Tracker

Purpose

Review your growth throughout the mentoring relationship.

Quarterly Check-In

I feel supported. 1 2 3 4 5

Communication is consistent. 1 2 3 4 5

Our meetings are meaningful. 1 2 3 4 5

Goal Progress

Goal | Progress | Next Step

Celebrate a Success

Support I Need

Professional Networking Tips

Purpose

Networking is about building authentic professional relationships.

Before an Event

- Review attendees and sessions.
- Prepare two thoughtful questions.
- Update LinkedIn/profile.

During an Event

- Introduce yourself.
- Sit with someone new.
- Volunteer when appropriate.
- Exchange contact information.

After an Event

- Send a follow-up email.
- Connect on LinkedIn.
- Stay in touch.

Reflection

- Who did I meet?
- What did I learn?
- What is my next networking step?