

Guidelines for Mentors of CSCSW's Mentorship Program

We greatly appreciate your interest in and willingness to serve as a mentor for your fellow CSCSW colleagues. The role of mentor is both an honor and a responsibility that one must enter into with thoughtful intention and care. Mentoring the next generation of social work professionals is an excellent way to give back to the profession by sharing valuable expertise and knowledge as well as providing support and connection. Thoughtful and responsible mentorship requires an awareness by the mentor of any potential power dynamics, including one's inherent privilege and positionality in juxtaposition with the mentee. The relationship between mentors and mentees should ultimately be one of mutual respect and benefit.

The commitment is for one year.

Please review the following guidelines for mentors. These guidelines seek to provide structure and to set clear expectations for mentors to successfully execute their roles. You are acknowledging and agreeing to abide by these guidelines by signing below.

1. Contact mentee in a timely manner, i.e. within one week, after receiving initial contact. Even if, for any reason, you are unable to take on the mentor role at the time, reach out to the mentee to let them know so that they may be redirected to another mentor.
2. Once you have established contact, schedule to meet with your mentee regularly. It is helpful to initially meet more frequently, i.e. once a month, in order to establish a relationship, but you may later mutually decide to decrease the frequency of meetings as needed.
3. Keep your scheduled meetings unless an emergency arises. Mentees will most likely thrive through your modeling of consistency and reliability.
4. Keep it professional. Mentees are observing you closely for cues on how to conduct themselves professionally in the realm of social work. Establishing boundaries that are appropriate for the mentor-mentee relationship early on will reduce confusion and facilitate the mentee's development in the profession.
5. Provide constructive feedback in a compassionate and respectful manner. Your empathic guidance will ensure that your mentee grows professionally.
6. If you are no longer able to continue as a mentor, ensure that you terminate appropriately with your mentee. Abandonment is just as harmful in this context as any other. Your timely communication and planning will prevent harm.
7. Reach out to the Member Benefits Committee Chair should you have any questions or concerns during your role as a mentor. You are not alone. We are here to support you in this vital role.
8. Refer to the NASW Code of Ethics for further guidance as needed.