What is the Mentorship for Quality in Nutrition and Dietetics Program?

The Mentorship for Quality in Nutrition and Dietetics Program, is a nationwide mentorship program that supports credentialed practitioners in the process of developing and implementing continuous quality improvement projects, including the Global Malnutrition Composite Score and Nutrition Care Process in their facility.
What is mentorship?

A mentoring relationship is one of support and guidance. There is a protected relationship in which the more experienced practitioner (mentor) can guide the professional development of another less experienced practitioner (mentee). This relationship occurs outside the normal manager and subordinate line management.

“The key to being a good mentor is to help people become more of who they already are, not to make them more like you.” - Suze Orman

Program Objectives

To guide and support any credentialed practitioner in every step related to process improvement, to develop skills and experience in quality improvement.

Who Qualifies for the Program?

To be effective in the relationship of mentor and mentee, the below are the qualifications for either the mentor or the mentee role.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Mentee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Credentialed practitioner that has worked on at least one major quality improvement project, with the desire to help and support other practitioners</td>
<td>• Credentialed practitioner who desires a subject matter expert to guide and support them in a process improvement project</td>
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| • Advanced degree or certification or 5 years of experience with a focus in quality management | • A process improvement project idea with the basic information defined and pre-approved by their leadership  
  ○ Minimum basic information needed to be defined prior to submitting application: project title, project aim, 5 W's (what, why, where, who, when) |
| • Available at minimum via email, but preferably a combination of email, phone, and virtual meetings, at least monthly | • Available at minimum via email, but preferably a combination of email, phone, and virtual meetings, at least monthly |
| • Available to respond to mentee within 7 days | • Ability to wait a maximum of 7 days for the mentor response |
| • Ability to meet with mentee monthly, at minimum. The length of the meetings will be based on the needs | • Ability to meet with mentor monthly, at minimum. The length of the meetings will be based on the needs  
  • Ability to coordinate the monthly meetings, and develop an agenda as needed |
| • Ability to participate in a midpoint review meeting with CDR Staff for group feedback on the mentorship program and any needs to support the mentoring relationship | • Ability to participate in a midpoint review meeting with CDR Staff for group feedback on the mentorship program and any needs to support the mentoring relationship |
| • Be able to support the mentor relationship for a minimum for 6 to 12 months. Once the 6 months timeline is met, further support will be based on needs and ability of mentor and mentee | • Be able to support the mentor relationship for a minimum for 6 to 12 months. Once the 6 months timeline is met, further support will be based on needs and ability of mentor and mentee |
We believe nutrition and dietetics practitioners can impact the quality outcomes of our patients. This program will support the progress of nutrition and dietetics professionals in the quality field by promoting effective process improvement.

**Benefits to the Mentor**

As a mentor, you will share your knowledge, skills, and best practices with other practitioners looking to implement process improvement projects in their facilities. Your guidance can make a significant difference in their careers and contribute to the success of our professional community.

Here are some key benefits being a mentor in our program can offer:

1. **Professional Development**: Mentoring can enhance leadership and communication skills, while guiding mentees through quality improvement processes and strategies. Being a mentor can also enhance expertise and reputation while enhancing the commitment to advancing the nutrition and dietetics profession and quality improvement initiatives.

2. **Networking Opportunities**: Mentors can expand their professional network by connecting with mentees, fellow mentors, and program organizers who share similar interests and goals in nutrition and dietetics.

3. **Personal Fulfillment**: Being a mentor provides the opportunity to share expertise and experiences and contribute to the growth and development of others. This can promote a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in making a positive impact on someone else's career and the nutrition and dietetics profession itself.

4. **Learning and Growth**: Mentors often learn from their mentees as well. Engaging with mentees can provide new perspectives and insights, fostering continuous learning and growth.
5. **Demonstrating the value of the profession through quality improvement**: Mentoring allows individuals to leave a lasting impact on the healthcare field by empowering the next generation of nutrition and dietetics practitioners with a quality improvement focus, contributing to the demonstration of the value the nutrition and dietetics profession has in the long-term improvement of health services and patient outcomes.

**Benefits to the Mentee**

Being a mentee can offer numerous benefits that can contribute to personal and professional growth, skill development, and career advancement in the field of nutrition and dietetics, and process improvement.

**Here are some key benefits being a mentee in our program can offer:**

1. **Skill Development**: Mentees can develop practical skills in quality improvement and communication through the support of experienced mentors.
2. **Access to Expertise**: Mentees gain access to the knowledge, experience, and insights of nutrition and dietetics professionals in the areas of quality improvement, who provide valuable guidance and mentorship tailored to their mentee learning needs and goals.
3. **Career Advancement**: Participation in a mentorship program can enhance mentees' abilities and skills, hence advancing their professional development for new career opportunities.
4. **Networking Opportunities**: Mentees can expand their professional network by connecting with mentors and program organizers who share similar interests and goals in quality improvement, fostering valuable connections and collaborations.
5. **Confidence Building**: Mentees gain confidence in their abilities to lead quality improvement initiatives, make data-driven decisions, and effectively communicate their ideas and findings to stakeholders, empowering them to take on greater responsibilities in their careers.

6. **Professional Recognition**: Participation in a mentorship program supports the ability of the mentees to demonstrate commitment to professional growth and excellence in the nutrition and dietetics field, and more specifically the area of quality improvement, enhancing credibility and visibility.

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**What this Program Is Not**

As much as this program is looking to support credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners actively working on process improvement projects, the below clarify what this project is not intended to do. This program is:

- NOT intended to be a live Q&A
- NOT intended for spontaneous conversations only
- NOT intended for people with no knowledge about quality improvement
  - The mentee should at least have a basic understanding of what quality improvement is
  - The mentor is expected to have a minimum experience in quality and process improvement
- NOT intended for newly credentialed practitioners (<1 year experience)
**Ground Rules for the Mentee and Mentor Relationship:**

- Respect mentee and mentor’s time -
  - Follow expected turnaround times and minimum standards for meetings
- Define the goal and purpose of mentorship for the process improvement project
  - What is the goal of participating in this relationship?
  - Set the benefits for both participants
  - How mentee and mentor will measure progress
- Keep the relationship at a professional level
  - Unless otherwise discussed, keep confidentiality
- Remain flexible and adaptable to change
  - How will each participant respond to new perspectives?
- Encourage discussions on differences
  - Respond with curiosity and openness to learn, not judge
- Both mentor and mentee will remain open to giving and receiving feedback
  - Mentors should listen first to understand, then respond
  - Leverage resources and networks to remain beneficial to both parties
- Express appreciation

**Expectations of the Mentoring Relationship:**

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<td>• Understanding that the mentee is not expected to follow all suggestions offered</td>
<td>• Understanding that the mentor may not be able to provide solutions to all needs for the project and the mentee may need to look for resources outside of the mentorship program</td>
</tr>
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| • Ability to meet with mentee a minimum of once a month, and with CDR staff a minimum of once for a midterm review | • Ability to meet with mentor a minimum of once a month, and with CDR staff a minimum of once for a midterm review  
  o Establish the meeting dates and agenda for the mentor meetings, unless otherwise agreed upon between the mentor and mentee |
| • Understanding that the program lasts 6 to 12 months. Any needs past 12 months, will be based on agreement between mentor and mentee | • Understanding that the program lasts 6 to 12 months. Any needs past 12 months, will be based on agreement between mentor and mentee |

**Application and Selection Process**

Each applicant will be expected to fill out an electronic application form, available in the Mentorship for Quality in Nutrition and Dietetics Program section of the Commission on Dietetic Registration’s Quality Management page found at [www.cdrnet.org/quality](http://www.cdrnet.org/quality). Applications will be available June 1st – June 30th every year while the program is active.
Unless otherwise specified, all communication will be done electronically. Application to this program does not guarantee selection.

Quality Management Committee (QMC) members and Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) staff will meet during the month of July, to review applications, and select the best match between mentors and mentees. Mentoring relationships will be limited to available mentors, mentees, areas of need, expertise, amongst other criteria. Communication of selection as a mentor or mentee, and mentoring relationships assignment will be done during the first 10 days of the month of August. Once selection is communicated, the participants will have until the end of August to complete an Initial Contract to ensure intentions are established. Once Initial Contract is completed, the mentoring relationship team will be formally introduced. The expectation is that once introduced, during the month of September, the mentor and mentee will schedule an introductory meeting. It will be the ultimate responsibility of the mentee to establish the initial meeting date. The participants will also be asked to complete a pre-program survey by August 30th.

During the initial meeting, it is encouraged to discuss how the basics of the relationship will be established. The Mentor-Mentee Contract will be completed by both parties and submitted to CDR staff. The completed Mento-Mentee Contract is required to be sent to CDR staff by end of the month of September. Additional mentoring relationship processes will be established by both participants. CDR staff and QMC members will support, and guide processes as needed. For communication with CDR staff or QMC members, practitioners will email quality@eatright.org.

The program is developed to last for the duration needed to complete the process improvement project the mentee brings to the program. However, this is with the understanding this mentorship program is scheduled to last no more than 1 year. Once the process improvement project or mentoring program is completed (whichever comes first) the mentee is expected to reach out to CDR staff via quality@eatright.org to communicate this. At this time, both mentor and mentee will receive a post-program survey to complete within 2 weeks of receipt.
Program timeline

1. June 1st-30th
   Open Application

2. July 1st-31st
   Participant Selection

3. August 1st-10th
   Communication of Acceptance to Program

4. August 11th-30th
   Pre-Program Document Completion & Email Introduction's

5. September 1st-30th
   Mentoring Partnership Meet, Mentor-Mentee Agreement Completion

6. Following August 1st-30th
   Post-Program Survey

7. Following August 30th
   Mentorship Program Participation Ends
# Suggested Meeting Schedule and Resources

## Suggested Schedule for Monthly Meeting Topics

These are the suggested topics for the monthly meetings for up to 6-months. Participants can agree to follow these or establish their own topics. The goal is that once the relationship is at the 3 month mark, there is active work on the process improvement project and meeting topics will be based on the project’s direction at the time.

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<tr>
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<th>Topic</th>
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| Mentee Self-Introduction | - Name, title, position, place of work, prior experience  
- Expectations and goals for the end of the program | Mentee and Mentor |
| Mentor Self-Introduction | - Name, title, position, place of work  
- Experience in quality improvement projects (examples) | Mentor |
| 1 | Basics of quality improvement | Mentor |
| | - Preferred methods and techniques  
- Best practice recommendations | |
| | Basics of the quality project working on | Mentee |
| | - Topic, goals, 5 W's, approvals obtained, data gathered, team members, general status of the project | |
| 2 | Deep discussion of the process improvement project | Mentee with Mentor Feedback |
| | - Problem, goals, data collected, and team members  
- Status of the project including barriers and data needed  
- Possible next steps | |
| 3 | Project status update | Mentee with Mentor Feedback |
| | - Discussion on advancing project to completion* | |

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*Contact quality@eatright.org for information or questions*
### Meeting Number | Topic | Person Suggested
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4 | Project status update  
• Discussion on advancing project to completion* | Mentee with Mentor Feedback
5 | Project status update  
• Discussion on advancing project to completion* | Mentee with Mentor Feedback
6 | Discussion of ideas for future nutrition and dietetics related process improvement projects | Mentee with Mentor Feedback

**If Mentorship is needed to continue further than the six months, focus on addressing barriers and issues affecting the completion of the quality project**

* The following questions can be used to prompt the discussion, as needed.  
  • What strategies have been attempted? What were the outcomes?  
  • Who are the project supporters?  
  • Who needs to be approached further for support?  
  • What are some suggestions to continue the progress of the project?  
  • What has worked, what has not worked, and what are lessons learned?

**List of Suggested Questions to Ask Mentors**

Being prepared to gain the most from the opportunity is key to success! The below are suggested questions to get the conversation started between the mentee and mentor.
Administrative items related to the mentorship program
(Basic administrative questions or items that we encourage discussion about, to ensure both mentor and mentee get the most out of this experience)

- Preferred means of communication
- Time commitment: preferred frequency and length of meetings, time zone, preferred days/times for the meetings
- Area of expertise
- Time limit mentor/mentee are able to accommodate (frequency, length of meetings, etc.)
- Mentee to offer examples of prior projects they have worked on

Suggested Quality Related Questions for Mentors
(Please, read all the questions thoroughly. Highlight those that will be of more benefit and plan/schedule to ask them through the meetings)

- Are there any certifications to complete to improve knowledge or understanding of quality improvement?
- Is there a process improvement you would recommend I develop my skills in?
- What is one or two steps in process improvement that you believe are key to a well-developed project?
- [Once you brief the mentor on your project] What would you suggest to ensure the success of this project?

Suggested Professional Development Related Questions for Mentors
(Please, read all the questions thoroughly. Highlight those that will be of more benefit and plan/schedule to ask them through the meetings)

- What is the most meaningful aspect of your position?
- Which career accomplishments have led to either professional success or personal satisfaction?
- What are the most important words of wisdom you wish someone had told you?
- What is your strongest character trait and how has it helped you in your career growth? Weakest?
- What are the strategies you have developed to establish a work/life balance?

Suggested Leadership Related Questions for Mentors
(Please, read all the questions thoroughly. Highlight those that will be of more benefit and plan/schedule to ask them through the meetings)

- What are the most important leadership skills to develop?
- If you were to embrace a new skill to develop, what would it be?
- How do you prepare for leadership or managerial meetings to engage in promotional development or wage increases?
- What do you feel is the most productive way to leverage leadership and/or team ‘buy-in’ in building projects or education programs?
- What do you feel is the most beneficial impact of Academy affiliation on professional or career development?
If any of the stipulated items in this guide are not followed by the mentor or mentee, the Quality Management Committee (QMC) encourages the participant to communicate with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) staff member via email at quality@eatright.org. The CDR staff will support resolution of any issues or dissolve the mentoring relationship if needed. Additional mentoring opportunities for either mentor or mentee will be based on needs, available program participants and reason for discontinuation of the mentoring relationship.

By participating in this mentorship program, both participants acknowledge that the program organizers, mentors, and mentees, shall not be held liable for any damages, losses, or injuries that may occur because of participating in the program. Participants are responsible for their own actions and decisions. Participation in the program is voluntary. Participants should be aware of not sharing any confidential information with the other.

The program organizers make no guarantees regarding the outcomes of the mentorship relationships and do not assume responsibility for any advice or guidance provided by mentors. Participants are encouraged to use their own discretion and seek professional advice when necessary. By agreeing to participate in this program, participants agree to indemnify and hold harmless the program organizers, mentors, and mentees from any claims, damages, or liabilities arising from their participation in the program.
Resources

All of these links can be found on the Commission on Dietetic Registration webpage www.cdrnet.org, specifically under the Demonstrate Quality Care tab.

- Quality basics (www.cdrnet.org/quality)
  - Quality Improvement (QI) 101 Education Package
  - Careers in Quality
  - Quality Resource Collection
  - Quality-Focused Practice Tips
- Global Malnutrition Composite Score (www.cdrnet.org/gmcs)
- Interoperability (www.cdrnet.org/interoperability-health-information-standards)
- Standards of Excellence Recognition Program (www.cdrnet.org/excellence)

Quality Improvement Related Suggested Reading Materials


**Nutrition and Care Process and Terminology Related Suggested Reading Materials**


**Global Malnutrition Composite Score Related Suggested Reading Materials**


