



## **MentorCONNECT**

### ***Cooperation with Professionals Overview***



## **MentorCONNECT: Where Relationships Replace Eating Disorders**

**VISION:** MentorCONNECT's **vision** is to provide individuals with the means to break through the isolation of eating disorders by sharing the tools of recovery in supporting relationships.

**MISSION:** We accomplish this **mission** by connecting members individually and in groups with mentors to share experiences, provide guidance, and help each other through the struggles and triumphs of our journeys.

MentorCONNECT offers one-on-one and group mentoring opportunities between lay mentors who are in sustained recovery from eating disorders and individuals who are seeking recovery support.

All individuals who sincerely desire to recover from eating disorders and are over the age of 13 are welcome to join and participate in MentorCONNECT.

MentorCONNECT is not affiliated with any other eating disorders recovery service or organization. All services provided to members are always free of charge. Membership is required to assess the level of support desired and to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of each member and the community.

Participation in MentorCONNECT is never a substitute for the professional medical care needed for the treatment of eating disorders.

Our primary purpose is to sustain our own recovery and assist others to achieve sustained recovery from eating disorders.

**NOTE:** *Please be aware our mentors work in a **non-medical, non-clinical peer-support** capacity (even if they hold professional credentials outside their volunteer work with MentorCONNECT). This service is specifically designed as an additional source of ancillary support only, and as such is **not suitable** for mentees in the very early/critical stages of recovery, whether or not they have a professional team in place.*



### **To the Treatment Professional: MentorCONNECT as a Resource, not a Replacement**

MentorCONNECT shares your commitment to doing whatever we can to help those who struggle with eating disorders to find the quality of recovery support both on- and offline that can translate into sustained recovery.

MentorCONNECT represents just one more supplemental resource that can provide your valued clients with quality relationships that can begin to replace the need for the “relationship” with the disordered thoughts and coping behaviors.

A significant percentage of our members come to us with partial or full professional treatment teams already in place. Many have experienced inpatient treatment one or more times. Our members are not seeking therapy but rather a transitional and ongoing source of connection with others to share the recovery journey with.

A mentor’s function is to share their personal recovery strength, experience, and hope – in other words, to provide living proof that recovery IS possible. While many of our volunteer mentors do hold professional credentials in their outside activities, they function as lay volunteers only while serving as a MentorCONNECT mentor.

MentorCONNECT will not hesitate to redirect a member who needs a higher level of care to the appropriate informational resources for locating professional medical care.

MentorCONNECT does not participate in outside research projects or provide endorsements of individual providers or referrals.



## **How MentorCONNECT Works**

### Three Levels of Membership

MentorCONNECT offers three levels of membership: General Support, Mentee, and Mentor. Each level has different requirements for membership. General Support members join to access group mentoring opportunities only. Mentee level members join seeking to match one-on-one with a caring volunteer recovery mentor. Mentor level members join to “pay it forward” by sharing their personal recovery strength, experience, and hope with a mentee.

### Mentor Matching

Mentor members are asked to volunteer for a minimum of one hour per week per mentee, and may choose to take on between one and three mentees as their individual schedule permits. Mentee members are allowed one mentor only. General support members may not match with a mentor. MentorCONNECT encourages self-matching for the strongest match but provides assistance with matching upon request.

### Mentoring Program

Mentoring can be done via email, phone, in-person (when available) or via Skype or mobile apps. Each mentoring team determines the boundaries, methods, and level of contact that they prefer. Each active Mentor member participates in MentorCONNECT’s Mentor Guide Program which matches new mentors with an experienced MentorCONNECT volunteer mentor for extra support and encouragement. Each member of an active mentoring team must complete periodic surveys while they are part of the program.

### Group Mentoring Activities

MentorCONNECT maintains a private, password-protected and heavily moderated PRO-recovery online community through the MC Community Forums. Within the Forums, members at all membership levels may participate in weekly live chat-based moderated support groups, recovery blogs, online themed support groups, and special events.



## **Who We Are as a Community**

### Who We Are

- We are a community of people in recovery from eating and related disorders
- Our primary purpose is to recover and help others to recover **if they are seeking recovery**
- While the needs of every individual are important, the need for unity of purpose is more important
- Without unity of purpose, the community will cease to exist
- We find unity of purpose by focusing on our primary purpose and not getting distracted by anything else
- We acknowledge above all else that our recovery from eating disorders is a matter of life and death

### How We Operate

- What is shared within the community is a sacred trust
- We will not share anything seen or heard within the community (including names) with anyone who is not a registered part of the community
- However, in the interests of truth and transparency, nothing is confidential or anonymous within the community because we are only as sick as our secrets
- In the interests of service, however, the community may choose to share information that is relevant to recovery (after it has been screened for relevance to our primary purpose)

### The MC Leadership Team

- We are in service to this community because our own recovery depends on it
- We therefore abide by the governing principles and policies set out for the community, and we bring no outside interests into this service
- Since we lead by example, we remember that recovery is not possible without transparent honesty and humility
- We are willing to share openly with the entire team and bring no personal or professional agenda to the table when acting on behalf of the community
- While we may be professionals involved in recovery professions, we do not serve the community in that capacity, but rather as private individuals



*Who We Are as a Community, cont.*

#### Volunteer Mentors

- As volunteer mentors, we share our personal experience, strength, and hope for recovery with mentees
- We do not attempt to direct decisions facing mentees and we do not attempt to tackle issues that are outside the range of our personal recovery experience
- While serving in a mentoring role, we are not marriage or employment counselors, bankers, or clergy, or treatment or other professionals, even if we hold professional credentials in our outside activities
- We may suggest tools for combating addictive behaviors so long as those tools stem from personal experience and have been proven to be effective
- When, while we are serving in a mentoring role, issues arise for which we have no personal experience or training, we consult our own mentors or the leadership team for someone who has experience in that area
- We are careful to take on only so many mentees as we have ample time to work with

#### For Professionals

- If you are a professional who would like to share information about MentorCONNECT with other professionals or with your clients, you are welcome to do so by referring interested person(s) and entities to our website: [www.mentorconnect-ed.org](http://www.mentorconnect-ed.org)