

Mentor Program Overview Article

Article from January 2015 SCV-CAMFT Newsletter, by Catherine Rodriguez, LMFT, Mentor Program Chair

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."
— Benjamin Franklin

Most of us would admit that having some extra support as we traverse our professional path would be a helpful advantage. To that end, one of the benefits of membership that SCV-CAMFT offers is the Mentor Program.

Mentoring is a semi-formal relationship between an individual who desires support and a more experienced clinician who can provide guidance and wisdom. It is semi-formal in the sense that it has defined parameters for engagement. It has a beginning, middle and end. It entails a commitment of time and energy over a six-month period. Participants commit to mutually agreed upon ground rules such as confidentiality, respect and keeping commitments. As is fitting to the profession, Mentoring can develop into a very rewarding and potentially long-lasting relationship.

Although Mentoring can provide support around the following topics, Mentoring is not providing supervision, case consultation or therapy. It is also not an opportunity for doing business together or engaging in a private practice internship.

In an MFT career, there are many possible opportunities to benefit from Mentoring. As a student in practicum, entering the profession can be very uncertain. During internship, new questions emerge, such as should I work in an agency or in private practice (or both), how do I prepare for the exam process, or what will I do once I'm licensed.

There are other transition points, as well. You may be moving from agency work to private practice (or visa versa). You want to learn more about a particular theoretical orientation or clinical topic. Larger questions can be addressed such as defining a professional identity, how to incorporate more creativity into the work or best develop one's strengths and growth areas. All of these topics and more are great opportunities to learn from someone who has walked the path ahead.

So, what do you need to do to participate in the Mentor Program? The SCV-CAMFT website will include links to the Mentor Program. You'll see the Program Guidelines, a Profile to complete and brief articles and / or videos on how to make the most of your Mentoring experience.

Once you submit a profile, the Mentee reviews the list of current Mentors and selects a few individuals who match their interests and goals. The Mentee makes contact with the potential mentors and interviews them briefly to determine who is the best match. Once the engagement is agreed to, each person signs the Mentor Program Engagement Agreement (so the chapter can keep track of participation in the program). From there, set up your meetings and get started in the process!

We hope that many members will take advantage of this valuable program. Mentoring benefits both Mentor and Mentee. It is a powerful tool that develops contacts, confidence, competence and clarity in the MFT journey.