

2022 Pastor Church Resources Mentee Survey Fact Sheet
Survey Conducted April 14-May 31, 2022

History of Mentoring in the CRCNA

In response to a disconcerting increase in conflicts and challenges with pastors and churches, a “Healing Ministries Committee” was formed and reported to Synod 1982, proposing the creation of several mechanisms to address “healing ministry for ministers, consisteries and congregations in situations of stress.” The committee focused on preventing conflict and burnout while also seeking to promote healing for those wounded by conflict and burnout. They recommended the creation of a Pastor Church Relations Committee (which became [Pastor Church Resources](#)), a Pastor Church Relations Minister, a system of [Regional Pastors](#), a revision of Church Order Article 17 *and the institution of a [mentoring program](#) for newly-ordained ministers.*

Synod took the unusual step of not just *strongly recommending* but *requiring* all newly-ordained ministers to have a mentor. Synod defined a mentor as someone who would “serve without pay or honorarium as consultant, friend, confidante to other pastors. Meet regularly or as often as appropriate with the assigned pastor and in a pastoral mode to discuss, guide, listen, encourage, confront, pray. To work in the spirit of mutuality and collegiality with the pastor to whom he [or she] is a mentor.”

General Observations and Key Takeaways from Survey:

1. **Mentees and Mentors should routinely (once a year, at least) talk about expectations** for the relationship. What is the mentee hoping to gain from the relationship? How does the mentoring relationship fit within the larger constellation of collegial support the mentee sustains?
2. **Mentees need more than a mentor.** One of the great gifts a mentor can give to a mentee is encouragement for the mentee to seek out and develop other intentional, supportive collegial relationships with pastors outside their immediate context.
3. **Video and phone is fine.** Relationships that relied primarily on phone or video technology (even before the pandemic) reported being just as meaningful as in-person relationships. If distance is an issue, consider a [peer-learning grant](#).
4. Mentors and mentees should remember that **after this five year period, there are no formal institutional checks to ensure a pastor has collegial support.** If a pastor wants to be a lone-ranger in our system, the system allows it. Consequently, it's vital to invest early in the habit of forming and prioritizing intentional, supportive collegial relationships.
5. **Some mentees said their relationship could use some more structure.** One structure that was named by many mentees was to follow the chapters in the pdf booklet, [Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring](#). Others of you have tried going through one or more of the books recommended at the bottom of the [Ministry Description](#). We also recommend the [Pastor's Spiritual Vitality Toolkit](#). But often what works best is for mentors to ask mentees to set the agenda, bringing a question or observation to each mentoring session.
6. One of Pastor Church Resources' core convictions is that **pastors are much more likely to thrive when they are investing in intentional relationships with colleagues outside**

their immediate ministry context for the purpose of support and continued growth. Mentoring for newly ordained ministers happens to be the way Synod has tried to get at these dynamics. If you've found other ways, God bless you! Our hope is that you'll catch the vision and continue to seek out meaningful collegial relationships and continue to find ways to grow.

Highlights of Survey Results

#1 The survey response rate is lower than desired, and provides a glimpse (rather than full picture) of the quality of the known mentoring relationships for newly-ordained ministers.

- Ministers Ordained in the CRCNA since 2017: 264
- Ministers Ordained in the CRCNA since 2017 whose mentor has been identified to PCR (either by mentee, Regional Pastor or Stated Clerk): 195
- 62 of those 195 completed and returned the survey. (32% response rate)

#2 A significant majority of mentees find their relationship with their mentor meaningful. The average rate of meaningfulness is 7.5/10

On a scale of 1-10, please identify how meaningful the mentoring relationship has been for you over the past twelve months. 1=not at all; 10=Deeply and transformingly

1-2=4 (6%)
3-4=3 (5%)
5-6=8 (13%)
7-8=24 (39%)
9-10=23 (37%)

*Less than 11% of mentees rate the meaningfulness of their relationship four or lower.

*More than 76% of mentees rate the meaningfulness of their relationship seven or higher.

#3 While respondents self-report mostly meaningful relationships with mentors and others, we wonder about the level of support among the 133 who didn't respond and the additional 69 who are not in a known mentoring relationship.

#4 Virtual and distance mentoring continues to be a fruitful option. Nearly 29% of you have conducted your relationship primarily through video or phone. And of those 29%, your average overall rating of meaningfulness is 8.1/10, which is slightly higher than the average overall rating of meaningfulness (7.5/10). This suggests it is possible to have a meaningful mentoring relationship virtually.

#5 There is a wide range in how time is spent in the mentoring relationship (between professional development and personal spiritual formation.) But 90% of relationships include at least some balance of both. Generally, mentors spend more time on professional development than spiritual formation.

How much of your time with your mentor is directed toward professional development (discussing the how-to of ministry tasks like preaching, mission, pastoral-care, administration)?	How much of your time with your mentor WOULD YOU LIKE to be directed toward professional development (discussing the how-to of ministry tasks like preaching, mission, pastoral-care, administration)?
All or Most=24 (39%) Half=21 (34%) Some=13 (21%) Almost no time=4 (6%)	(29%) 18=All or Most (48%) 30=Half (19%) 12=Some (3%) 2=Almost no time at all

How much of your time with your mentor is directed toward your personal spiritual formation (discussing your relationship with God, spiritual/devotional practices, prayer together)?	How much of your time with your mentor WOULD YOU LIKE to be directed toward your personal spiritual formation (discussing your relationship with God, Spiritual/devotional practices, prayer together)?
All or Most=9 (15%) Half=22 (35%) Some=25 (40%) Almost no time=6 (10%)	(16%) 10=All or Most (53%) 33=Half (31%) 19=Some (0%) 0=Almost no time

#6 A noteworthy minority of mentees (31%) would prefer their time with their mentor be spent in at least a somewhat different way (more/less professional development or spiritual formation). Though only 13% would prefer their time be spent quite a bit differently.¹

7=11% would prefer more time be spent on professional development
12=19% would prefer less time be spend on professional development
43=69% are content with the amount of time spent on professional development
2=3% would prefer less time be spent on spiritual formation
17=27% would prefer more time be spend on spiritual formation
43=69% are content with the amount of time spent on spiritual formation

#7 Mentors and mentees talk about a lot of issues, but there were some recurring themes.

Most Common Topics of Conversation

- 29 Conflict
- 28 Transitions/Change
- 27 Personal Life (family, marriage, singleness)
- 25 Leadership (staff, church renewal, governance, vision, leadership development)
- 25 Biblical/theological issues
- 24 Pastoral Care
- 20 Church Order/Classis/Denomination
- 18 Contemporary Issues
- 18 Mental/Emotional Health

¹ "Somewhat differently" is defined as rating their preference one spot different from their actual. I.e. (actual=some of the time, preferred=half of the time). "Quite a bit differently" is defined as rating their preferences two or more spots different from their actual. i.e. actual=some of the time, preferred=most of the time.)

#8 100% of those surveyed could identify at least one other intentional relationship outside their congregation that provided either professional support or personal spiritual formation! Virtually every pastor who named two other intentional relationships also named three or more.

What other intentional relationships, if any, do you maintain that provide either professional support/development or personal spiritual formation?

4 (6%) identified at least one other intentional relationship(s).

7 (11%) identified two other intentional relationships

51 (82%) identified three or more other intentional relationships

#9 Face to face gatherings with area pastors, whether CRC or ecumenical, are by far the most commonly named source of such intentional relationships. Though professional relationships (spiritual directors, therapists and coaches) were the next most common.

Whom are these relationships with?

45 Informal Pastor Relationships

23 Professionals (Spiritual Directors, Therapists, Coach)

10 Spiritual Director

13 Therapist

47 Pastor Friends/Seminary Classmates/Friends

30 Intentional Pastor's Group (Peer Learning/Support)

17 Regional Pastor

9 Prayer Partner/Accountability Partner

28 Members of Congregation

6 Former Mentor

43 Family (Spouse, Parent, Sibling)

#10 Though 9 rated their mentoring relationship's meaningfulness 5 or below (out of 10), 100% of those 9 were able to identify at least one other intentional supportive relationship.

#11 Female clergy's responses (12 total) suggest that newly-ordained female clergy in the CRCNA are quite a bit more likely to have a robust network of supportive relationships than newly-ordained male clergy.

When given a chance to name other intentional relationships outside their congregation that provide either professional support or personal spiritual formation, (respondents can name as many as they want or none at all), female clergy results showed that

12 named 3 or more such relationships. (100% is higher than male clergy avg (78%))

12 named at least two such relationships (100% is higher than male clergy avg (92%))

12 named at least one such relationship (100% is equal to the male clergy avg (100%))

#12 The average "meaningfulness of relationship" score for female mentees is 7.7, virtually identical to the score of all respondents. It is noted that among female mentees with female mentors (6), the average meaningfulness of relationship score is 7, compared to 8.3 for female mentees with male mentors. That said, the anecdotal evidence from female mentees hearing these numbers was that they had experienced some wonderful opposite-gender mentoring, and that it was certainly possible for a man to capably mentor a woman and for a woman to capably mentor a man.

	# of Respondents	Meaningfulness of Relationship (1 low, 10 high)
Female Mentees Total	12	7.7
Female Mentee, Female Mentor	6	7
Female Mentee, Male Mentor	6	8.3
Male Mentee, Male Mentor	50	7.4
Male Mentee, Female Mentor	0	0
Female Mentors Overall	6	7
Male Mentors Overall	56	7.54

#13 Images Most often used by Male Pastors and Female Pastors

Women	Men
9 Safe Space 5 Encourager 4 Advice/Insight 3 Sounding Board/Conversation Partner 1 Challenger	26 Encourager 19 Advice/Insight 18 Safe Space 15 Sounding Board/Conversation Partner 12 Friend