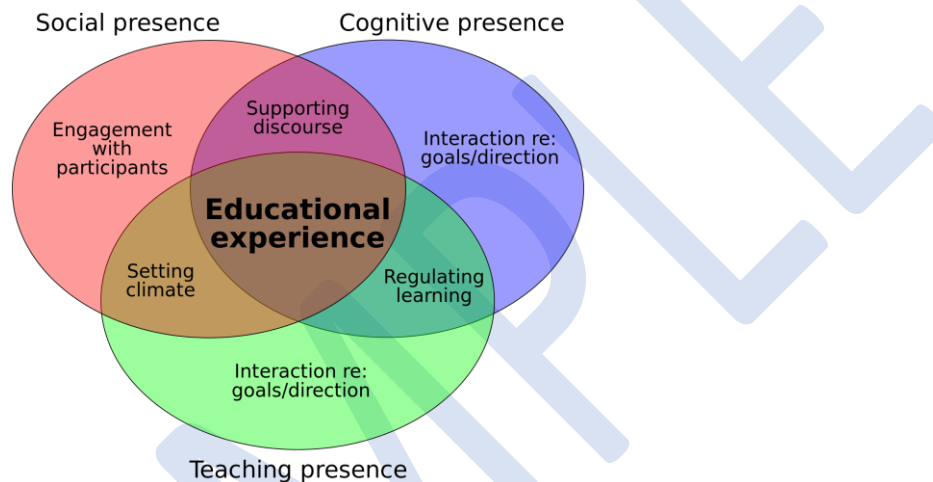


COURSE MENTOR TRAINING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The role of the instructor in the NTP program is to provide a dynamic, scientifically accurate, and practically applicable holistic nutrition education that effectively prepares students to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be a practitioner. The role of a student is to engage with the curriculum, synthesize the concepts, learn to communicate with clients, and apply those skills, knowledge, and attitudes to empower others to achieve their health goals. So then where does the Course Mentor fit into the classroom? To understand the importance and purpose of a Course Mentor in the NTP program, it is helpful to first consider the academic framework the program is built upon—the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model.



The CoI framework outlines the process an online classroom can utilize to provide the platform for deep critical thinking and meaningful learning experiences. That process involves the development and integration of three interdependent components—social, cognitive, and teaching presence. Though emphasis may be placed on one or two presences over another, all three elements are necessary for the most effective academic environment. In the NTP Online program, instructors fulfill the teaching presence, students engage the cognitive presence, and it is the Course Mentor who facilitates the social presence.

Social presence is critical for creating a climate of safety and encouragement that fosters deeper learning. It is also essential for stimulating conversations and collaborations that move students to a higher plane of critical thinking that promotes the value of diverse perspectives.

Whether you have been working in the holistic nutrition field for a decade, or you can still freshly remember the jitters of anticipation you experienced when you started your journey in the NTP program, each of you has a unique perspective, diverse experience, and valuable support to extend to the students you mentor as you co-create a social presence space for everyone to share their personalities and connect.

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ROLE DETAILS

Course Mentors play an important role in the classroom:

- They provide invaluable support to instruction teams.
- They help students solidify their understanding of concepts.
- They answer questions, facilitate discussions, and help build community.
- They share their experience and expertise to inspire students on their journeys.

Successful Course Mentors:

- Commit to the NTA's mission of delivering a science-based education that fosters a community of confident holistic nutrition professionals who harness the power of real food and empower people to reconnect with the innate wisdom and unique needs of their bodies, thereby supporting lasting wellness.
- Adhere to and uphold the [NTA's Scope of Practice and NTA's Code of Ethics](#).
- Are dedicated to helping students succeed.
- Exhibit a willingness to prepare, engage, and connect with students in ways that advance students' education and enhance their classroom experience.
- Review all curriculum materials to stay up to date with the latest information, assignments, and language being used to teach NTP students. They consequently have a deep knowledge of the program curriculum and how it may have changed since they took the program themselves.

Duties and Expectations: Please Read Carefully!

1. Participate in the Course Mentor Support Program, which includes watching training videos.
2. Attend a live orientation meeting before the start of the NTPO Program.
3. Attend any training meetings scheduled by your instructor team for Course Mentors.
4. Host a monthly Zoom meeting with your assigned cohort of 8-10 students. The NTA provides the schedule and agenda templates (see Meeting Schedule below). The meetings should last 40 minutes.
 - All meetings must be conducted as a group setting. You are not permitted to conduct 1:1 calls or meetings with students.
 - Course Mentor monthly Zoom meetings are NOT recorded. If a student cannot attend, they miss out on the benefits of the collaboration and community. Recording these sessions is a privacy issue since the NTA is not able to review/monitor them the same way we monitor our own instructor Zoom meetings.
5. Create an agenda for each monthly meeting using the templates provided in the Course Mentor Support Program. Submit your agenda to the Assignment Submissions section during the first week of each month in which a meeting occurs.
6. Make a discussion post in the NTPO program to your cohort students one week before each meeting that gives a brief explanation of what will be covered in the meeting and includes the Zoom link with a reminder to mark their calendars.
7. Review all relevant NTPO curriculum reading, videos, and assignments prior to weekly whole-class Zoom meetings and the monthly cohort Zoom meetings that you host. The curriculum is routinely updated, so it may be different than what you experienced.

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8. Attend the whole-class weekly Zoom meetings when your schedule permits or listen to the recordings.
9. Your individual class instructors may have additional responsibilities for you based on the unique needs of your classroom community.
10. Course Mentors are prohibited from promoting products or services to students, and everything they share must be in alignment with the [Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics](#) set forth by the NTA. However, if a student approaches a Course Mentor with the desire to be a client, Course Mentors may take them on as a paying client through their normal business channels.
11. When hosting monthly meetings, Course Mentors should dress appropriately. Clothing must not be too revealing nor depict offensive language.
12. The privacy of student information is paramount. Do not share or use any information a student discloses or contact information that is provided for anything outside of these Course Mentor Duties.

Anti-Harassment Policy

The Nutritional Therapy Association, Inc. prohibits any and all types of harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination of its Instructors, Students, Course Mentors, or Staff by other Instructors, Students, Course Mentors, Staff, or outside parties. Harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, national origin, disability, veteran status, or other protected status negatively affects morale, motivation, and job performance. It is inappropriate, offensive, and will not be tolerated. Any Instructor, Student, Course Mentor, or Staff member who is aware of any instances of harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination and is not comfortable addressing the concern with the individuals involved should report the alleged act immediately to the Director of Education or the CEO of the NTA. If the Instructor, Student, Course Mentor, or Staff is uncomfortable discussing the matter with the NTA staff, they should report the alleged act immediately to any member of the Board of Directors of the Nutritional Therapy Association, Inc.

Social Presence

Your primary role as a Course Mentor is to help students connect and collaborate to better understand the curriculum. The monthly meeting you hold should provide a safe, judgement-free zone for students to inquire, question, discuss, and investigate facets of the curriculum and nutritional therapy process together.

If you are new to facilitating these types of conversations, it is helpful to remember that you are not lecturing or teaching to students—you are helping them think critically and engage in meaningful conversations that deepen their understanding of the material, so the questions you ask and points you share should prompt them to do most of the talking. Your clinical pearls, experience, and wisdom are tremendously valuable and should be shared, but your priority objective is to ask more questions than you answer.

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Positive Conversations

As a mentor, it is possible that some of your students will share struggles they are having with keeping up with the course work, working with clients, absorbing the material, etc. It is important that students can express their struggles and it is okay to express empathy and understanding, yet we also want to help them move forward and stay positive. Strive to create a “solutions-based focus” in the discussion by asking questions like:

1. “What is working?”
2. “If there is a struggle, what ideas do you have for improving that?”
3. “What resources do you have?”
4. “Who can support you?”
5. “What has worked in the past in a similar situation?”

Remember in your conversations to always stay in scope and **direct students to pose any challenging questions in the Questions for Instructor thread in the Discussions area of Canvas**. Since you are not teaching or presenting on the course content, it can be helpful to remind students that the purpose of these monthly meetings is to bring their personalities into the classroom and collaborate to construct a deeper understanding of the curriculum, as learning is enriched by different perspectives.

MONTHLY MEETING GUIDE

The following structure should be used for each monthly meeting. Please familiarize yourself with each element before reviewing the full schedule.

1. **Friendly Five**—reserve the first five minutes of the meeting for students to express themselves and get to know one another as an act of building community. Rather than just asking the general “how’s everyone doing?” question, try something more focused such as:
 - Share one word that describes how you are feeling today.
 - What is your favorite vegetable and why?

The questions don’t have to be serious! The key is to get each student to share a bit about their life and feel safe establishing relationships with the group, but to keep it brief.

2. **Case Study Presentation** – This is the main event for each meeting. Each case study will follow a provided framework of important topics to cover. See the Case Study Framework and agenda templates in the Course Mentor Support Program for more details about each meeting. *Note: The first two meetings of the course will not be case study discussions, but Meetings 3-8 are.*
3. **Closing Remarks**—always end the meeting with a reminder to check their Course Syllabus to make sure they are tracking with the homework benchmarks, interact on the discussion threads, and a positive encouragement to carry their amazing efforts into the next month.

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MEETING SCHEDULE

Meeting 1:

- CM Office Hours: {date}
- Modules that students have completed: Welcome, Evolution of the Modern Diet, Introduction to Anatomy and Physiology, Basics of Nutrition, and the first week of Culinary Wellness 1.
- Agenda considerations:
 - This is an introduction meeting and the agenda will be provided for you. It can be found in the Course Mentor Support Program under Meeting 1.

Meeting 2:

- Upload agenda by {date}
- CM Office Hours: {date}
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: second week of Culinary Wellness 1, and they will be in the second week of Digestion and Elimination.
- Agenda considerations:
 - This meeting will be dedicated to practicing Motivational Interviewing skills.
 - Use the “Meeting 2 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program to create your own agenda.

Meeting 3:

- Upload agenda by {date}
- CM Office Hours: {date}
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Blood Sugar Regulation, Fatty Acids, Mineral Balance, and they will be in the Hydration module.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 3 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the first of the case study meetings and should encompass Foundational topics.
 - Course Mentor leads this meeting including presenting a sample case study and facilitating the discussion.

Meeting 4:

- Upload agenda by {date}
- CM Office Hours: {date}
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: second week of Hydration, Sleep, Stress, and Movement, and they will be in the week of their Term 2 Quiz.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 4 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the second of the case study meetings and should encompass Foundational topics.
 - A student volunteer presents a case study and facilitates the discussion, with guidance from the Course Mentor.

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Meeting 5:

- Upload agenda by _{date}_
- CM Office Hours: _{date}_
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Endocrine, and they will be in the second week of Immune.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 5 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the third of the case study meetings. Note that by this point, students have completed the Foundational modules and are working through the Consequences. Encourage discussion of Endocrine and Immune factors, if appropriate for this client’s case.
 - A student volunteer presents a case study and facilitates the discussion, with guidance from the Course Mentor.

Meeting 6:

- Upload agenda by _{date}_
- CM Office Hours: _{date}_
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Cardiovascular Health, and they will be in the second week of Nutritional Detoxification.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 6 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the fourth of the case study meetings. Note that students are working through the Consequences at this point. Encourage discussion of Cardiovascular and Nutritional Detoxification factors, if appropriate for this client’s case.
 - A student volunteer presents a case study and facilitates the discussion, with guidance from the Course Mentor.

Meeting 7:

- Upload agenda by _{date}_
- CM Office Hours: _{date}_
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Introduction to Capstone Project, and they will be in the Barriers, Influences, and Emotional Wellbeing module.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 7 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the fifth of the case study meetings. Note that students have completed the Consequence modules. Encourage a robust discussion about Barriers, Influences, and Emotional Wellbeing as it pertains to this client’s case.
 - A student volunteer presents a case study and facilitates the discussion, with guidance from the Course Mentor.

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Meeting 8:

- Upload agenda by `_{date}_`
- CM Office Hours: `_{date}_`
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Environmental Factors, Culinary Wellness 2, and they will be in Practice Resources.
- Agenda considerations:
 - Use the “Meeting 8 Agenda Template” provided in the Course Mentor Support Program.
 - This is the sixth of the case study meetings, but is a bit different in that it is a chance for students to prepare for and practice parts of their Capstone Project Presentations.

Meeting 9:

- No agenda required.
- CM Office Hours: `_{date}_`
- Modules that students have completed since last meeting: Capstone Project Presentations.
- Meeting considerations:
 - **Business Q&A**—If applicable to your situation, share a bit about how you are using your certificate professionally and your journey in starting a business. Let students ask you questions as the driver of what and how much you share. If you do not have a business or are not comfortable sharing, lead the group through a discussion to generate business questions that your group wants to pose to the instructor team in the Questions for Instructors forum.
 - **Student Check-in**—What do students plan to do next? What do they anticipate being the most enjoyable and most challenging aspects of life after graduation?

As you support students in their journey to wrestle with, question, internalize, and make sense of this holistic nutrition information in a collaborative environment, you are helping to strengthen a lasting community that will extend beyond the walls of the classroom and have an even more impactful ripple effect than any of us could achieve individually. Thank you for your dedication and passion for shifting the tide of health from despair to hope. The investment you make in these students and in yourself over these next ten months will yield a tremendous return as you see the growth and positive change you bring forth in one another.

Your instructor team will be in touch soon with more information to get you oriented and ready to engage with your student cohort. We appreciate your time, energy, and commitment to sharing the message of the power of real food with the word.

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NEXT STEPS

1. Sign up for a free Basic Zoom account if you don't already have one.
2. You will gain access to the Course Mentor Support Program in Canvas on _____
3. Mark your calendars for the live Course Mentor Orientation meeting on _____. A Zoom invite will be sent via email, so please make sure your email address is current with the NTA.
4. Classes start _____. Your instructor team will meet with you during the second week of class to establish the days/times you will hold your monthly meetings and allow students to sign up for the group that works best with their schedule. Try to avoid weekend meetings, if possible.
5. A reminder that the first monthly meeting you hold with your cohort needs to be scheduled for the week of _____.

REFERENCES

Garrison, D. R. (2007). Online community of inquiry review: Social, cognitive, and teaching presence issues. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 11(1), 61-72.

Lowenthal, P. R. (2010). Social presence. In *Social computing: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications* (pp. 129-136). IGI Global.