

2022 Mentor Survey Summary

Who took the survey?

41% of active mentors responded to the survey. Synod 1982 required all newly ordained pastors to have a mentor for the first five years of their ministry. The 2023 Mentor Survey, conducted from March 30 to May 8, 2023, polled those serving as mentors to new pastors.

197 Ministers ordained in the CRCNA the last 5 years
125 Mentors identified to Thrive
51 Mentors responded

How do mentors view their mentoring relationships?

We are grateful to report that a majority (73%) of mentors experience their relationship with their mentee as “deeply and transformingly” meaningful (a score of 7 or higher out of 10). Here’s what they’re saying:

“We are always amazed at how the Spirit works in our conversation with one another.”

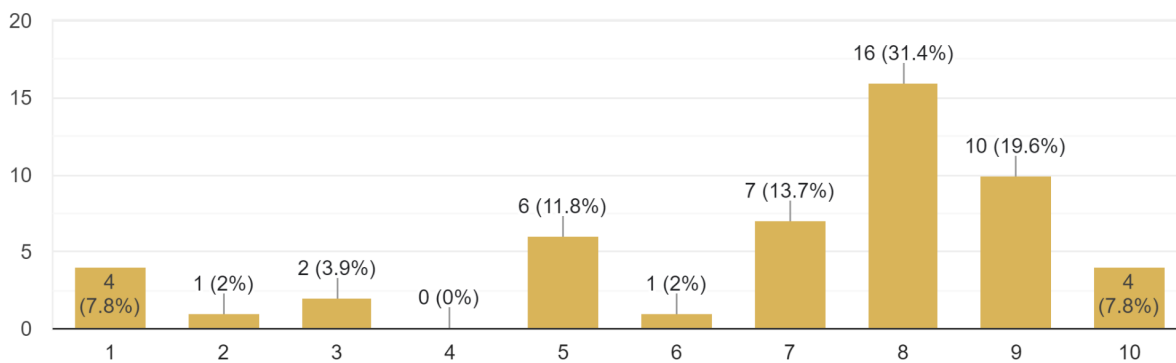
“I’ve gained a sense of what it is like for a person new to the CRC to learn how to do ministry with a CRC context. I’ve had opportunities to examine my own assumptions, and been made aware of things that I’ve simply taken for granted.”

“Knowing that we are not alone in this work has had a positive impact.”

On a scale of 1 to 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.

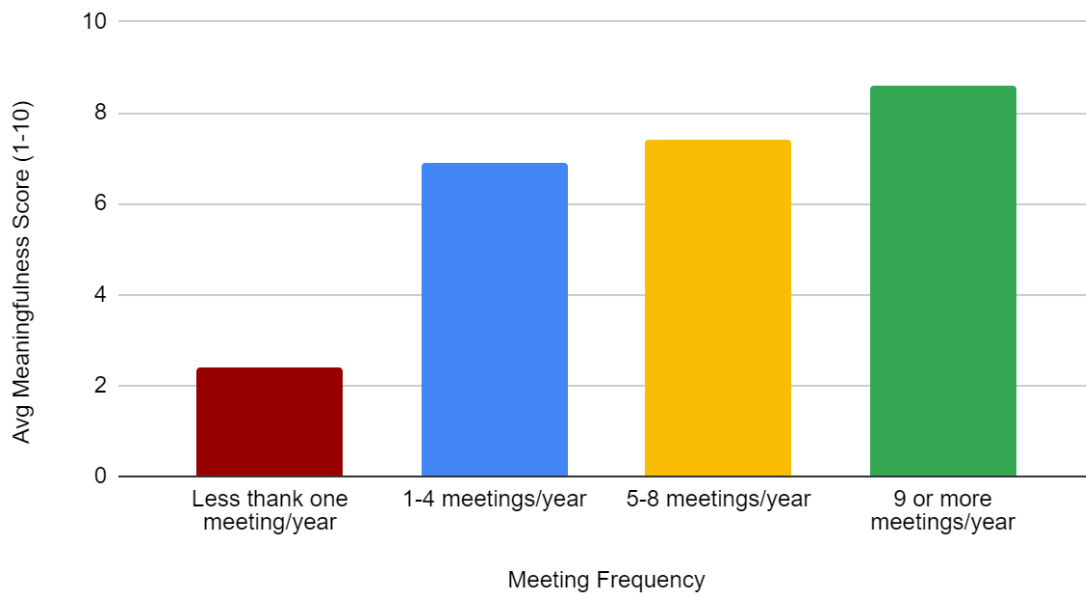
51 responses

Here are the complete data for all respondents:



Mentors are tasked by Synod to meet with their mentees “regularly or as often as appropriate.” While there are observable increases of Meaningfulness scores as meeting frequency increases, the data show that the quality of meetings have a more significant impact than the quantity of meetings.

Avg Meaningfulness Score (1-10) vs. Frequency

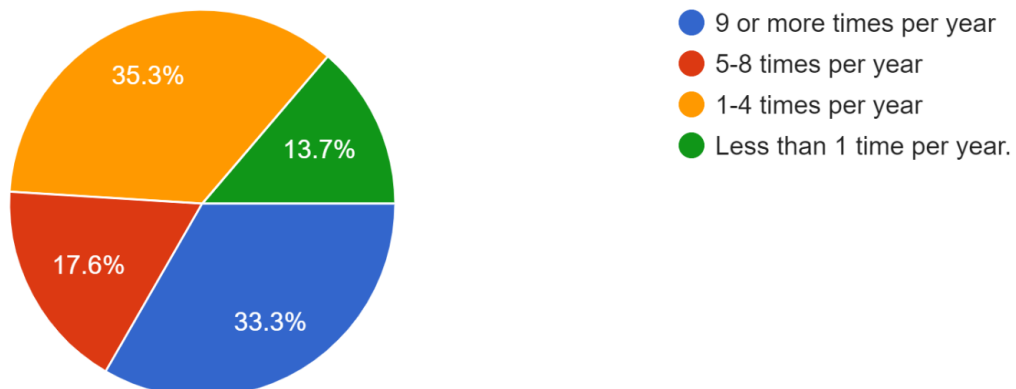


Finding the time to meet regularly is a common challenge for mentors and mentees. Nearly 50% (25 out of 51) report meeting four or fewer times through the last year. Busy schedules, demands of work and family, and distance between mentor and mentee are the most regularly reported impediments. Four mentors noted their mentee’s lack of initiative as a reason for not meeting regularly. One mentor who scored his mentoring relationship 10/10 shared that he connects with his mentee whenever the mentee has a question or concern arising out of ministry (they meet 5-8 times per year).

Here’s the breakdown of meeting frequency from all respondents:

How often do you ordinarily meet with your mentee?

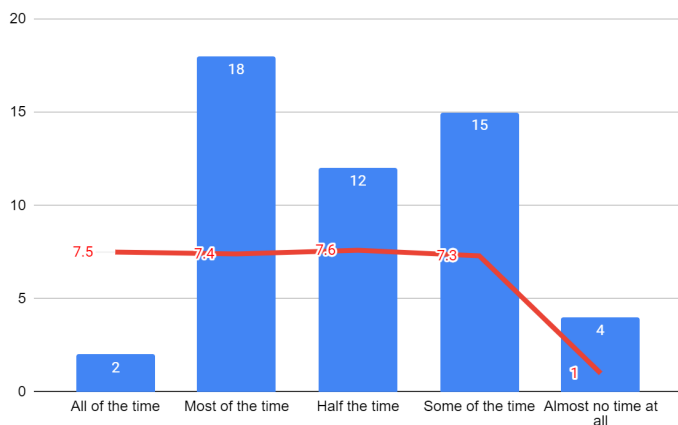
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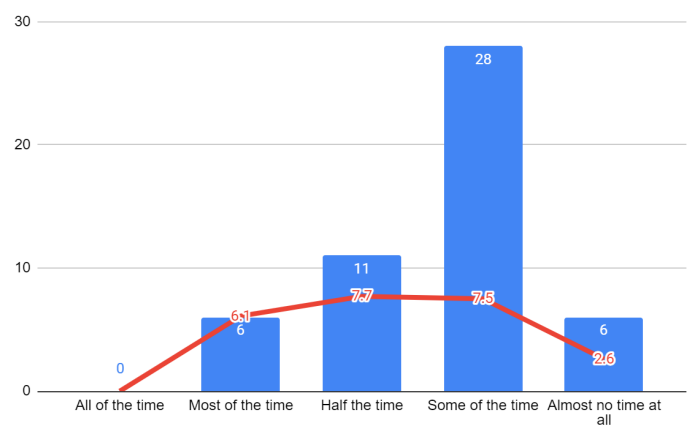
What are mentors talking about with new pastors?

CRC Mentors spend time with new pastors discussing professional development. These conversations are critical in reflecting on and growing in their ministry roles. At the same time, it's crucial that new pastors consider their personal spiritual formation. Mentors are encouraged to direct time in their meetings to this key topic, as well. The following two charts show how much time mentors reported spending on each. The lines in each show the average meaningfulness score associated with the frequency of the discussion focus.

How much of your time with your mentee is directed toward professional development (discussing the how-to of ministry tasks like preaching, mission, pastoral-care, administration)?



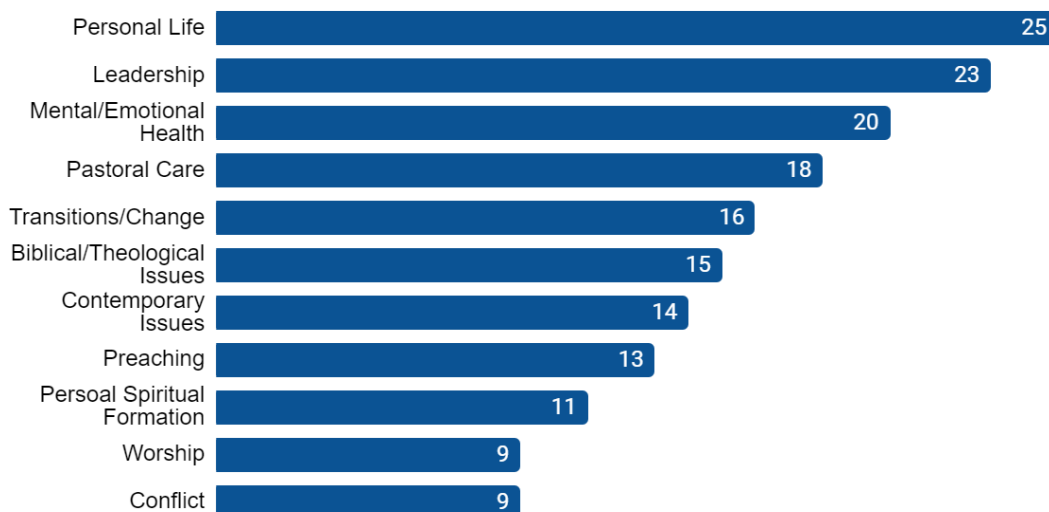
How much of your time with your mentee is directed toward their personal spiritual formation (discussing their relationship with God, spiritual/devotional practices, prayer together)?



Effective mentoring requires attention to both professional and personal development. Mentors responded that they talk about professional development frequently and less often discuss matters of personal spiritual formation. Of the 20 mentors who indicated that they talk about professional matters most or all of the time, 13 spoke of spiritual formation with their mentees some of the time.

Mentors and mentees speak about a number of themes within the two broader categories already mentioned. When asked to name up to three major themes or topics they spoke with new pastors about in the past year, these were the top ten that emerged:

Major Themes and Topics



How do mentors see themselves?

Mentors, like General Practitioners of medicine, must implement a variety of skills while others specialize. Mentors use their many gifts, skills and experiences to fulfill this mandate. Doing so both recognizes the variety of tools mentors need to carry, and captures the formational opportunity that exists when mentor and mentee gather. The top five images respondents used to best describe their approach to mentoring were:

- Encourager (52%)
- Conversation Partner (30%)
- Safe Space/Listener (28%)
- Coach (26%)
- Friend (20%)



Key insights from our mentors

“Mentors must recognize the moments that come that take the relationship deeper and intentionally approach those moments.”

“As time has progressed, my mentee has found his voice with preaching and pastoral work and needs my input less.”

“We keep it simple; she brings the questions and issues and we talk about them.”

“I've found the 4th edition of *Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring* to be a very helpful resource for me. I appreciate the breadth of themes and subjects. I've received good cues from it as to what to listen for and what to talk about.”

“I feel like being a female pastor has been a huge part of our conversations this year, so I definitely recommend trying to connect pastors with people of the same gender and/or similar life experiences that they need to navigate.”