MC Chat Support Group Coordinator Job Description

MentorCONNECT Mission & the Weekly Chat Support Group Meetings
The mission of MentorCONNECT is to provide one-on-one and group mentoring opportunities to individuals in recovery from eating disorders. The chat support groups are where MentorCONNECT members come together on a weekly basis to discuss themes central to achieving their recovery goal in a group setting.

The Chat Coordinator is the 'key' to ensuring that chat meetings take place as scheduled each Monday night and that new incoming chat leaders are trained and prepared for their roles.

Reporting
The Chat Coordinator reports to the Executive Director
The Executive Director is: Shannon Cutts
Shannon can be reached at: MC@mentorconnect-ed.org

Chat Coordinator Responsibilities Overview
Scheduling:
- One month out, begin working on the chat leader schedule for the next month
- Assign two chat co-leaders for each Monday night meeting
- Ensure there is always one senior-level (mentor or higher) chat leader present per shift
- Ensure assigned chat leaders approve their assigned shift in writing (via email)
- Make sure chat co-leaders know it is their responsibility to choose discussion topics for their assigned shift(s) – remind them that song lyrics, quotes, and stories can make excellent discussion topics

Training:
- Train new incoming chat leaders (assigning them two "follow" and two "co-lead" shifts before allowing them to co-lead a chat)
- Ensure new incoming chat leaders understand where everything is inside the forums (chats, forums, where to post discussion topics, how to reply to members, et al)
- Ensure new incoming chat leaders are familiar with the posting guidelines and moderation policy before beginning their service as chat co-leaders
- Assist with creating/approving topics as needed
- Assist with filling shifts as needed
- Assist with answer questions and troubleshooting as needed

Training Schedule
1) The Chat Coordinator will always be an experienced Chat Leader.
2) The Chat Coordinator will work with the Executive Director to plan out a month's worth of chats and review all leaders' availability.
3) The Chat Coordinator will work with the Executive Director to incorporate their first chat leader Trainee and ensure all training shifts are completed.

Support Group Co-Leadership
When scheduling chat leaders for their shifts, it is important to ensure that all chat meetings are co-led whenever possible.

Chat Leader Shifts
Each Chat Leader is asked to commit to a minimum of one (1) chat support group meeting per month. Chat Leaders may add additional meetings as their schedule permits.

Member Agreement, Moderation Policy
The Chat Coordinator must ensure that all approved leaders are thoroughly familiar with and prepared to abide by all of the MentorCONNECT community rules at all times. The community guidelines (Member Agreement, Moderation Policy) are posted inside the Forums under the "MC Community" menu tab.

To Schedule a Forums Chat Event:
1. Log in to the Forums
2. Click on the "Chats" menu bar
3. Click on "Create Chat"
4. Click on the "Chat Event" radio button
5. Fill in the "Title" field with the Month, Date and "Chat Support Group Meeting" (ex: October 28th: Chat Support Group Meeting")
6. Fill in the "Description" field with "This chat support group meeting is open to all members of MentorCONNECT"
7. Scroll down to the "Settings" part of the page
8. Select the Start Date
9. Select a Start Time of 8:00 pm (regardless of what time zone you personally live in)
10. Select an Event Duration of 1:00 hour(s)
11. Be sure Live Moderation is Disabled (click the "Disabled" radio button)
12. Scroll down to the very bottom of the page
13. Click "Create Chat" to create your chat event
14. Your Chat Event will now automatically display in the Chat Events and on the Community Calendar
15. Your Chat Event will open automatically on the date and time you have chosen and automatically close after the amount of time you have designated
16. If for any reason you need to alter the close time, you can click on "Edit this Chat Event" to edit elements of the event before the event or while the event is in progress

Posting Discussion Topics:
1. Log into the Forums
2. Click on the "Forums" menu bar
3. Under "Member Forums," click on "Monday Night Support Group"
4. Look to the right and click on the button that says "Post New Topic"

Posting Discussion Topics, cont.

5. Under "Forum," be sure that "Monday Night Support Group" is selected
6. Fill in the "Title" field with the Month, Date and "Chat Support Group Meeting Discussion Topic" (ex: October 28th: Chat Support Group Meeting Discussion Topic")
7. Fill in the "Description" field with the song lyrics, quote, story or other topic
8. Scroll down to the very bottom of the page and click on "Post Now"
9. Your discussion topic will now be visible to all members prior to the Chat Event

Posting Chat Topics in the Chat Event

1. Click on the "Chat" tab
2. Click "All Chats"
3. Click the specific chat event date
4. Click the "Edit this chat event" link (in the right column)
5. Post the lyrics/quotes/poem in the "Description" text box (be sure to put the title of the song or the poem or the word "Quotes" in bold type)
6. Click "Update Chat Event" button at the bottom to be sure the information is saved.

Leading a Chat Meeting
The Chat Coordinator is responsible for ensuring all chat leaders understand how the chat meetings work, how to open and close a meeting, how to create and post topics ("Reflections") and how to moderate a chat meeting successfully (including communication basics and an understanding of the chat-based format).

Opening a Meeting: Meetings begin at 8:00pm (central time) sharp. When it is 8:00pm, chat leaders will open the meeting. Here are the steps to open a meeting:

Step One: Stop all side conversations to listen to the guidelines.
Type "Welcome everyone! It is now 8pm and our meeting will begin. Tonight's chat leaders are (name) and (name). Everyone now please be quiet for the reading of the meeting guidelines."

Step Two: Wait until everyone is quiet. If necessary, ask again for silence and address violators by name when requesting silence of side conversations. Then type out these Guidelines (you can just copy and paste if that is easier):

Guideline #1: All discussions must focus on the topic for the evening
Guideline #2: Please abide by all chat leader instructions at all times
Guideline #3: Only pro-recovery talk is allowed so please review the Member Agreement before participating the evening's discussion topic in advance

Step Three: Guide participants to find the discussion topic for the evening. Type the following:

To find tonight's discussion topic, go to the "Forums" menu tab, click on Monday Night Support Group, click on "Month/Date: 'Title'"

Wait until everyone has located the discussion topic. Then you can begin the meeting.

Leading a Chat Meeting, cont.

During the meeting: It will be important to continue monitoring the group throughout the meeting to train participants not to announce goings and comings, and to train latecomers not to break up a meeting by asking where to find the topics. Remind latecomers that the meeting has already started and they can contact the leaders privately for help after the meeting has concluded.

Concluding a Meeting: Before the meeting ends, remind attendees they are welcome to continue the discussion in the Monday Night Support Group forum. Let the group know that the chat will be closing as soon as the meeting has concluded. Encourage everyone to remember they are not alone and they have the entire community supporting them in their recovery. Also remind everyone of any upcoming events.

Tips On Moderating a Chat Meeting

How to Post a Comment: All messages can be submitted to the chat window by typing a message (there is no character length limit) in the small window under the text "Type Your Post." Clicking "enter" on your keyboard will submit your comment to the chat window for other attendees to see.

How to Private Chat with Your Co-Moderator During a Meeting: During the meeting, chat moderators (co-leaders) can private chat using the "Whisper" function. Clicking on the "Whisper" button activates the feature. "Whispers" are visible ONLY to chat moderators. "Whispers" show up in bright yellow in the chat window (the wide space to the left on the screen).

Identifying Chat Co-Moderators: Chat Moderators will display with a "Chat Moderator" badge so all attendees can easily identify who that event's leaders are. All attendees will be displayed along the right hand column on the Chat Event screen.

Kicked Users: While this may never occur, members who become more disruptive than is manageable can be "kicked" for a period of time or permanently (they can later be reinstated by clicking "Kicked Users" and selecting the user you wish to reinstate.

Chat Archives: The archived chat conversation will remain available online for three days following the chat event. This provides a good window of time for attendees who missed the live meeting to review what was discussed. The "Chat Archive" displays on the right hand side in a purple box. Clicking on the Month pulls up chat events that have been archived for that month.

<u>Chat Rooms</u>: All Monday Night Chat Support Group meetings will take place in Chat Events. While the Chat Rooms feature may be used at some future point, presently they are not in use inside the Forum.

Overview of Chat-Based Format
Since the Support Group is conducted in a chat-based forum, it is recognized that traditional group dynamics may not apply in every situation. Within the limitations of a chat-based group, every attempt should be made to adhere to the fundamental group goals of:
- <u>Positive</u>: Pro-recovery conversation is always the #1 goal
- <u>Proactive</u>: Building pro-recovery problem-solving is key to all discussions
- <u>Purposeful</u>: All conversations should relate to that week's topic
- <u>Progress-not-perfection</u>: Baby steps are always emphasized
- <u>Productive</u>: Members should leave feeling more encouraged than when they arrived

Communications Basics
These simple communications basics can always be helpful when leading chat meetings.
- <u>Listening skills</u>: Listen to what the other person is saying. It is often helpful to repeat back what you have heard from the other person before responding to make sure you have understood correctly
- <u>Speaking skills</u>: Email and chat-based communications cut out 90% of how we "hear" each other – nonverbally through visual and body language cues. So spend time considering what you say, or type, to ensure clarity and minimize miscommunication
- <u>Conflict resolution skills</u>: From time to time, miscommunication may occur. Stay calm. Backtrack to discover where the misunderstanding first began. Using your listening and speaking skills, work from that point forward to clear up any confusion. Defer resolution of conflicts with individual members to after the meeting conclusion

Handling Requests from Forums Members for Interventions, Referrals or Information
- Participation in *Mentor*CONNECT is never a substitute or replacement for professional medical help
- Serving as a volunteer Mentor, chat support group leader, or *Mentor*CONNECT volunteer in any capacity does not extend to offering referrals or advice about eating disorders treatment
- *Mentor*CONNECT's official policy is to refer those who seek additional support to NEDA, ANAD, EDReferral, Gurze or other similar website resources
- When offering resources for further information, all volunteer leaders are required to give at least 3 resources as we do not endorse particular services or providers

Additional Support
MentorCONNECT is a team-based community and all volunteer leadership roles are approached as a team. The Chat Coordinator should not hesitate to contact the Executive Director <u>at any time</u> for assistance.