

How can project-based mentorships enhance the dietetics profession?

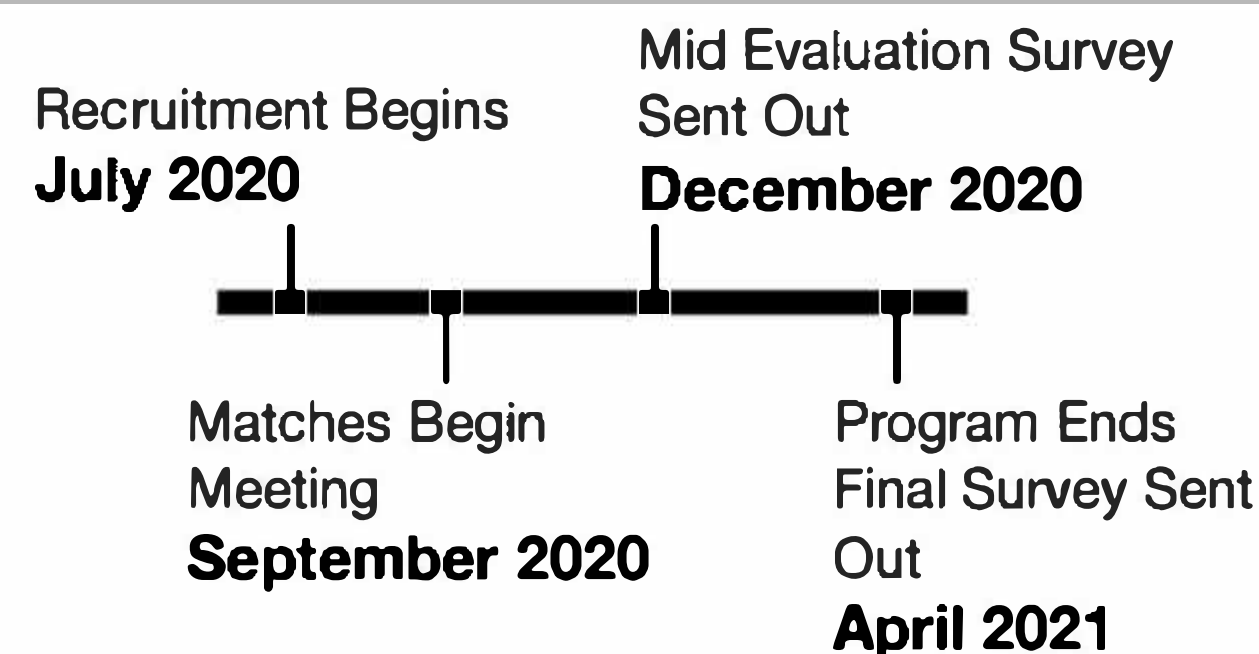
Tarbell V, Cottey K, Rodriguez Sandoval M, McCleskey C, Krpec B, Beathard K, Hicks-Roof, K

ABSTRACT

The RD Mentorship Program is designed to provide dietetic students (mentee) with the opportunity to gain one-on-one experience with a Registered Dietitian (mentor). This nationwide program evaluates project-based mentorships. Potential mentors and mentees completed an initial survey that indicated mentor projects and mentee interests. Mentees (n=378) were matched to a mentor (n=264) based on their project preferences and interests. Matches met virtually monthly from September 2020 to April 2021. A mid-program evaluation was sent out in December 2020. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The mid-program evaluation indicated that 96% (n=265) of participants found the application and matching process good to very good. The majority of mentee participants liked the variety of dietitians and projects. Some of the projects were, but not limited to, the following: social media and website development, food photography, grocery store tours, and patient education handouts. Through the RD Mentorship Program's project-based mentorship format, mentees are exposed to a broad range of activities that Registered Dietitians perform across many sectors. These projects help to build relationships and offer valuable experiential learning opportunities in dietetics.

METHODS

- Program begins recruitment in all US states for the first time
- Mentor and Mentee matched based on dietetic field and projects
- Mentors and Mentee meet at least one time per month virtually
- December 2020 Midterm Survey Evaluation sent out

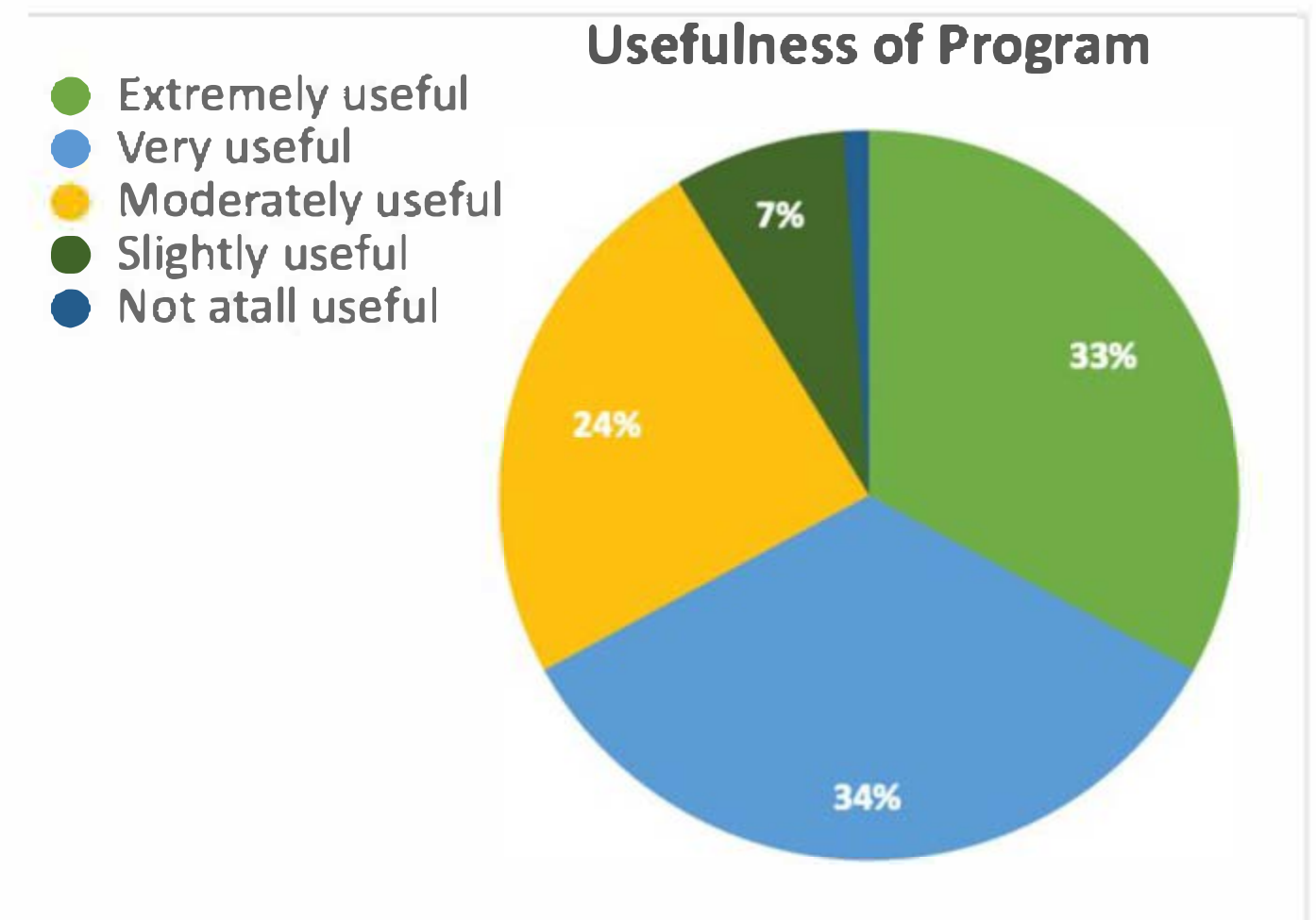


RESULTS

- Over 96% of participants found the application to be good/very good
- Over 98% of participants liked the variety of dietitians/ projects they chose from in the application process
- Over 92% of participants would be interested in continuing to participate in the RD Mentorship Program in future years

Topics Covered	
Diabetes	Renal Nutrition
Eating Disorders	Cooking Classes
Community Nutrition	Infant Nutrition
Vegan Protein Options	Nutrition and Mental Health

Projects in 2020-2021	
Social Media Content	Nutrient Analysis
Website Development	Cooking Classes
Case Studies	Text Message Program
Virtually Shadowing RD	Podcast Scripts
Educational Handouts	creating ebook
Recipe Development	Food Photography
Literature Reviews	Grocery Store Tours



CONCLUSIONS

Through the RD Mentorship Program project-based mentorship format

- Mentees are exposed to a broad range of activities that Registered Dietitians perform across many sectors.
- These projects help to build relationships and offer valuable experiential learning opportunities in dietetics.

<https://www.rdmentor.com>

