



CEREBRAL  
PALSY  
FOUNDATION

# Healthcare Mentorship Program

## YEARLY REPORT

# 2024

# INTRODUCTION

**Our mentorship program exists to provide early-career healthcare and research professionals with physical disabilities opportunities to engage, collaborate with an inclusive cohort of colleagues, both senior and junior, to encourage support and promote visibility and success in their future healthcare fields.**

This initiative has been developed to support people with cerebral palsy who are in early stages of their healthcare, social work and/or research careers. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, physicians, therapists, nurses, psychologists, social workers, researchers and research trainees. Individuals must have less than five years of experience in their chosen profession.

For the pilot year of the program, four individuals with cerebral palsy were selected. The selection committee considered the applicant's level of experience, their project plan merit, references, and career goals.



**ALL**  
**MENTEE PARTICIPANTS**  
**REPORTED**  
**VALUE ADD AND**  
**SATISFACTION**  
**WITH PARTICIPATION**

# OUR PROGRAM SO FAR

## CPF'S MISSION

The Cerebral Palsy Foundation is a pioneering organization committed to creating positive change for the 17 million people worldwide living with cerebral palsy. CPF operates across four core focus areas, namely healthcare, education & employment, advocacy, and design & technology, with the overarching goal of accelerating clinical implementation, supporting relevant research, driving effective policy & advocacy, and leading knowledge translation & dissemination to achieve better outcomes. CPF's dedication to advancing early career growth for individuals with cerebral palsy in healthcare, social work, and research fields aligns with its broader mission to build professional pipelines and provide more opportunities for success and inclusivity.

## PROGRAM MISSION

Our program for individuals with cerebral palsy will help encourage career growth and professional development in the healthcare, social work and research fields where people with cerebral palsy are underrepresented. The CPF Healthcare Mentorship Program amplifies opportunities for those who are early in their careers in terms of both career development and professional empowerment. The purpose of the Mentorship Program is to help create, mentor, and grow a robust community of healthcare professionals and researchers with cerebral palsy. This program will place a high value on the forged connections between mentors and mentees, as well as between the successful applicants in the program.

# OUR 2024 PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

4

## MENTEES SELECTED

Out of ten applicants, four mentees were selected. The mentees represented the fields of mental health counseling, social work, neuroscience, and physical medicine and rehabilitation. The mentees were either in the first five years of their career, or still within secondary education.

8

## MENTORS INVESTED

Each mentee was paired with two mentors: one professional with cerebral palsy, and one professional with experience related to their field. The mentors came from diverse backgrounds including education, neuroscience, social work, and medicine.

6

## GROUP WEBINARS

Mentees and mentors had access to webinars focused on mentorship dynamics, ableism in healthcare, the ADA and workplace accommodations, panel discussions, and program feedback.

4

## ONGOING MENTEE PROJECTS

Mentee projects will continue after the close of the program's pilot year and include research into genetic causes of cerebral palsy, spasticity and stress, decision making with a disability, and work centering around developing patient self-advocacy.

# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

## SHORT TERM

**Improved** career prospects and advancement opportunities for program participants.

**Increased** visibility and success of individuals with physical disabilities in healthcare fields.

**A growing community** of healthcare professionals and researchers with combined expertise and lived experience, who are committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity, **Two mentors from the 2024 cohort were asked to return for the 2025 program and are returning. One 2024 mentee is returning as a mentor in 2025.**

## MEDIUM TERM

**Participants contribute** to a more inclusive and diverse healthcare and research workforce.

**Fostering** a culture of mentorship and support in healthcare and research fields.

**Advancing systemic changes** in healthcare institutions to promote diversity and inclusion.

## LONG TERM

**The CPF Healthcare Mentorship Program** aims to create lasting change, empowering individuals with physical disabilities to thrive in healthcare and research careers, while promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in these fields.

“My experience with the mentorship program was truly enriching. I am grateful for the dedicated mentors who invested their time and expertise in helping me grow both in research and in developing relationships with other professionals who have CP.

**I value the opportunity and appreciate the positive impact it had on my growth within the field of research.”**

**-KARINA CARNALL**

Mentee, 2024 Early Healthcare Mentorship Program Cohort

“The program does a great job of connecting students and professionals with cerebral palsy together, and the mentorship relationship was fruitful not only in advancing scholarship, but also in lending emotional support for both mentors and mentees alike.

**These are both so important in a world that still struggles with inclusivity and to see the value that individuals with CP bring to healthcare and related fields.”**

**-DR. RAFFI NAJARIAN**

Mentor, 2024 Early Healthcare Mentorship Program Cohort

“There are a few role models for individuals with CP entering healthcare related fields. It’s easy to feel out of place. The program allowed our group to connect with individuals with CP, who have both similar experiences, concerns, and goals

**Individuals with CP and other physical disabilities can enhance perspectives and understanding of the healthcare community.”**

**-DR. JUSTIN RAMSEY**

Program Advisor, 2024 Early Healthcare Mentorship Program Cohort

# OUR FUTURE PLAN LOOKING TO 2025

## LEARNING AND LOOKING AHEAD

Our 2024 pilot year of the Healthcare Mentorship program offered many opportunities for learning and preparing for future iterations of the project.

For the 2025 cohort we received ten applications and accepted seven mentees.

Each mentee will be paired with a single mentor, who has both cerebral palsy and relevant professional experience. In addition, we will have a Mentor Advisory Council to provide mentorship and extra support across mentees and their projects.

The program will run from January to June of 2025, and both mentees and mentors will have access to a series of six webinars.

14

**MENTEES AND  
MENTORS**

7

**FIELDS  
REPRESENTED**

6

**WEBINARS IN SIX  
MONTHS**





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**WE THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN  
OUR PROGRAMS**