



# SL Mentorship Platform Content Style Guide

## ▼ TL;DR

A brief summary of the entire guide including the most information anyone writing for Sean's Legacy Mentorship Platform would need to know.

*This TL;DR can be updated in future phases.*

- Principles



## Voice and Tone

### Our use of language should always be

- **Clear.** We are intentional with our messaging. We need to understand who and/or the topic we are writing about, and clarify using simple words and phrases.
- **Consistent.** We use the same words to communicate with our mentees and mentors.
- **Inclusive.** We promote a sense of belonging and community by using respectful, supportive language. Avoid using humor at inappropriate times or at the users' expense. Refer to users with "you".
- **Uplifting.** Be kind and welcoming. We want to encourage mentees and mentors to see their unique gifts. We want to empower mentees and mentors to find the best connection fit.
- **Ethical.** We are transparent and don't use tactics that mislead our mentees into doing something without their understanding or consent. We also don't call these tactics "Dark Patterns" because we use inclusive, anti-racist language.

### Tone can change depending on context, however tone should always be

- **Respectful.** Avoid making assumptions about mentees. We never use gendered language. Using “please” and “thank you” connotes respect. Always offer choice.
- **Approachable.** Avoid jargon and use clear, concise language.
- **Compassionate.** We want mentees and mentors to feel accepted for exactly who they are.

## ▼ SL Mentorship Platform Content

### ▼ Overarching purpose of this guide



This guide aims to keep all content published by Sean’s Legacy Mentorship Platform consistent and in line with **Sean’s Legacy Guiding Principles**:

- **Inclusivity.** To strive for gender inclusivity in our communities and schools.
- **Empowerment.** To empower LGBTQIA+ youth to embrace their extraordinary capabilities.
- **Compassion.** To abandon our judgement so that we may appreciate others perspective.
- **Respect.** To admire and appreciate others for their abilities, qualities, and strengths.

*This guide was written with these principles in mind, as well as adjectives provided by Steph Lambrushcini (see below) and information gleaned from the Phase 1 UXR Report.*

- Welcoming
- Trustworthy
- Professional
- Engaging
- Uplifting
- Community

### ▼ Users (target audience)

The mentorship platform is 18+ and targeted for users 18-25. Our target audience are those who identify on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. Mentors are 18+.

## ▼ Voice and Tone

### ▼ About our voice and tone



#### Our use of language should always be

- **Clear.** We are intentional with our messaging. We need to understand who and/or the topic we are writing about, and clarify using simple words and phrases.
- **Consistent.** We use the same words to communicate with our mentees and mentors.
- **Inclusive.** We promote a sense of belonging and community by using respectful, supportive language. Avoid using humor at inappropriate times or at the users' expense. Refer to users with "you".
- **Uplifting.** Be kind and welcoming. We want to encourage mentees to see their unique gifts. We want to empower mentees and mentors to find the best connection fit.
- **Ethical.** We are transparent and don't use tactics that mislead our mentees into doing something without their understanding or consent. We also don't call these tactics "Dark Patterns" because we use inclusive, anti-racist language.



#### Tone can change depending on context, however **tone should always be**

- **Respectful.** Avoid making assumptions about mentees. We never use gendered language. Using "please" and "thank you" connotes respect. Always offer choice.
- **Approachable.** Avoid jargon and use clear, concise language.
- **Compassionate.** We want mentees and mentors to feel accepted for exactly who they are.

### ▼ Voice guidelines and characteristics

- **Kind, not pushy**
- **Welcoming, not unapproachable**
- **Ethical and open, not withholding or cagey**
- **Empowering, not judgmental**

▼ Tone in Use

- *This list should continue to be updated in future phases.*

Step in the user journey	Emotion / Pain points	User need	Tone	Example of copy / possible content touch points
Signing up	Uncertainty, even lack of trust	To find out more about the mentorship program	Clear, straightforward	<p>“The mentorship program is completely free.”</p> <p>“You can change the information in your profile at any time.”</p> <p>“We take privacy seriously at Sean’s Legacy. Read more about our privacy policy <a href="#">here</a>.”</p>
Profile creation	<p>Might not want to spend so much time filling out so many details</p> <p>Frustration / might abandon a task if it’s too onerous or if they’re not</p>	Fill out their profile minimally to start booking mentors	Reassuring, encouraging, empathetic	<p>“Please share more about yourself.”</p> <p>“We’d love to learn more about you.” <i>(For profile description placeholder text):</i> “I love baking and hiking, and</p>

		inspired to write a description		<p>would love to teach a karaoke class. I was the fastest swimmer in the 3rd grade. I work in customer service, but hope to pivot into UX eventually.”</p> <p><b>Content pointers:</b> • Prioritize for users what profile information is essential • Offer useful placeholder text</p>
Searching for a mentor	Insecurity about finding a mentor or reaching out	Find a suitable mentor that matches their interests and goals	Reassuring, encouraging, empathetic	<p>“Our mentors have been where you are now, reach out when you feel ready.” “Our mentors are dedicated to supporting your dreams.”</p>
Booking a mentor	Excited, but also worried about whether they are doing something right	Successfully book a session with a mentor	Reassuring, encouraging, empathetic	<p>“You’ve successfully requested a meeting with a mentor. They have X days to respond.”</p> <p>“Congratulations on taking the first step.</p> <p><i>MentorName</i> will reach out within</p>

				X days.” -or- “Congrats on taking the first step! Here’s the timeline of what happens next <i>InsertTimeline</i> ”
Not being able to find a mentor / book a session with a mentor	Frustration, disappointment	To successfully find another mentor	Reassuring, open about other options / alternatives	“This mentor is unavailable at this time. How about booking in with one of your suggested mentors?” “ <i>MentorName</i> is unavailable at this time, <u>but here are some other options.</u> ” (link to suggested mentors)
A mentor not accepting the connection / meeting request	Rejection, insecure, disappointment, frustration	To understand why and successfully find another mentor	Reassuring, encouraging, empathetic, open about other options / alternatives	<Should there be an automated message for this? Does a mentor handle this? And how do we work with tone in a situation like this?>

•

## ▼ Common use cases

*Phase II was not able to begin this section.*

### ▼ Error messages

(general guidelines for error messages)

### ▼ Empty states

Question to ask yourself when writing an empty state: *what does a user need to know in order to make this feature useful or relevant to them?*

### ▼ CTA

We use Sentence case for CTA's.

- examples: Sign up, Learn more

### ▼ Onboarding

We use Account during the onboarding process, while Profile is used once the user is finished with onboarding and in to the site.

## ▼ Word list / Taxonomies



*The mentor side of the platform from UXD2 SL Phase II and the mentee side from UXD1 SL Phase II have not been audited for inconsistencies. We recommend Phase III UXW check for discrepancies in final hand off designs from Phase II to ensure standardization.*

***As the platform grows, so too will this word list. See below for examples to consider in future phases.***

Spectrum in-product word list

MailChimp word list

### CTA's:

- Continue (instead of Next)
  - Use case: to go to the next step in a flow.
- Choose (instead of Select)
  - Use case: when making a choice between 2 or more decisions.
- Delete (instead of Remove)
  - Use case: to use when a user wants to remove a piece of information already provided or delete their account.
- Sign up (instead of Create profile)
  - Use case: to initiate account creation.

- Log in
  - Use case: for returning users.
- Complete
  - Use case: to end a flow.
- Find or Browse (instead of Explore or Check out)
  - Use case: to look through the list of mentors.
- Edit (instead of Update)
  - Use case: when editing a profile or the questionnaire.
- Save
  - Use case: to be used when finished with editing.
- Begin
  - Use case: currently being used for mentor match questionnaire.
- Learn more
  - Use case: currently being used on landing pages, directs user to Q&A screen.



Language for gender, orientation, race, and ethnicity:

#### Gender / Identity

***(Designs may be using a mix of “Gender identity” and “Identity” as titles; Phase III consider early audit for standardization. Phase II suggests “Identity” as the title)***

- Gender queer/Gender fluid
- Non-binary
- Transgender (instead of Transgender male or Transgender female)
  - consider using / testing “Trans”
- Two-spirit
- Man (instead of Cisgender male/man)
  - consider testing “Male” vs “Man”
- Woman (instead of Cisgender female/woman)



- consider testing “Female” vs “Woman”

#### Orientation

***(Designs may be using a mix of “Sexual orientation” and “Orientation” as titles; Phase III consider early audit for standardization. Phase II suggests “Orientation” as the title)***

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay/MLM (instead of Homosexual)
  - consider removing / clarifying / testing “MLM”
- Lesbian/WLW/Sapphic
  - consider removing / clarifying / testing “WLW”
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Pansexual
- Queer

#### Race and Ethnicity

***(Designs may be using a mix of “Race/Ethnicity” and “Cultural background” as titles; Phase III consider early audit for standardization)***

- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- White (instead of Caucasian)
- East/Southeast Asian
- South Asian
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

#### Additional words:

- Create account (instead of Create profile)
  - Use case: only for speaking about the creation of mentor/mentee accounts, not to be used a CTA.

- Account
  - Use case: to be used when a user registers for an account.
- Profile
  - Use case: to be used once a user is in the site.
- Questionnaire (instead of Quiz)
  - Use case: when writing about anything regarding the Mentorship match questionnaire.
- Focus areas (instead of Supported needed)
  - Use case: when asking mentees the areas they would like focus on during mentorship.
- Match
  - Use case: when filling out the matching questionnaire to get matched to a mentor.
- Chosen name (instead of first name / initial / nickname / preferred name)
  - Use case: when asking for a mentee or mentor's name.

▼ [OOS Section]

*This list can continue to be updated in future phases.*

Words to use carefully:

- 

Words / terms to never use:

- Dark patterns (as an example)

▼ **Grammar and mechanics**



This guide is to help everyone write consistent content for the Sean's Legacy Mentorship Platform.

- We are using U.S. standards for spellings, date format, etc.
- All copy should read at a 6th grade level or lower.

***SL Phase II UXW recommends running all copy through the Hemingway Editor to further increase standardization across designs.***

### ▼ Basics

- One space after a period.
- **Use periods after proper sentences.**
  - Examples: "This information will only be viewable to the Sean's Legacy team and your future mentors." -&- "Setting goals will help you find better mentor matches (select all that apply)."
  - **We don't use periods after lists or after links.**
    - Example for after links: "I have read and accepted Sean's Legacy's privacy policy" -or- "Already have an account? Log in"
- Use an **Oxford comma** (aka Serial comma) between elements in a series of three or more items.
  - Example: "Our voice is clear, consistent, and inclusive."

### ▼ Capitalization



We use Sentence case for the majority of our content to help readability and to best convey our tone.

**Only proper nouns will use Title Case** (ex: Names, Titles, Brands, Geographic locations).

- **Sentence case:**
  - Most major and minor words are **not** capitalized.

- Examples: “Platform safety features” instead of “Platform Safety Features”
- **When to use:**
  - CTA's (ex: Sign up, Learn more, Continue home, Contact us)
  - Headings (ex: “Mentorship matching quiz”)
  - Industry options
- Title Case:
  - Major words are capitalized, minor words are not.
  - **When to use:**
    - Proper nouns
      - Names (“Hope Dehnert”)
      - Titles (“Co-Founder and Managing Director, MPH”)
        - this includes Occupation titles for mentor cards, questionnaire, etc.
      - Brands (“Sean’s Legacy Mentorship Platform”)
      - Geographic locations (“Philadelphia, PA”)

## ▼ Redefining Professionalism



Professionalism is subjective and is being redefined to be more inclusive, especially by those in our target audience.

There are plenty of examples of how professionalism can be classist, racist, ableist, and sexist.

Our voice and tone persona, if you will, is the *cool guidance counselor*; professional, but approachable.

They speak with authority without being authoritarian.

[Here is a great article on the topic.](#)

Based on the above we allow for informal language because it's the way humans speak.

## ▼ Informal Language and Abbreviation



We use informal, every day language - ***not slang or jargon*** - and we don't go overboard with our use of informal language.

We are careful with our use of abbreviations.

### Informal language / Abbreviations

*This list can continue to be updated in future phases.*

We can use:

- Congrats (instead of congratulations)
- Bio (instead of biography)
- Info (instead of information)
- hr (instead of hour)
- min (instead of minute)
- info (instead of information)

We would like to not use:

- hs (for high school)
- prof (for professional)

## ▼ Contractions

We use contractions based on our user group and the way people actually speak.

**Examples:**

- You'd
- You've
- I'm
- We're
- We've

## ▼ Lists

Items in a list do not have punctuation after them.

## ▼ Dates and Numbers

- Use numeric symbols for all numbers (1, 2, 3 - instead of one, two, three).
  - Example: “Book a mentor in 3 easy steps”
    - We use numeric symbols because they are more readable and easier to scan / understand quickly.
- “mm-dd-yyyy” (example: 03-20-2023)

## ▼ Spelling and formatting

Standardized Spellings:

*This list can continue to be updated in future phases.*

- Checklist (instead of check list)
- Sign up (instead of Signup)
- Sign in (instead of Sign-in)
- Log in (instead of login)

## ▼ Accessibility [for future phases]

### ▼ Statement

### ▼ Guidelines and best practices

APA Accessibility

- Be mindful of animations and pop up modals
  - anything suddenly popping up or changing unexpectedly on the screen can be hard for assistive technologies to interpret and therefore confusing to the user.
- Avoid directional language (“Click here”)

### ▼ Alt text



Alt text is necessary for screen readers, and for those with sensory processing sensitivities. Alt text also optimizes the site for search engines and benefits slow-loading browsers.

*Phase 2 UXW recommends working with the development team in future phases to address alt text and aria labels.*

Helpful links:

[Intuit's guide for writing meaningful alt-text](#)

▼ Header usage

H1

H2

etc

▼ Link copy

▼ Closed captioning and transcripts

▼ Hashtags

When using hashtags we can ensure accessibility by using Camel Case (#PrideFest2023, #YouAreLoved, etc); a screen reader will be able to decipher and read out the individual words.