A. Companions – Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors

All spiritual directors are bound by a code of ethics, a set of principles of behaviour. In the spirit of inclusivity and consistency and to preserve the integrity of the practice of spiritual direction, the Companions in the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (Companions) has adopted the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD) Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors (2019 Revised version).

Introduction

What is spiritual direction?
Spiritual direction is a process by which one person journeys contemplatively with another who is seeking to discern God's presence (however God is named) in the everyday experience of their life, thus enhancing growth in intimacy with God, and right relationship with all creation. This ministry has a long and revered history across faith traditions, and in the Christian tradition has been practised by non-ordained people and ordained ministers. The focus of this ministry is the particular relationship between God and the person seeking direction.

Who is a spiritual director?
A spiritual director is one who explores with the person coming for spiritual direction how the Divine is moving in his or her life.

Spiritual directors have a sense of call to their ministry, a call that is complemented by appropriate gifts, education and formation which have been recognized by the community of spiritual directors. They listen contemplatively and respond appropriately from a depth of personal experience of life and faith. They allow their own spirituality to grow and mature with an ever-deepening awareness and understanding of struggle, paradox and mystery. They develop a wide vision embracing the various traditions of Christianity and respecting others' faith traditions and spiritual perspectives.

Spiritual directors cherish and foster an active contemplative spiritual practice and regularly seek spiritual direction and supervision for themselves.

Spiritual directors have formal qualifications which includes experience in contemplative spiritual direction practice.

Why do spiritual directors need a code of ethics?
In common with other professionals who engage in deep personal contact with others, spiritual directors practise their ministry in a professional capacity. Any misuse of power by a director exposes the person being directed to the possibility of its abuse. Directors may not use others for their own pleasure, satisfaction or benefit.

Spiritual direction is based on values which acknowledge the nature of God's presence in all creation. This divine presence in all humans must be acknowledged and respected within the spiritual direction relationship.

About the Code
This code is divided into sections that reflect the different areas of responsibility. Although it begins with responsibility towards the director's own self, there is no order of priority in the code. Each area will assume its own importance on different occasions.

Terms Defined

- *Directee*: A person seeking spiritual direction from a spiritual director.
- *Spiritual direction*: The process by which one person journeys contemplatively with another person seeking to discern the presence of God/the Divine in the everyday experience of their life, so enhancing growth in intimacy with God and right relationship with all Creation.
- *Spiritual director*: The person who companions the directee as they become more aware of God's self-communication and explores how they might respond to that self- communication and live out the consequences of that relationship.
- *Faith Community*: A group or community which reflectively sustains and supports each other in their individual spiritual journey.
- *Contemplative stance*: The practice of listening deeply to one's inner experience, trusting that the movement of God/the Divine, will ultimately be revealed, and wisdom gained.
- *Evaluation*: An intentional process by which a spiritual director and a directee assess the movements of the spirit in the spiritual direction process and come to agreement on whether the current relationship is to continue or not.
- *Termination*: An intentional process by which a spiritual direction relationship is brought to an end (which can be instigated by either party).

- *Education and formation*: A process involving the provision of the necessary knowledge, the learning of skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for the proper practice of spiritual direction.
- *Professional qualifications for spiritual directors*: Those formal requirements that enable directors to exercise their ministry. (see AECSD Contemplatively Forming Tomorrow's Spiritual Directors: Formation Guidelines for Spiritual Directors in Australia (Revised 2018).
- *Supervision*: The processing of the inner experiences of the director immediately prior to, during and after direction sessions so that, growing in awareness of his or her reactions and responses, the director is more able to maintain a contemplative focus and be more able to attend to the needs of the directee. Other secondary tasks and benefits may occur through teaching, consultation and in gaining personal insights and healing.
- *Supervisee*: The person receiving supervision.

The Code

1. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards themselves by:

(a) Maintaining responsible association with their own spiritual community.
(b) Remaining abreast of developments in the field of spiritual direction through continuous practice and on-going formation.
(c) Maintaining their own life of faith and spiritual practice.
(d) Receiving appropriate supervision.
(e) Maintaining contact with an appropriate spiritual direction community or peer group.
(f) Consulting other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.
(g) Maintaining an appropriate understanding of the cultural, socio-historical and environmental contexts in which contemporary spiritual direction operates.
(h) Exercising self-care by living a wisely balanced life-style.
(i) Recognising and addressing the difficulties multiple roles or relationships pose to the effectiveness or clarity of the spiritual direction relationship and removing oneself from any situation which compromises the integrity of the spiritual direction relationship.

2. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards their directees by:

(a) Commencing spiritual direction by first discussing with the prospective directee:
    (i) The nature of spiritual direction.

(ii) The respective roles of spiritual director and directee.
(iii) The length and frequency of direction sessions.
(iv) Confidentiality and its limitations.
(v) Remuneration, if any.
(vi) The regular evaluation of the relationship.
(vii) Freedom of both parties to terminate the relationship.

(b) Seeking to maintain a reasonable workload by limiting the number of directees to that which is reasonable and ensuring an appropriate spacing of appointments.

(c) Referring directees to other appropriately qualified persons as necessary.

(d) Ensuring that directees who have ongoing relationships with health professionals make known to those health professionals their involvement in spiritual direction where appropriate.

(e) Ensuring, in situations where they have other professional qualifications (such as a psychologist) that they clarify with their directees the nature of their relationship as a spiritual director.

(f) Ending spiritual direction relationships in cases where it is not in the best interests of the directee (including if financial gain for the spiritual director would be a major justification for continuing).

(g) Respecting the dignity of each directee, all appropriate physical, psychological and social boundaries are maintained within, and outside of, the spiritual direction relationship. The director makes those boundaries very clear to the directee.

(h) Respecting the privacy of their directees, for example, by:

(i) Protecting the identity of the directee, including the fact that a person is a directee.

(ii) Keeping confidential all oral communications concerning spiritual Direction.

(iii) Taking all reasonable precautions available to ensure spiritual direction via electronic means is as secure as possible.

(iv) Not recording unwarranted personal information and ensuring that any such (personal) information is held in strict confidentiality, except where otherwise legally required.

(v) Conducting direction meetings in an appropriate location.

(vi) Ensuring that both spiritual director and directee are aware of any legal requirements that may override confidentiality, including, but not limited to, provisions about child abuse, sexual assault of children or adults, elder abuse and physical harm to self and others, and other criminal behaviours.

3. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards faith communities by:

(a) Being aware of, and respectful to the faith traditions and spiritual communities to which their directees belong.

(b) Not engaging in any proselytising that is directed towards changing the commitment of a directee to the director's spiritual community or tradition.

(c) Respecting the processes of corporate discernment, accountability and support offered by individual spiritual communities.

4. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards colleagues by:

(a) Respecting other spiritual directors, ministers and professionals and not disparaging their work.

(b) Requesting their directees to inform other relevant professionals, e.g. psychologist, that they are receiving spiritual direction.

(c) Not giving to or receiving from other spiritual directors, ministers or other professionals, information about their directee without the written permission of the directee.

5. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards society by:

(a) Representing their qualifications clearly and accurately in any public communication.

(b) Providing information about their services in a way that serves the ministry and charism of contemplative spiritual direction.

(c) Not making statements that contain false, misleading information or misrepresentations about the value and expectations of spiritual direction or a particular spiritual director, nor statements that exploit a directee's fears, anxieties or emotions, or belie the 'slow action of God' that is inherent in spiritual direction.

(d) Conforming to applicable jurisdictional legislation regarding:

(i) Non-discrimination.

(ii) The disclosure of information to public authorities in cases of disclosure by a directee of abuse or knowledge of abuse, danger or crime.

(iii) The requirement for Working with Children and police checks.

6. Spiritual directors act with responsibility in the role of supervisor by:

(a) Not providing supervision or consultation without the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Working towards setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive

boundaries.
(c) Not engaging in any dual or multiple relationships with a supervisee in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to their supervisee.
(d) Evaluating their supervisee's performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

7. Spiritual directors act with responsibility towards students by:
(a) Instructing only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
(b) Evaluating their participants' ongoing development in a manner that is fair, respectful and transparent.
(c) Ensuring all participants have multiple and varied opportunities for spiritual direction experiences in a supervised environment which is safe for both director and directee.
(d)Taking reasonable steps to ensure that directees are informed that their director is in formation.
(e) Ensuring that their relationships with students are constructive, non-exploitative, and respectful.
(f) Ensuring that ethical responsibilities of spiritual directors, as set out in this code, are integral to students' course work.

B. Companions – Code of Ethics for Givers of the First Spiritual Exercises

Why do Givers of the First Spiritual Exercises need a Code of Ethics?
Norms for ethical conduct in the ministry of the First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) are essential today because of the requirement of public accountability. This code provides behavioural standards for the Giver of the FSE. This Code of Ethics is also for Trainers and Mentors of the FSE.

Terms defined

- *FSE*: The abbreviated description of the First Spiritual Exercises.
- *The Giver*: The one giving the FSE to another.
- *The Receiver*: The one making a FSE retreat.
- *Spiritual Conversation*: The form of guided reflection after prayer in the FSE is called Spiritual Conversation. Guiding spiritual conversation requires training.
- *The Mentor*: The one guiding the Giver of the FSE during his or her initial retreats.

- *The Trainer*: The one who trains a Giver of the FSE.

The Code

1. Givers of the FSE act responsibly towards themselves by:

(a) Maintaining responsible association with their own faith community.

(b) Maintaining their own life of faith and prayer with on-going spiritual conversation.

(c) Receiving appropriate mentoring.

(d) Consulting other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.

2. Givers of the FSE act responsibly towards Receivers by:

(a) Discussing with prospective Receivers:

(i) The nature of the FSE.

(ii) The respective roles of the Giver and the Receiver.

(iii) The length and frequency of spiritual conversation sessions.

(iv) Confidentiality and its limitations.

(v) Freedom of both parties to terminate the relationship.

(vi) Costs, if any.

(b) Working under a Mentor in giving the FSE retreats for the first time.

(c) Limiting the number of Receivers to that which is reasonably possible, either individually or a group.

(d) Helping Receivers to seek the support of a qualified church minister, pastoral associate, Spiritual Director or counselor, when asked for or needed.

(e) Clarifying with Receiver the nature of their relationship as a Giver of the FSE, when the Givers of the FSE has other professional qualifications (such as in spiritual direction, counselling, coaching, psychotherapy).

(f) Respecting the dignity of the Receiver by:

(i) Respecting the Receiver's life story, values, conscience, spirituality and theology.

(ii) Limiting inquiry into the personal life of the Receiver to those matters directly relevant to the making of the FSE.

(iii) Recognizing the unequal power relationship between a Giver of the FSE and the Receiver and acting to avoid exploitation.

(iv) Refraining from behaviour that is sexualized, manipulative, abusive or coercive.

(v) Maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries.

(g) Respecting the privacy of the Receiver by:

(i) Protecting the identity of the Receiver, and the fact of him or her

receiving the FSE.
(ii) Keeping confidential all oral communications and making no written notes.
(iii) Not giving or receiving from Givers, Mentors, Spiritual Directors, professionals or ministers, information about their Receiver without her or his written permission.
(iv) Conducting spiritual conversation meetings in an appropriate location.
(v) Ensuring that both the Giver and the Receiver of the FSE are aware of any legal requirements that may override confidentiality, including, but not limited to, provisions about child abuse, sexual assault of children or adults, elder abuse and physical harm to self and others, and other criminal behaviours.

3. Givers of the FSE act responsibly towards faith communities by:

(a) Being sensitive to the faith traditions to which their Receivers belong.
(b) Refraining from any proselytizing that is directed towards changing the commitment of a Receiver to the Giver's faith community.
(c) Respecting the processes of decision making, accountability and support offered by faith communities.

4. Givers of the FSE act responsibly towards society by:

(a) Representing their qualifications accurately in any public communication.
(b) Not making statements that contain false, misleading information or misrepresentations about the value and expectations of the FSE or a particular spiritual conversation guide, nor statements that exploit a Receiver's fears, anxieties or emotions, or belie the 'slow action of God' that is inherent in the FSE.
(c) Conforming to applicable jurisdictional legislation about:
(i) Non-discrimination.
(ii) The disclosure of information to public authorities in cases of disclosure by a Receiver of abuse or knowledge of abuse, danger or crime.
(iii) Obtaining WWC and police checks.
(iv) The disclosure of information to public authorities in cases of abuse, danger or crime.

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