

The Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors Diocese of Kootenay

The Code of Ethics serves as:

- A norm to protect the client and the spiritual director from the unethical application of spiritual direction.
- A standard for directors regarding conduct, training, and continuing education.
- A basis for addressing questions and complaints regarding unethical conduct.

Who is it for?

- This Code applies to all aspects of the ministry of a spiritual director licensed within the Diocese of Kootenay which includes, but is not limited to, individual direction, group work, teaching, supervision, and consultancy.
- This Code also applies to spiritual directors of other denominations whose credentials are recognized by the Bishop of the Diocese of Kootenay.

Terminology:

- a. *Directee*: a person seeking spiritual direction from a spiritual director.
- b. *Spiritual Direction*: the process by which one person helps another grow in intimacy with God and in right relationship with others and with all of creation.
- c. *Spiritual Director*: the person who helps the directee become more aware of God's self-communication, respond to that self-communication, and live out the implications of that relationship.
- d. *Evaluation*: an intentional process by which a spiritual director and a directee assess the progress of spiritual direction and agree on its future.
- e. *Termination*: an intentional process by which a spiritual direction relationship is brought to an end.
- f. *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 practise of spiritual direction.
- g. *Supervision*: the processing of the inner experiences of the director during direction sessions so that, growing in awareness of his/her reactions and responses, the director might maintain a contemplative focus and be freer in attending to the needs of the directee. Other secondary tasks and benefits may occur through teaching, consultation and in gaining personal insights and healing.

The Code of Ethics

Section 1: The Spiritual Director and the Self

1. Personal Spirituality: *Spiritual directors assume responsibility for their own personal growth by:*

- a. Developing a prayer life through engaging in personal and communal practices and disciplines
- b. Availing themselves of regular spiritual direction

2. Formation: *Spiritual directors engage in ongoing formation by:*

- a. Continuing to discern their call to the ministry of spiritual direction
- b. Nurturing self-knowledge and interior freedom
- c. Cultivating insight into the influences of culture, socio-historical context, environmental setting, and institutions
- d. Studying scripture, theology, spirituality, psychology, and other disciplines related to spiritual direction
- e. Contributing according to their ability to ongoing research in the field of spiritual guidance

3. Supervision: *Spiritual directors engage in supervision by:*

- a. Being a member of the Spiritual Directors Group or a suitable equivalent, *and*
- b. Seeking individual consultations with a trained supervisor of spiritual directors when appropriate. When a supervisor is not available, the person may consult another Christian spiritual director with at least 7 years of experience.

4. Personal Responsibility: *Spiritual directors meet their own needs outside the spiritual direction relationship in a variety of ways, especially by:*

- a. Engaging in regular self-care; wisely balancing time for prayer, work, leisure, family and personal relationships
- b. Refraining from practising spiritual direction when their physical, spiritual, or psychological condition impairs attention and judgement
- c. Removing themselves, in so far as possible, from any situation that compromises the integrity of the spiritual direction relationship (e.g. dual or multiple relationships – see section 2.4 below)

5. Limitations: *Spiritual directors recognize their limits of:*

- a. Energy, by restricting the number of directees
- b. Attentiveness, by appropriate spacing of meetings and directees
- c. Competence, by refraining from entering new areas that involve additional skills without further study, training, and supervision, and by referring clients to other appropriately qualified persons when necessary

Section 2: The Spiritual Director and the Directee

1. Mutual Agreement: *An agreement is established between the Spiritual Director and the directee which includes the following:*

- a. Nature of spiritual direction
- b. Roles of the spiritual director and the directee
- c. Frequency and length of direction sessions
- d. Amount of remuneration, if any, to be given to the director or the Church
- e. Nature and limits of confidentiality
- f. Process of evaluating and terminating the relationship
- g. Existence of, and where to find, the Code of Ethics to which all directors adhere
- h. Procedure for reporting a complaint of unethical conduct against a spiritual director
(Code of Ethics, Section 4:3)

2. Dignity: *Spiritual directors value the dignity of the directee by:*

- a. Adhering to the Code of Ethics at all times while exercising their ministry
- b. Respecting the client's gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race, membership of any community, culture, values, conscience, theology, and spirituality, especially when these are different from those of the directors
- c. Avoiding defensive stances of their own beliefs and convictions, knowing the capacity these have to create bias and prejudice
- d. Respecting the unique process through which an individual becomes aware of spiritual, religious, moral and other values
- e. Recognizing the imbalance of power in the spiritual direction relationship and taking care not to exploit it through behaviours such as sexual abuse, sexual harassment, manipulation, bullying and spiritual abuse

3. Sexual Boundaries: *The function of boundaries is to protect the nature of the spiritual direction relationship and the vulnerability of both directee and director. The crossing of sexual boundaries is always an ethical violation. Hence spiritual directors do not:*

- a. Engage in sexual intimacy in any form with current directees
- b. Engage in dating behaviours or sexual intimacy with former directees until a reasonable time (not less than 2 years) has elapsed since the termination of the direction relationship
- c. Undertake spiritual direction with persons with whom they have been or are at present engaged in any intimate relationship
- d. Initiate, or respond to, any kind of intimate behaviour or sexual overture within the spiritual direction situation (i.e., solicitation, physical advances, verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature, or anything that might reasonably be construed as inappropriate in a professional relationship)

4. Multiple Relationships: *In so far as possible, spiritual directors will avoid being in more than one role with a directee. In situations where dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable the director will take great care:*

- a. To discuss with the potential directee concerns that might arise in the situation of multiple relationships and what steps may be taken to ensure appropriate boundaries remain in place
- b. That the dual or multiple relationship between director and directee be carefully monitored, especially through supervision, and every effort made to avoid conflicts of interest
- c. That any influence the director may have through a non-direction relationship not be used to the director's advantage or the directee's harm
- d. Not to engage in business or other financial dealings with directees
- e. Not to exploit persons sexually or otherwise over whom they hold supervisory or training influence

5. Confidentiality: *Spiritual directors maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of the directee by:*

- a. Protecting the identity of the directee whenever possible
- b. Keeping confidential all oral and written matters arising in the direction sessions
- c. Storing only such information as is essential for the process in written or electronic form
- d. Conducting direction sessions in appropriate settings and maintaining safe church practises
- e. Observing legal regulations that require disclosure to proper authorities, including but not limited to child abuse, elder abuse and physical harm to self or others
- f. Making prudent arrangements to see that confidentiality is preserved in the event of death, incapacity, or retirement from ministry as a spiritual director
- g. Allowing the directee access to all personal data kept in written or electronic form when requested

Section 3: The Spiritual Director and Others

1. Colleagues: *Spiritual directors maintain collegial relationships with other professionals and display an openness to an inter-disciplinary approach by:*

- a. Developing intra- and interdisciplinary relationships; networking
- b. Requesting a directee who is in counselling or therapy to inform their counsellor/therapist about being in a direction relationship
- c. Securing written releases and permission from directees when specific information needs to be shared for the benefit of the directee
- d. Honouring the contribution of other professionals

2. Faith Communities: *Spiritual directors maintain responsible and respectful relationships to communities of faith by:*

- a. Remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability, and support
- b. Appropriately drawing on the teachings and practises of communities of faith
- c. Respecting the client's relationship to their own community of faith

3. Social Responsibility: *Spiritual directors have a responsibility to the wider society as well as to their individual directees. They show this by:*

- a. Keeping in mind issues of peace, justice, equality, reconciliation, ecology, etc. without in any way diminishing the integrity of their commitment to individuals
- b. Seeing if spiritual direction can be made available at times to those who cannot afford to offer remuneration
- c. Advertising in a way that is prudent and discreet
- d. Representing their academic and professional qualifications and accreditations accurately
- e. Modelling a way of living that contributes to the faith and spiritual development of people

Section 4: Addressing Ethical Questions and Complaints:

1. Whenever a spiritual director has a question regarding the Code of Ethics they are to bring it to the Spiritual Directors Group for information, clarification and direction.
2. If a spiritual director becomes aware of a lesser infringement of the Code of Ethics which is not threatening to the well-being of the directee, director, or others (e.g., where boundaries are crossed, but not violated), they are encouraged to approach the director in question with the purpose of resolving the matter through clarification.
3. If a spiritual director receives a complaint of unethical conduct against them, or if a directee has a complaint of unethical conduct against a spiritual director, they are to promptly report the complaint to the diocesan Bishop. If the spiritual director is not an Anglican, both the Anglican Bishop and the head of the spiritual director's judicatory (and in the case of religious, the Superior of their Order) are to be notified.
4. All ethical violations are recognized as serious. The procedure for dealing with a complaint shall conform to the norms and procedures of the Diocese of Kootenay or to the appropriate judicatory (or religious Order) in the case of a director who is not an Anglican. If the complaint is upheld, the Diocese or other judicatory (or religious Order) will take appropriate actions regarding discipline.

Acknowledgements:

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