

CODE OF CONDUCT for UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS

The University of Newcastle, NSW

December 2011

INTRODUCTION

Responsible chaplains are aware of their sacred calling, and accept pastoral responsibility and accountability for the people entrusted to their care. These guidelines indicate acceptable ethical behaviour for chaplains. They seek to do this in the context of a statement of ethical principles for the conduct of ministry.

PRINCIPLES

These guidelines cannot address every ethical dilemma that will arise for those in ministry. There are, however, basic principles that undergird the guidelines. By applying these principles to ethical dilemmas and to all relationships, acceptable behaviour for those who minister can be determined.

1. Service in Humility and Love:

All who minister are called to a ministry of service. Abuses of power and privilege have no place in ministry. To exercise ministry means that chaplains will act in ways that don't deliberately hurt those in their care. Not only is it the role of chaplains to seek to prevent harm to people, but they must also actively seek to do good. Chaplains must act in ways that seek the well-being of people, in ways that enable people to live active, full lives.

2. The Dignity of the Individual

Chaplains need to be people who always encourage and respect the dignity of those for whom they care. Each individual is special. Chaplains are called to encourage, lead and guide those who seek their ministry. At the same time chaplains need to recognise that each individual is personally responsible for their own actions and are called to respect decisions made by them.

3. Justice and Integrity

Those whose ministry is grounded in their faith will act with total respect, consideration and truthfulness towards those among whom they are called to minister. They will always seek justice where there is oppression and truth where there is deceit.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THOSE WE MINISTER TO

1.1 We maintain the right of the people to whom we minister to a relationship of mutual trust, to privacy and confidentiality. No information divulged by people can be discussed with others unless informed consent is given. This includes passing on information within the chaplaincy team.

1.2 We acknowledge that under the guise of caring and sharing, information which is incorrect or which is private can be passed on. We recognise the need to guard against careless talk and to beware of accepting second-hand information at face value.

1.3 We undertake to inform people of the limits of confidentiality. We accept that confidentiality is required to be breached when there is clear danger to the safety of the person or to any other individual or group. Those we minister to will normally be informed beforehand if confidentiality has to be broken.

1.4 We will not use our position to take advantage of those we minister to for purposes of personal, institutional, political or financial gain.

1.5 We will not sexually exploit or sexually harass those we minister to. We recognise that those exercising ministry are in a position of power relative to those we minister to. This power means that sexual relations within any ministry can never be equal. Sexual harassment covers a range of unwelcome and unreciprocated behaviours both verbal and physical. It extends from unwelcome actions such as gestures, displays of offensive pictures, comments of a sexual nature, implicit or explicit demands or suggestions for sexual activity through to physical contact.

1.6 We will encourage those to whom we minister to move towards self-determination, and towards responsibility for their own lives.

1.7 We will acknowledge the limit of our competence and refer those to whom we minister to others when this proves necessary or desirable.

1.8 We will accept the autonomy of those we care for and respect their freedom to choose who can best care for their needs and enable their spiritual growth.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES TO OUR COMMISSIONING BODIES

2.1 We recognise our membership of our commissioning bodies and will listen to, and follow the counsel of those ministers to whom we are answerable.

2.2 We will contribute our own unique professional expertise to the development of the ministry and policies of our respective commissioning bodies.

2.3 We will uphold professional standards of practice in ministry and work for their advancement.

2.4 We will act to prevent negative discrimination in access to ministry where this discrimination is based on colour, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, marital status, religious or political beliefs.

2.5 We will be professional in the time we give to the chaplaincy, guarding against both over-commitment and avoidance of responsibility.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THOSE WE MINISTER WITH

3.1 We will treat colleagues with respect, consideration, fairness and good faith.

3.2 We will recognise the abilities, expertise and views of our colleagues in ministry and value the contributions they make.

3.3 We will respect the professional confidence of colleagues.

3.4 We will seek mediation when important conflicts with colleagues or others require to be resolved.

3.5 We will work and cooperate with colleagues and social service agencies in society to endeavour to serve the best interests of the people to whom we minister.

3.6 We will respect the time constraints of those who minister in a non-stipendiary capacity.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES TO OURSELVES

4.1 We acknowledge that there are limits to the ministry we can properly provide. We will respect our own health and undertake appropriate self-care.

4.2 We recognise our own need for recreation, refreshment and renewal, for which, at times, we will need to call on the support and expertise of other ministers and professionals.

4.3 We will use regular professional supervision for review, learning and personal and spiritual growth, in seeking to maintain a high standard of ministry.

4.4 We recognise that our knowledge needs to be continually extended and our talents nurtured. In addition to personal study, we will regularly attend courses, retreats, lectures, seminars and schools of ministry to learn and be encouraged in our ministry.

4.5 We recognise that personal relationships require time and space. We need to ensure that we give our families and friends quality time and love. Bound up with this is our own need for love. If we are to continue to love we need to be loved and need to give time to families and friends so that we may receive their love.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES TO SOCIETY

5.1 We acknowledge that chaplains have a role in society that carries with it great respect. We will do all in our power to act responsibly and with integrity so as to maintain such a position of positive respect and trust.

5.2 We will always act within the expected laws and behaviour of our society and not use our position for personal gain.

5.3 We will seek to bring about justice in our society and encourage those to whom we minister to live according to sound moral and ethical values.

5.4 We will encourage debate and both challenge and support those in positions of political responsibility. We understand that the chaplaincy does not, however, endorse or give financial support to any political party.

5.5 We acknowledge the plurality of society and respect those who have different values, religious backgrounds and viewpoints to ours.

Practice of the Guidelines

As part of their approval by the University, all chaplains would be required to formally assent to the Guidelines and their practice.

Breaches of the Guidelines

Breaches of the guidelines will be dealt with in the following manner: -

A chaplain (A) who receives a complaint of misconduct about another chaplain (B) (or about a person in a position of pastoral leadership attached to the University Chaplaincy) should carry out the following procedures:

(i) See if the complainant has tried to resolve the matter with chaplain B;

(ii) If the matter is still unresolved, chaplain A needs to talk to chaplain B on behalf of the complainant;

(iii) If that fails to resolve the matter, chaplain A refers the dispute to the chaplains' executive who would meet as soon as possible with the complainant and chaplain B;

(iv) If the matter is still unresolved, the chaplains' executive would refer the matter to the relevant University authority with a written account of the attempts at resolution. The complainant would then follow University procedures viz. in order for it to be a formal complaint, it needs to be in writing.

DEFINITIONS

Responsible Chaplains:

Those people who have been appointed by their commissioning bodies as University of Newcastle chaplains and who have been approved by the University authorities as University chaplains.

Chaplain A:

The chaplain who first hears of a complaint about another chaplain (or about a person in a position of pastoral leadership attached to the University Chaplaincy).

Chaplain B:

The chaplain (or a person in a position of pastoral leadership attached to the University Chaplaincy) about whom a complaint is made.

A person in a position of pastoral leadership attached to the University chaplaincy:

A person who is not an official chaplain; but who works with one or other chaplain in their work as a chaplain e.g. an assistant to a chaplain; a youth worker; a person who is experiencing chaplaincy work; and such like.

Our Commissioning Body:

The denomination (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Uniting Church, Seventh Day Adventist...) or the Religious group (Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim ...) who appointed the chaplain to the University.

Other Definitions

The **Co-ordinator** is elected for one year by the chaplains at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will function as the Manager of the Chaplaincy in liaising with the University, the chaplains and the students and staff of the University.

The **Deputy Co-ordinator** will assist the Co-ordinator in discharging his/her duties.

The **Secretary** is responsible for taking the Minutes at the meetings, dealing with correspondence and managing the petty cash. (An assistant secretary may be appointed by the chaplains as required).

The **Executive** consists of the Co-ordinator, the Deputy Co-ordinator and the Secretary. Another chaplain may be added, at times and as required, at the discretion of the executive.

We wish to acknowledge with thanks that this Code of Conduct is based on
ETHICS IN MINISTRY - A SET OF GUIDELINES FOR LAY MINISTERS OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE, NSW.

Revised in December 2011