

Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Spiritual Directors International

Ethical conduct flows from lived reverence for God, self, and others but is not inevitably the reality of every spiritual direction relationship. Therefore, these guidelines are meant to inspire members of Spiritual Directors International toward integrity, responsibility, and faithfulness in their practice of spiritual direction.

I. The Spiritual Director and the Self

1. Spiritual directors assume responsibility for personal growth by: a) participating in regular spiritual direction, b) following personal and communal spiritual practices and disciplines. 2. Spiritual directors engage in ongoing formation as directors by: a) continuing to discern their call to the ministry of spiritual direction, b) nurturing self-knowledge and freedom, c) cultivating insight into the influences of culture, social-historical context, environmental setting, and institutions, d) studying scripture, theology, spirituality, and other disciplines related to spiritual direction. 3. Spiritual directors engage in supervision by a) receiving regular supervision from peers or from a mentor, b) seeking consultations with other appropriately qualified persons when necessary. 4. Spiritual directors meet their needs outside the spiritual direction relationship in a variety of ways, especially by: a) self care, wisely balancing time for worship, work, leisure, family, and personal relationship, b) addressing the difficulties multiple roles or relationships pose to the effectiveness or clarity of the spiritual direction relationship, c) removing oneself from any situation that compromises the integrity of the spiritual direction relationship. 5. Spiritual directors recognize the limits of a) energy by restricting the number of directees, b) attentiveness by appropriate spacing of meetings and directees, c) competence by referring directees to other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.

II. The Spiritual Director and the Directee

1. Spiritual directors initiate conversation and establish agreements with directees about: a) the nature of spiritual direction, b) the roles of the director and the directee, c) the length and frequency of direction sessions, c) the compensation, if any, to be given to the director or institution, e) the process for evaluating and terminating the relationship.

2. Spiritual directors honour the dignity of the directee by: a) respecting the directee's values, conscience, spirituality, and theology, b) inquiring into the motives, experiences, or relationships of the directee only as necessary, c) recognizing the imbalance of power in the spiritual direction relationship and taking care not to exploit it, d) establishing and maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries with the directee, e) refraining from sexualized behaviour, including, but not limited to, manipulative, abusive, or coercive words or actions toward a directee.

3. Spiritual directors maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of the directee by a)

protecting the identity of the directee, b) keeping confidential all oral and written matters arising in the spiritual direction sessions, c) conducting direction in appropriate settings, d) addressing legal regulations requiring disclosure to proper authorities, including, but not limited to, child abuse, elder abuse, and physical harm to self and others.

III. The Spiritual Director and Others

1. Spiritual directors maintain collegial relationships with ministers and professionals by a) developing intra- and interdisciplinary relationships, b) requesting a directee who is in therapy to inform his or her therapist about being in spiritual direction, c) securing written releases and permission from directees when specific information needs to be shared for the benefit of the directee, d) respecting ministers and professionals by not disparaging them or their work. 2. Spiritual directors maintain responsible relationships to communities of faith by: a) remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability, and support, b) appropriately drawing on the teachings and practices of communities of faith, c) respecting the directee's relationship to his or her own community of faith. 3. Spiritual directors, when presenting themselves to the public, preserve the integrity of spiritual direction by: a) representing qualifications and affiliations accurately, b) defining the particular nature and purpose of spiritual direction, c) respecting all persons regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, any preference, personal characteristic, condition or status.