Standards for Ethics, Certification, and Renewal of Certification

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National Association of Catholic Chaplains
Standards for Ethics, Certification, and Renewal of Certification

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National Association of Catholic Chaplains
Part One: Introduction

I. NACC Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission
The National Association of Catholic Chaplains advocates for the profession of spiritual care and educates, certifies, and supports chaplains, clinical pastoral educators, and all members who continue the healing ministry of Jesus in the name of the Church.

Vision
The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) is cultivating the ministry of chaplaincy and transforming spiritual care locally, nationally, and globally to faithfully reflect the healing presence of Jesus Christ by:

- Forming life-giving relationships with individuals, families, colleagues, and organizations;
- Advancing compassionate care through creative educational and spiritual growth opportunities;
- Promoting the dignity of persons of every age, culture, and state in life.

NACC is a light of hope, whose members are persistently advocating for those dedicated to the spiritual care of people experiencing pain, vulnerability, joy, and hope.

Values

**DISCIPLESHIP**
Reflecting on and following the mission of Jesus in head, heart, and action.

**INTEGRITY**
Living out the Gospel in all we do.

**STEWARDSHIP**
Developing and utilizing wisely the gifts and resources entrusted to us.

**COMPASSION**
Responding to the call of Jesus by sharing the suffering, hope, and joy of others.

**INCLUSIVITY**
Welcoming, honoring, and fostering diversity that deepens our unity.

**PROFESSIONALISM**
Providing competent and effective ministry within the field of spiritual care.

**LEADERSHIP**
Collaborating to develop and nurture the necessary gifts for the direction of our ministry.

**EMPOWERMENT**
Encouraging others to use their gifts within and beyond professional spiritual care.
National Association of Catholic Chaplains
Part Two, Section 100
Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals\(^1\)

101 The Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals:

101.1 gives expression to the basic values and standards of the profession;
101.2 guides decision-making and professional behavior;
101.3 provides a mechanism for professional accountability; and
101.4 informs the public as to what they should expect from Spiritual Care Professionals.

102 Preamble

102.1 Spiritual Care Professionals are grounded in communities of faith and informed by professional education and training.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

102.11 Remain proficient by regularly updating themselves in theology, enhancing professional competence, and growing in personal spirituality.

102.12 Promote ethical and moral values by following *The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

102.13 Respect the primacy of conscience in themselves and in those they serve.

102.2 They are called to nurture their personal health of mind, body, and spirit, and be responsible for their personal and professional conduct as they grow in their respect for all living beings and the natural environment.

102.3 When Spiritual Care Professionals behave in a manner congruent with the values of this Code of Ethics, they bring greater justice, compassion, and healing to our world.

102.4 Spiritual Care Professionals:

102.41 affirm the dignity and value of each individual;

102.41.1 Honor all persons as being created in the image and likeness of God.

102.42 respect the right of each faith group to hold to its values and traditions;

102.43 advocate for professional accountability that protects the public and advances the profession; and

\(^1\) Spiritual Care Professionals is the term commonly adopted by the Spiritual Care Collaborative to include chaplains, pastoral counselors, pastoral educators, and students.
102.44 respect the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, sexual orientation, and religious diversity of other professionals and those served, and strive to eliminate discrimination.

102.441 Respect diversity of age, national origin, and physical ability.

102.442 Refrain from using their position, influence, knowledge, or professional affiliation for unfair advantage or for personal gain.

103 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Clients

Spiritual Care Professionals understand clients to be any counselees, patients, family members, students, or staff to whom they provide spiritual care. In relationships with clients, Spiritual Care Professionals uphold the following standards of professional ethics. Spiritual Care Professionals:

103.1 Speak and act in ways that honor the dignity and value of every individual.
103.2 Provide care that is intended to promote the best interest of the client and to foster strength, integrity, and healing.
103.3 Demonstrate respect for the cultural and religious values of those they serve and refrain from imposing their own values and beliefs on those served.
103.4 Are mindful of the imbalance of power in the professional/client relationship and refrain from exploitation of that imbalance.
103.5 Maintain relationships with clients on a professional basis only.
103.6 Avoid or correct any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicting interest(s).
103.7 Refrain from any form of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or sexual assault in relationships with clients.
103.8 Refrain from any form of harassment, coercion, intimidation, or otherwise abusive words or actions in relationships with clients.
103.9 Safeguard the confidentiality of clients when using materials for educational purposes or written publication.
103.10 Respect the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by clients when communicating with family members or significant others, except when disclosure is required for necessary treatment and granted by client permission, for the safety of any person or when required by law.
103.11 Understand the limits of their individual expertise and make referrals to other professionals when appropriate.

104 Ethical Principles in Relationships Between Supervisors/Educators and Students

Spiritual Care Professionals respect the integrity of students, using the power they have as supervisors/educators in responsible ways. Spiritual Care Professionals:

104.1 Maintain a healthy educational environment free of coercion or intimidation.
104.2 Maintain clear boundaries in the areas of self-disclosure, intimacy, and sexuality.
104.3 Provide clear expectations regarding responsibilities, work schedules, fees, and payments.
104.4 Provide adequate, timely, and constructive feedback to students.
104.5 Maintain a healthy respect for the personal growth of students, and provide appropriate professional referrals.

104.6 Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding all information and knowledge gained in the course of supervision.

105 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Faith Community

Spiritual Care Professionals are accountable to their faith communities, one another, and other organizations. Spiritual Care Professionals:

105.1 Maintain good standing in their faith group.

105.2 Abide by the professional practice and/or teaching standards of the state/province, the community, and the institution in which they are employed. If for any reason a Spiritual Care Professional is not free to practice or teach according to conscience, the Spiritual Care Professional shall notify the employer, his or her professional organization, and faith group as appropriate.

105.3 Do not directly or by implication claim professional qualifications that exceed actual qualifications, or misrepresent an affiliation with any institution.

106 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Other Professionals and the Community

Spiritual Care Professionals are accountable to the public, faith communities, employers, and professionals in all professional relationships. Spiritual Care Professionals:

106.1 Promote justice in relationships with others, in their institutions, and in society.

106.2 Represent accurately their professional qualifications and affiliations.

106.3 Exercise good stewardship of resources entrusted to their care, and employ sound financial practices.

106.4 Respect the opinions, beliefs, and professional endeavors of colleagues and other professionals.

106.5 Seek advice and counsel of other professionals whenever it is in the best interest of those being served, and make referrals when appropriate.

106.6 Provide expertise and counsel to other health professionals in advocating for best practices in care.

106.7 Seek to establish collaborative relationships with other community and health professionals.

106.8 Advocate for changes in their institutions that would honor spiritual values and promote healing.

106.9 Provide other professionals with chart notes where they are used that further the treatment of the clients or patients, obtaining consent when required.

106.10 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of clients.

106.11 Ensure that private conduct does not impair the ability to fulfill professional responsibilities or bring dishonor to the profession.

106.12 Clearly distinguish between statements made or actions taken as a private individual and those made as a member or representative of one of the cognate organizations.
107 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Colleagues

Spiritual Care Professionals engage in collegial relationships with peers, other chaplains, local clergy, and counselors, recognizing that perspective and judgment are maintained through consultative interactions rather than through isolation. Spiritual Care Professionals:

107.1 Honor all consultations, whether personal or client-related, with the highest professional regard and confidentiality.
107.2 Maintain sensitivity and professional protocol of the employing institution and/or the certifying organization when receiving or initiating referrals.
107.3 Exercise due caution when communicating through the internet or other electronic means.
107.4 Respect each other and support the integrity and well-being of their colleagues.
107.5 Take collegial and responsible action when concerns about or direct knowledge of incompetence, impairment, misconduct, or violations against this Code arise.
107.6 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of clients.

108 Ethical Principles in Advertising

Spiritual Care Professionals engage in appropriate informational activities that educate the public about their professional qualifications and individual scopes of practice. Spiritual Care Professionals:

108.1 Represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of pastoral care, education, and counseling in an accurate manner.
108.2 Do not use any professional identification (business cards, letterhead, Internet or telephone directory, etc.) if it is false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive.
108.3 List and claim as evidence only degrees and certifications that are earned from educational institutions and/or training programs recognized by the certifying organizations of Spiritual Care Professionals.
108.4 Ascertain that the qualifications of their employees, supervisees, and students are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive.
108.5 Represent themselves as providing specialized services only if they have the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.

109 Ethical Principles in Research

Spiritual Care Professionals engaging in research follow guidelines and applicable laws that strive to protect the dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants. Spiritual Care Professionals:

109.1 Engage only in research within the boundaries of their competence.
109.2 In research activities involving human participants, are aware of, and ensure that the research question, design, and implementation are in full compliance with ethical principles.
109.3 Adhere to informed consent, including a clear and understandable explanation of the procedures, a description of the risks and benefits, and the duration of the desired participation.
109.4 Inform all participants of the right to withdraw consent and to discontinue involvement at any time.
109.5 Engage in research while being sensitive to the cultural characteristics of participants.
109.6 Maintain the confidentiality of all research participants and inform participants of any limits of that confidentiality.
109.7 Use any information obtained through research for professional purposes only.
109.8 Exercise conscientiousness in attributing sources in their research and writing, thereby avoiding plagiarism.
109.9 Report research data and findings accurately.