



Spiritual Care Australia

Standards of Practice



Respect - Integrity - Compassion - Excellence

Version 1 - Release

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ABN 74140224899

Foreword

Providers of spiritual care make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of people who find themselves in vulnerable situations. They embody care and compassion as they help people discover ways to cope with their circumstances and derive a sense of meaning, purpose and connection.

The importance of addressing the spiritual care needs of individuals is endorsed in most professional settings. It is essential that people receiving spiritual care be afforded dignity and protection, and these standards emphasise this in defining a person-centred approach to service delivery. These standards address the person whose primary role and function is to provide spiritual care.

Spiritual Care Australia commends this document to you as an integral tool in the provision of excellence. Our vision is to contribute further to professionalism and excellence in the delivery of spiritual care. We look forward to continuing to work with SCA members, employers, government, other key stakeholders and the wider community in achieving this vision.

I wish to pay tribute to the working group who were instrumental in developing these standards along with the many contributors, reviewers and stakeholders who shared their wisdom in the development of this first national statement to create a benchmark for spiritual care practice in Australia.



Carl Aiken
National President Spiritual Care Australia
April 2014

Spiritual Care Australia is the national association of practitioners in chaplaincy, pastoral care and spiritual services. It exists within, and is a part of, contemporary multi-faith, multi-cultural Australia. Spiritual Care Australia is committed to the values of respect, integrity, compassion and excellence.

Contents

Introduction	5
Definitions/Terminology	5
Purpose of the Standards of Practice	7
Standard 1: Delivery of care	8
Standard 2: Assessment	9
Standard 3: Teamwork and collaboration	10
Standard 4: Accountability	11
Standard 5: Ethical practice	12
Standard 6: Respect for diversity	13
Standard 7: Supervision	14
Standard 8: Self care	15
Standard 9: Continuous quality improvement	16
Standard 10: Knowledge and continuing education	18
Appendix 1 - Practitioner Membership Levels and Criteria	19
References	20

Introduction

Spiritual Care Australia (SCA) promotes excellence in the practice of spiritual and pastoral care. The organisation recognises that all people, regardless of religious faith or cultural background, have spiritual and pastoral needs that require a sensitive, respectful response from skilled practitioners. SCA acts as a coordinating, advisory and liaising body, and provides accreditation for spiritual care practitioners.

These Standards of Practice spell out what is required of a spiritual care practitioner, according to their level of membership (see appendix 1) and act as a gauge for a range of organisations where spiritual care is practised.

Spiritual care is provided in many contexts. These include, but are not limited to, aged care, criminal justice, defence, education, emergency services, health, mental health, and welfare services. Spiritual care encompasses all the ways in which attention is paid to spirituality.

There is increasing interest in spirituality and a wider acceptance of its value in enhancing the ability to increase resilience, positively embrace experiences and outcomes, and celebrate life - even in difficult situations. As spiritual care providers offer services, it is important that best practice and critical reflection are at the forefront of the care given.

Spiritual care and pastoral care are very closely linked. In this document, the term 'spiritual care' is used with the understanding that 'pastoral care', traditionally a commonly used term, could be just as suitable.

The term 'practitioner' is used throughout this document to refer to a spiritual care practitioner, defined below. The term 'individual' is used to refer to the person or group of people receiving spiritual care from a practitioner. Trained volunteers are an integral part of spiritual care.

Definitions/Terminology

Critical incidents are not necessarily a dramatic event but are usually incidents which have a personal significance. They are often events that raise personal questions regarding beliefs, values, attitudes or behaviour. They are incidents which in some way have had a significant impact on personal and professional learning (Monash University, 2007).

Individual is a person receiving spiritual care.

Organisation is the practitioner's workplace or setting.

Pastoral care focuses upon healing, guiding, supporting, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering of individuals in whatever situation they find themselves. (Undated - Bruce Rumbold, LaTrobe University, School of Public Health.)

Pastoral care volunteer is a trained person who supports pastoral services and works under the direction of a spiritual care practitioner. This role is integral to spiritual care services in many organisations.

Practitioner is a spiritual care practitioner, pastoral care practitioner, or chaplain appointed and recognised as the specialist in the provision of spiritual care. The practitioner may be paid or unpaid, providing spiritual care to individuals through person-centred, relational, supportive and holistic care - seeking out and responding to expressed spiritual needs. This may include managing requests from an individual for a faith representative of their choice.

Religion is understood as an institutional expression of shared beliefs and customary practices. It is often integrated into a community's cultural life and can be a framework for meaning, ethics, understanding and decision making. Religion is considered to be structured, formal and grounded in tradition. Most religions have communal beliefs and practices relating to the spiritual dimension, healthy living, illness and death. (HCCVI, 2011)

Religious care is provided within the context of shared religious belief, values, rituals, sacraments, liturgies, meditation and prayer.

Spiritual care encompasses all the ways in which attention is paid to the spiritual dimension of life. It is most commonly offered in a one-to-one relationship, is person-centred and makes no assumptions about personal conviction or life orientation. It offers a way for people to experience and make meaning of their hopes and fears. Spiritual care is provided by practitioners to appropriately meet the individual's spiritual and emotional needs. Spiritual care may include presence, conversations, ritual, ceremonies and sharing of sacred texts and resources. Spiritual care is not proselytising and does not impose the practitioner's beliefs or values. (HCCVI, 2011)

Spiritual care assessment tools are guides designed to assist practitioners in assessing the pastoral, spiritual and emotional needs of their clients. They are most often acronyms that provide a framework for considering the resources (internal and external) available to the person to cope with their crisis/situation.

Spiritual care plans are mutually agreed goals to achieve specific spiritual wellbeing.

Spirituality is intrinsic to the person. It is the "self" in relationship with:

- oneself
- others
- nature, environment, universe
- and the transcendent.

Spirituality may be experienced in a quest for meaning, purpose, connection, belonging, hope, and can deepen with growing reflective capacities and self awareness. People can become more conscious of spirituality at major turning points in life. Spirituality is always embedded in the unique experience and story of each person. (HCCVI, 2011)

Standards are a holistic set of practice statements about the provision of excellence in spiritual care.

Supervision is a professional relationship in which the practitioner can offer the supervisor an account or recording of their work, reflect on it, and receive feedback and, where appropriate, guidance from the supervisor.

Purpose of the Standards of Practice

SCA has adopted 10 standards of practice as a guide for spiritual care practitioners in the development of their professional practice and to assist organisations in their support of paid or unpaid practitioners.

The standards of practice:

- reflect attitudes and common beliefs about the value and dignity of each person, family, carer and other professionals.
- give practitioners, consumers and employers a realistic level of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the provision of spiritual care, thus promoting excellence in the provision of spiritual care practise.
- help practitioners to give the highest possible level of care in diverse environments. Spiritual care respects the social, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and gender concerns of all people.

The skill levels and strength of spiritual care will vary depending upon individual capacity, pastoral experience and degree of additional education and training. Practitioners are ethically bound to take responsibility for their own knowledge, attitudes and skills as they seek to provide excellent spiritual care.

These standards may also be used by employers to specify professional accountability, develop position descriptions, and guide performance reviews. They provide a framework for the practice of spiritual care based on the SCA levels of membership (Refer to Appendix 1).

Standard 1: Delivery of Care

Promote spiritual wellbeing and continuity of care.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

Offer person-centred care, with a focus on the individual's spirituality emerging from their experience, journey and story.

Engage empathetically with the individual to promote wellbeing and continuity of care.

Respond to referrals and requests.

Provide appropriate time for the individual to identify and connect with spiritual resources.

Communicate verbally and non-verbally in an inclusive manner, making use of interpreters as required.

Facilitate opportunities for prayer, reflection and ritual in response to the individual's tradition and affiliations.

Ensure that individuals are not subjected to proselytising or the imposition of inappropriate personal views.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

Respond to critical incidents in a timely manner.

Identify and provide appropriate spiritual care.

Advocate for disempowered and vulnerable individuals.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels plus:

Understand the diversity and complexity of spiritual needs within the organisation and respond appropriately.

Wherever possible and as appropriate, involve the individual, family and other care providers in formulating desired outcomes in relevant care plans.

Standard 2: Assessment

Assess, evaluate and respond to individuals' spiritual care needs.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

Use appropriate spiritual care assessment tools when required to identify needs, hopes, internal and external resources, and possible outcomes in relation to spirituality.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

Conduct on-going assessments of the individual's spiritual resources and modify care as required.

Consult with family members and/or carers as necessary.

Prepare and record a spiritual care plan as required.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels plus:

Recognise and work with complex spiritual, religious and ethical issues.

Contribute to individual's care plans, noting their spirituality and its impact on their situation.

Work with other disciplines to ensure appropriate spiritual assessments are made.

Standard 3: Teamwork and Collaboration

Collaborate with practitioners and other staff and volunteers involved in the care of the individual.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

Maintain effective working relationships with others involved in the individual's care.

Share workload and referrals amongst practitioners and volunteers.

Respond promptly to referrals.

Participate in relevant meetings contributing to the review and development of the individual's spiritual care.

Engage with external spiritual care providers including chaplains, faith community representatives and volunteers.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

Maintain a thorough knowledge of the services provided by the organisation.

Collaborate with the individual, their families and carers.

Discuss available options to determine the priorities, goals, actions and time line for implementation of the individual's spiritual care.

Participate as required in the organisation's team meetings, understand group dynamics and organisational behaviour.

Initiate and contribute constructively to collaborative relationships with external spiritual care providers, including chaplains, faith community representatives and volunteers.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels plus:

Collaborate with stakeholders to develop and review relevant organisational policies and procedures to ensure best practice in pastoral and spiritual care.

Standard 4: Accountability

Comply with organisational reporting requirements, policies and regulatory guidelines.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

When required by people involved in the care of the individual, provide an appraisal of their spiritual needs and resources.

Record details of spiritual care delivery, client preferences and outcomes of care into individual's care records and databases as required.

Comply with organisational policies and regulatory guidelines regarding privacy and confidentiality.

Adhere to organisational policies and procedures such as mandatory and occupational health and safety training.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

Have an understanding of organisational culture and systems.

Promote the integration of spiritual care into the culture of the organisation.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels plus:

Lead and facilitate planning in accordance with the organisation's strategic direction.

Serve as a member of organisational ethics committees or equivalent.

Represent the practitioner's organisation at forums, conferences and events, internally and externally as required.

Standard 5: Ethical Practice

Adhere to all relevant codes of conduct and practice.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

Adhere to SCA Code of Conduct
(Refer to SCA website www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au).

Maintain an ethical stance towards the individual.

Maintain an ethical stance towards colleagues.

Support ethical decision making.

Maintain personal and professional boundaries.

Certified

As for the previous plus:

Promote ethical decision making.

Identify and respond appropriately to ethical issues.

Participate in continuing education regarding ethical practice.

Consider views of the wider community on relevant ethical issues.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels plus:

Provide consultancy to those involved in ethical decision-making processes.

Review policy, procedures and service delivery in the light of ethical considerations.

Provide continuing professional development in ethical practice.

Standard 6: Respect for Diversity

Model and promote respect for human diversity in the provision of spiritual care.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

Model respect for diversity in the provision of culturally appropriate spiritual care.

Collaborate with the practitioner’s organisation and its staff to provide culturally appropriate spiritual care.

Support, provide and assist appropriate spiritual and religious practices.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

Demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of cultural, spiritual and religious diversity.

Provide education to staff in cultural, spiritual and religious diversity as required.

Develop, coordinate and facilitate spiritual or religious practices appropriate to the diverse settings and individual needs.

Certified Advanced

As for the previous levels.

Standard 7: Supervision

Engage in regular formal supervision.

Membership Level	Key Elements
Member	Engage in 10 hours of supervision per annum (group or individual) for full-time practitioners or five (5) hours for part-time practitioners with a qualified supervisor.
Certified	Engage in 10 hours of one-to-one professional supervision per annum with a qualified supervisor.
Certified Advanced	Engage in 20 hours of individual supervision per annum with a qualified supervisor, including individual spiritual direction, professional reading and reflection.

(Refer to the latest version of the SCA Supervision Policy on the documents tab of the SCA website at <http://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au>)

Standard 8: Self-Care

Accept personal responsibility for self-care.

Membership Level	Key Elements
Member	<p>Maintain personal spiritual practice and connections to faith/ community groups that nourish spiritual life and identity.</p> <p>Actively foster one’s personal spiritual development and growth.</p> <p>Implement self-care practices to maintain a healthy work-life balance.</p> <p>Maintain supportive networks.</p> <p>Participate in an annual performance review.</p>
Certified Entry	<p>As for the previous level plus: Mentor and support members and other colleagues.</p>
Certified Advanced	<p>As for previous levels.</p>

Standard 9: Continuous quality improvement

Enhance the quality of spiritual care through continuous quality improvement.

Membership Level

Key Elements

Member

- Be familiar with current research in spiritual care.
- Ensure all data collection and statistical requirements are met.
- Participate in quality improvement projects as directed.

Certified

As for the previous level plus:

- Collect relevant data to monitor the quality and effectiveness of spiritual care.
- Participate in teams to monitor opportunities for quality improvement.
- Develop and implement an annual plan for departmental quality improvement.
- Initiate and participate in the quality improvement programs of the organisation.
- Collaborate with researchers and practitioners.
- Contribute to academic and professional journals.

Certified Advanced**As for previous levels plus:**

Report on quality improvement initiatives and outcomes to the organisation's executive/quality improvement program committee.

Use the results of quality improvement activities to initiate change in the delivery of spiritual care.

Contribute to the organisation's accreditation processes by documenting and providing evidence of compliance with standards of service delivery and addressing any improvements identified.

Initiate research projects relevant to spiritual care and publish findings.

Engage in collaborative research.

Use research to educate executives, administrators and managers about the role, value and impact of spiritual care within your organisation.

Educate staff across the organisation regarding the significance of spiritual care.

Standard 10: Knowledge and Continuing Education

Demonstrate commitment to the development of professional capacity.

Membership Level	Key Elements
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Member	<p>Meet continuing professional development and education requirements for SCA membership at Member level (refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>Undertake personal spiritual development.</p>
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Certified	<p>As for previous level plus:</p> <p>Meet professional development and education requirements for SCA membership at Certified level (refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>Keep abreast of current spiritual care theory and practice.</p> <p>Integrate current spiritual care theory and practice into clinical practice.</p> <p>Provide spiritual care educational presentations in the workplace.</p>
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Certified Advanced	<p>As for previous levels plus:</p> <p>Meet education requirements for SCA membership at Certified Advanced level (refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>Contribute to relevant publications and academic and public debate.</p> <p>Undertake and engage in spiritual care presentations at relevant events, forums and conferences.</p>
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Appendix 1 - Practitioner Membership Levels and Criteria

*(For the most up-to-date information regarding membership refer to the SCA website
<http://spiritualcareaustralia.org.au>)*

References

Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Inc. (2011). Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care & Chaplaincy. Retrieved November 14, 2013, from <http://www.hccvi.org.au/downloads/Capabilities%20Framework%20FINAL%202011.pdf>

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Spiritual Care Australia. (2012). Membership. Retrieved November 14, 2013, from <http://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au/styled-2/index.html>

Spiritual Care Australia. (2012). Policy & Procedures. Retrieved November 14, 2013, from <http://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au/styled-3/index.html>

Other Resources

Best Standards in Pastoral Care Practice and Administration from <http://www.pastoralcaremgmt.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/beststandardsinpastoralcarepracticeadmin2013ver003pub07172013.pdf>

NHS Scotland Chaplaincy Services 2007 from http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/290156/chaplaincy__standards_final_version.pdf

World Health Organization (WHO) APPENDIX 3 10-10-AM 'Pastoral Intervention Codings' Description of Pastoral Intervention Codings from [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/nhhrc/publishing.nsf/Content/400/\\$FILE/400%20-%20C%20-AHWCA%20-APPENDIX%203%20ICD-10-AM%20Pastoral%20Intervention%20Codings.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/nhhrc/publishing.nsf/Content/400/$FILE/400%20-%20C%20-AHWCA%20-APPENDIX%203%20ICD-10-AM%20Pastoral%20Intervention%20Codings.pdf)