



Well.com

Threshold Listening Spiritual Directors
Standards of Ethical Conduct 2021

Read this document through carefully

Think about different experiences of spiritual direction with your directees. Ask yourself where you would see the standards being upheld or weakened in your own ministry?

How does this code help you to know the most loving thing to do in those concrete situations?

What's missing? What is not explicitly here that you think needs to be?

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual Direction, sometimes referred to as spiritual accompaniment, is an ancient tradition in the church. It is becoming increasingly popular across the denominations and among lay and ordained people. The Spiritual Director is there to help others to pay attention to the presence and invitations of God: the real director in the Spiritual Direction conversations is the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual direction happens in groups or between two people. These standards relate to one-to-one direction and the listening space a director provides to help a person to become more aware of God in daily life, to live in love with God in a more conscious and intentional way, more like Jesus, to be more in tune with God's desires and freer to share God's love.

In keeping with the intentions and ethos of well.com, Threshold Spiritual Direction draws on the values and attitudes of the Celtic Christian Church with its particular emphasis on:

- The presence of God in all his creation; every breath and beat of life is sacred
- God's ongoing invitation to relationship
- The Holy Spirit in each one of us, giving us what we need to live in love with God and others
- The welcoming of differences and diversity

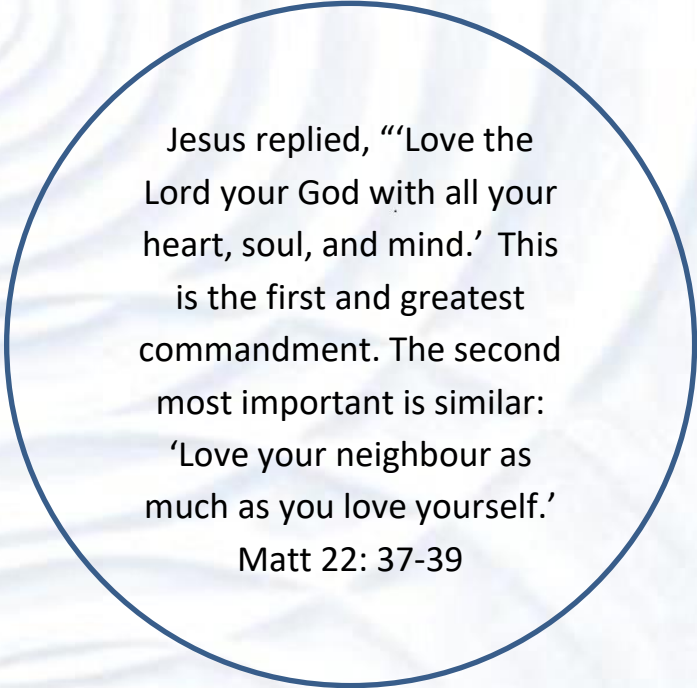
Aware of God in each person, we recognise that each person coming for spiritual direction already has inside him or herself everything needed for relationship with God. Each person brings Christ to us. There is the utmost reverence and respect for the directee's own experience and relationship, whatever form it may take.

We recognise Spiritual Direction as a charism and not a qualification, but also see that the gift needs nurturing to grow.. Training and formation are essential to ensure that the director continues to listen wisely and well. We recognise also that the gift and training can, without intending to, create an inequality within the direction conversation and that a director can have more influence over the directee than s(he) might appreciate. Because if this felt inequality, it is important for a directee to be sure that the relationship with the director will be healthy and appropriate, that as directee, he/she will be accepted, respected ... safe.

To ensure a safe and appropriate space for the direction relationship to flourish, we agree to maintain the following standards. We use Matthew 12: 30-31 - Love of God, Self and Neighbour - as the biblical framework for these standards. We expect that anyone connected formally with us as a spiritual director in well.com or participating in Threshold training/ formation will abide by them as a way of fostering the kind of relationships Jesus would want for his people and the good practice which reflects his desires for them.



The standards below are underpinned by a number of values - characteristics of Jesus that we want to embody in our practice. We have presented these in ways that we can pray with and reflect on in the booklet: "*well.com - Values*" We invite you to pray your way through this booklet also.



Jesus replied, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: ‘Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.’
Matt 22: 37-39

LOVE OF GOD

- ❖ Your relationship with God is central to your ministry. Cultivate a regular rhythm of prayer and feed your relationship through group/ personal prayer, study and service.
- ❖ The directee and you are – as always - in the jet stream of God’s blazing love. This is God’s. This is a sacred space. Let the environment of your conversation reflect such.
- ❖ You are called by God into this ministry and continue in this ministry only as long as this calling persists. Notice and bring to God (and supervision!) any anxious need to seek directees like a shopkeeper in search of customers.
- ❖ God is directing both you and your directee. Focus on God’s communication with the directee. Let God be God.

LOVE OF SELF

- ❖ Be realistic about how the number of people you can accommodate. Plan adequate space between sessions.
- ❖ Prioritise regular days of rest, space for a retreat, times to pray/play.
- ❖ Take time to nurture friendships. Spiritual direction is not a place to satisfy your intimacy needs
- ❖ Organise regular spiritual direction for yourself. In the midst of strong emotion, the directees' and your own, it is vital that you are reminded of God's care for you in your own prayer/life.
- ❖ Attend the regular group or one-to-one supervision provided. Even with only one directee, this helps you to explore your experience, revisit emotion, identify areas of prejudice, fear and weakness, and also to see and celebrate strengths and gifts.
- ❖ Connect with other directors, an antidote to the isolation of this ministry.
- ❖ Operate within the limits of your skill and gifting. Regular supervision will help you recognise and attend to any conscious unconscious incompetence.

LOVE OF OTHERS: Directees

- ❖ The Holy Spirit is already at work in the directee. Respect your directee's values, conscience, spirituality and theology and freedom.
- ❖ Create and hold a safe space by
 - Conducting sessions in appropriate settings, using your own home only if you can offer a safe confidential space.
 - Beginning with a clear agreement between you both including the kind of spiritual direction you offer and its limits, the length and frequency of sessions, any donation, how you review the sessions and end the relationship
 - Keeping confidentiality orally and in your notes

- Attending to your legal duty to disclose to the proper agencies incidents of child and vulnerable adult abuse, and the potential for physical harm to the directee or to others.
- ❖ Notice any desires/attempts to exert undue influence on your directee and bringing this to supervision.
- ❖ Maintain good physical and psychological boundaries. Avoid dual relationships. If this is not possible (eg, a directee working in a team with you) be clear regarding the purpose and boundaries of each relationship.
- ❖ Avoid contact with the directee on social media. Restrict contact via text and email. Direction requires a safe space rarely provided by messaging.
- ❖ The deep sharing in direction is not an invitation to friendship, especially not a physical or sexualised relationship. Strong feelings of emotional or physical attraction in relation are taken to supervision to explore as transference and counter-transference.
- ❖ Relationships change over time. Build in reviews. Give the directee and yourself freedom to say if the direction relationship continues. Directees outgrow us; their needs change. Sometimes they need someone else.

LOVE OF OTHERS: Colleagues

Maintain good relationships with peers and other professionals by:

- ❖ Actively building and maintaining relationships with other directors and people from different disciplines
- ❖ Showing respect for other directors or professionals and avoiding unsubstantiated criticism.
- ❖ Asking that a directee in therapy to inform his/her therapist about being in spiritual direction
- ❖ Sharing information with other professionals only with the written permission of the directee

- ❖ Take your lead from the deaf man in Mark 7 who was healed and could speak plainly. Be open and honest with other directors. . If you have a query or concern, talk *to* and not *about* people. Keep communication open and transparent.

LOVE OF OTHERS: Wider community

- ❖ Represent yourself accurately in terms of: the purpose and limits of spiritual direction, the formation and support you have in place to help you to provide this ministry with safety and integrity.
- ❖ Represent your own faith tradition and belief system with honesty and integrity, respecting also the directee's relationship to his/her own faith community or tradition
- ❖ Be open to any community discernment about your call to this ministry. Pray constantly for indifference. God may be asking you to follow him on a different path. Clinging to any identity/role will get in the way of your freedom to follow him.
- ❖ Welcome all as Jesus welcomed them - respecting all persons, regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, psychological or physical challenge, personal preference, condition or status.



**May we rest
in the stillness of God.
May we find acceptance
in the deep love of his Son,
and in our coming and our going
may we experience
the freedom of the Spirit,
day by day,
calling us
to new life
together
in Christ**

**In the Name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**

Amen