



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

Guidelines for Intervention/Response To Clergy Addicted to a Substance or Behavior

I. Overarching principles:

- All forms of addiction damage relationships with self, other people and God. And, as Christians we believe in forgiveness, healing and restoration to wholeness through Jesus Christ.
- Addiction is a disease that affects the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of the addict as well as his/her family members and congregation and other ministry settings.
- Addiction is the inability to stop doing certain behaviors in spite of negative consequences or the likelihood of negative consequences.
- All clergy who face addiction are encouraged to seek help and enter recovery. Clergy in recovery may offer unique gifts in their ministry settings.
- All people and congregations affected by another's addiction need support and care.
- It is right for a Bishop to intervene pastorally when the Bishop has "reason to believe" that a cleric is engaged in addictive behavior, even when that behavior occurs in private (at home) and not in ministry settings.
- In addition to a pastoral intervention, it is right for a Bishop to consider referring a matter for Title IV disciplinary proceedings when the addictive behavior constitutes a crime, occurs on church property, occurs on church time, occurs in a pastoral setting, or the cleric resists assessment or treatment.
- Clear, public, consistent and transparent procedures regarding intervention and response to clergy addiction facilitate healing for all.

II. Scope of these Guidelines:

These guidelines apply to all situations in which there is reason to believe that a cleric is addicted to a substance (e.g.. alcohol, illegal drugs, misuse of legal drugs) or behavior (e.g. gambling, sex, adult pornography¹).

¹ For the purpose of these guidelines, "pornography" refers to any materials that are sexually explicit and intended to cause sexual arousal. These materials may be accessed through the internet, phone, DVDs, or any other means. Images that appear to portray naked children or images of children in sexually suggestive or explicit positions are beyond the scope of these guidelines. These images may constitute child pornography and must immediately be reported to the police and/or the Department of Children and Families (DCF). To report suspected abuse or neglect of a child call the DCF hotline at 800-842-2288.

III. Response to Cleric: ²



If the Bishop has reason to believe³ that a cleric may be addicted to a substance or behavior, then the Bishops will discern together and a Bishop will take action that can include:

A. Conversation with the cleric in which a Bishop asks questions about the cleric's well-being, relationships with family members and congregants, and functioning as an ordained minister of the church. The Bishop may also talk with the cleric's spouse/partner, collegial clergy, lay leaders and others as deemed appropriate by the Bishop.

B. Intervention with the cleric. This encompasses a wide continuum of responses--from investigating the facts that have been brought to the Bishop's attention (affording the Bishop the opportunity to ascertain the cleric's awareness and veracity,) to a traditional addiction intervention model. The Bishop may want to use a facilitator skilled in addiction intervention.

C. Referral for disciplinary action under Title IV. This can occur in conjunction with other options. The Bishop shall consider referral of cleric for disciplinary action under Title IV when any of the following are present:

1. Using a church computer to access pornography of any type and/or engage in compulsive or addictive behavior.
2. Engaging in compulsive/addictive behavior while "on the clock."
3. Engaging in compulsive/addictive behavior in a ministry setting. OR
4. Resistance to assessment or treatment.

D. Issuance of Pastoral Direction at any point in this process. ⁴ A Pastoral Direction may address the question of continuing ministry placement.

² Although these guidelines apply to priests and deacons, Bishops are held to these same standards. If there is reason to believe that a Bishop is addicted a substance or behavior, the Presiding Bishop (PB) has the authority to respond through the PB's Office of Pastoral Development, or under Title IV if the PB has "sufficient reason to believe that any Bishop has committed an Offense and the interests and good order and discipline of the Church require investigation ..." Canon IV.3.23 (b)

³ "Reason to believe" is the legal standard in Connecticut for mandatory reporting of suspected abuse and neglect of protected populations to state agencies. Under Connecticut law, clergy are mandated reporters.

⁴ Pastoral Direction is defined in Canon IV.15 as "a written solemn warning from a Bishop to a Priest or Deacon setting forth clearly the reasons for the Pastoral Direction given in the capacity of pastor, teacher, and canonical overseer, which is neither capricious or arbitrary in nature nor in any way contrary to the Constitution and Canons of the Church, national or diocesan, and directed to some matter which concerns the Doctrine, Discipline or worship of this Church or manner of life and behavior of the Priest or Deacon addressed, and shall be deemed to include without limitation admonition and Godly admonition.

IV. Current Clergy Placement:



A. The Bishop decides whether there will be restrictions on ordained ministry. The Bishop makes this determination regardless of whether the cleric is referred for disciplinary action under Title IV. In determining whether clergy placement continues, the Bishop may consider a myriad of factors including the following:

1. Whether the cleric is well enough to work based on recommendations from professional assessment(s).
2. The amount of time needed for treatment, rehabilitation and amendment of life.
3. The level of damage to relationships in the ministry setting (staff, congregants, lay leaders) and erosion of trust as determined by the Bishop.
4. The totality of the circumstances including the cleric's work history, other life factors and major life transitions (marriage/divorce; parent's death; sick child, etc.).
5. Impaired ability to perform as ordained leader as determined by the Bishop.

B. If placement continues, the Bishop's office monitors the cleric's wellness by methods that include:

1. Obtaining a signed release so the Bishop can obtain confirmation of treatment from treating professional(s). (This includes verification that cleric is in fact participating in treatment, not the content of conversations in therapeutic settings.)
2. Informing lay leaders of the parish and/or ministry setting. The Bishop discerns who among the lay leaders is to be informed.
3. Checking in with the lay leaders on an ongoing basis. Lay leaders are urged to contact the Bishop's office immediately if they have any concerns regarding the cleric's addictive behavior.
4. Monitoring use of the church computer if it was inappropriately used in any way. Such monitoring will be done as the Bishop deems appropriate.

V. Response to individuals affected by cleric's addiction⁵

The Bishop's office will ensure that pastoral care and response will be offered as appropriate to:

1. Individuals who brought concerns of the cleric's addiction to the attention of the Bishop's office.
2. Individuals who report finding evidence of the addiction.
3. All paid staff, lay and ordained, and others who may have worked under the cleric's authority.
4. Others as deemed appropriate by the Bishop.

In providing pastoral care the Bishop's office may disclose the process and outcome of the Bishop's intervention, preserving pastoral confidences as the Bishop determines appropriate.

⁵ This is in addition to the general pastoral care and response that is available to the entire congregation.



VI. Future Clergy Placement

Clergy who are in recovery from addiction may serve in parish ministry or other ministry settings at the Bishop's discretion. The Bishop's office has resources to support and assist clergy, lay leaders and parishes in this process.

A. Disclosure of prior addictive behavior under these guidelines is required by the cleric to the parish leadership when:

1. The addictive behavior constituted an "offense" under Title IV, even if action under Title IV was not taken. This includes:

- a. Using a church computer to access pornography of any type and/or engage in compulsive or addictive behavior.
- b. Engaging in compulsive/addictive behavior while "on the clock."
- c. Engaging in compulsive/addictive behavior in a pastoral or ministry setting. OR
- d. Previous resistance to assessment or treatment.

2. In the Bishop's determination such disclosure is required based on a number of factors including whether the addictive behavior (or the concealing of that behavior) impaired the functioning of the cleric at a previous parish, or damaged the cleric's relationships/trust with staff, congregants and lay leaders.

B. Education on addiction is essential at the time of disclosure. Education can provide a framework for understanding the former behavior of the cleric and invite others to examine their own behaviors. It can also provide insight into the depth of shame experienced by those addicted and family members, particularly in instances of pornography addiction.

C. Content of disclosure: The cleric is expected to disclose:

1. The nature of the addiction.
2. The time of onset.
3. How the cleric entered into recovery.
4. The outcome of any formal disciplinary proceedings or leaves from ministry taken at the request or through agreement with a Bishop.

AND

5. What the cleric does now to continue in recovery.

D. Timing of disclosure:

When there is a search committee and the cleric is a candidate, the cleric must disclose to the search committee before the committee determines which of the candidates' names go forward to the vestry.

In other situations, the cleric must disclose to the vestry before the cleric begins to serve at a parish or at a time designated by the Bishop.

When possible, the Bishop's office will contact a parish leader (search committee chair or warden) prior to disclosure. The purpose of this contact is to inform the parish leader that the



candidate has a story to share, that the Bishop's office is aware of his/her story, and that the Bishop's office supports the candidate in the search/placement process.

E. Verification of disclosure:

The Bishop's office shall verify that said disclosure occurred by one of the following:

1. Presence of the Bishop's staff member during the disclosure.
2. Confirmation of the disclosure by conversation with a lay leader after the disclosure. (Cleric informs the lay leaders that a member of the Bishop's staff will make contact to confirm that the disclosure occurred. In that conversation, the staff member asks the lay leader to explain the content of what was disclosed).

OR

3. Any other reliable means to confirm that full disclosure occurred.

Office of Mission Integrity and Leadership
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