



Anglican Diocese
of Adelaide

The Professional Supervision Guidebook for clergy and lay ministers in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide

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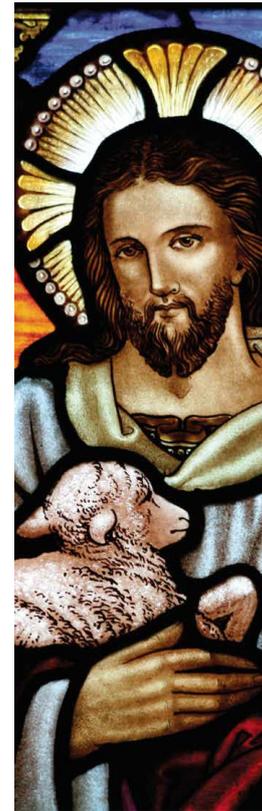
Introduction

Ministry in all of its variety of forms, is filled with many delights and joys, as well as frustrations and sorrows. Ordained clergy and licensed lay ministers have the great privilege of making the good news about Jesus known. We know that this can sometimes entail cost, both to our own personal wellbeing and to those close to us.

Studies from around the world warn of the high rate of fatigue and burnout among Christian ministers, who often bear the burdens of walking alongside others in their grief and struggles, as well as sharing in their triumphs. These formal studies, and our own experience, tell us that those who constantly give pastorally to others can, at times, experience fatigue, exhaustion and discouragement. Many ministers also experience times of isolation, and sometimes feel as though they have no one to talk to openly and honestly about these, and other, matters.

The Ordinal exhorts the ordained clergy of the Church to be faithful in prayer, to study the Scriptures wholeheartedly reflecting on their meaning, and, to rely on the Holy Spirit and the grace of God for the strength they will need to run the race that lies ahead. The same exhortation holds true for licensed lay ministers also. This entails being called into a life of both service and of self-care and reflection, that is consistent with the provisions of 'Faithfulness in Service' and goes also to the duty of care we, as ministers of the gospel, owe both to ourselves and to those whom we seek to serve. These are not things we can do and achieve alone.

As Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders, so we who minister in the name of Christ, are to keep watch *over ourselves* and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made us overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. (Acts 20.28).



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Professional supervision

Professional supervision, which is sometimes also called pastoral supervision, is an important means of self care and reflection that has served professional persons involved in the 'helping' and 'caring' professions for many years, and which is now becoming normative in many denominations for both ordained and lay ministers of the Christian Church.



It is important to understand that professional supervision is distinct to, and separate from, what might be termed 'line management' or 'performance supervision', whereby a more senior person may be said to be 'supervising' a more junior person, such as an assistant, or a person in a training role (e.g. a Parish Priest supervising an Assistant Priest or a theological student in training).

Professional supervision is an agreed, regular, planned, and bounded space, in which a practitioner skilled in supervision (the supervisor) meets with one or more other practitioners (the supervisee/s) to look together at the supervisee/s' practice of ministry in a self-reflective and formative way. This is distinct to, and different from, other practices and relationships that may, on the surface, look similar, such as ministry coaching, mentoring and spiritual direction.

In professional supervision the focus falls on the ministry of the person being supervised, and on the exploration of the issues that arise out of the practice of that ministry. This gives the minister an opportunity, and a safe and confidential space, for reflecting on their own vocation and its future development and effectiveness. There will also be an emphasis on the personal wellbeing of the supervisee.

The overarching intention is that professional supervision provides a supportive, reflective and educative space to facilitate the professional growth and development of the supervisee as a person in ministry, so as to enhance their faithfulness and effectiveness in ministry.

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Some will prefer to experience supervision individually, one on one with a qualified person. Others have found that sharing the supervisory experience in a group with others has enabled a degree of relational mutuality that has been especially beneficial for those who might exercise their ministry primarily alone and without the benefits of being part of a ministry team.

A brief theological reflection on professional supervision

The experience of supervision can be likened to the narrative about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in the final chapter of Luke's Gospel (Luke 24.13-35). In the biblical narrative, the two disciples walking the road to Emmaus leave Jerusalem in grief and despair after the crucifixion of Jesus and are joined by none other than the risen Christ himself, who journeys alongside them for part of the way, unseen and unrecognised by them.

The experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus reminds us how easy it is to miss the presence of the risen Lord with us and among us, especially as we are consumed and sometimes overwhelmed by the many needs and demands, and the emotions and imperatives, of the present.

In the ministry of accompaniment, the walking alongside with, and in and through their mutual reflection on the Scriptures and their meaning, and finally in an act of hospitality, the Emmaus disciples come to recognise and experience the presence of their Lord.



The Antiochian Orthodox priest David Alexander makes the connection in this way:

The experience of being supervised is, in my experience, not unlike being on a pilgrimage with others (co-pilgrimage). The experience of walking through my supervisory encounters with a supervisory person on my left hand, helping to guide and challenge me, and a supervisee person on my right hand, whom I am attempting to guide and challenge, brings to mind the image of three pilgrims on a road. In the end, all three of us are looking for the same meeting in our work – an encounter with God in the presence of another.*

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Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them...
(Luke 24.13-15).

* From D. Alexander, *Co-Pilgrimage and Presence: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective for Pastoral Supervision*.

Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry, 2013.

The diocesan policy framework and settings

The diocese has published a 'Clergy and Lay Ministers: Professional Supervision Policy' ("**the Policy**") that is effective from 1 January 2022 and mandatory from 1 January 2023. Supervisors should read the policy carefully in conjunction with this Guidebook.

(a) The register of approved supervisors

The policy provides that the diocese will keep and maintain a register of approved supervisors. The Archbishop (or delegate) will approve prospective supervisors. The criteria for becoming an approved supervisor is set out in the Policy at Clause 3.6. As part of the application process, supervisors nominate how they meet the criteria, provide their CV, give a commitment to be bound by the ethical requirements of the Policy including that of confidentiality, and obtain a current Safe Ministry Clearance from the Diocese or from an equivalent professional standards organisation. The Registrar has responsibility for keeping the register and for adding duly approved supervisors to it.



(b) Selecting a supervisor

Supervision is a personal, as well as a professional, relationship. Neither the Archbishop nor the Registrar 'match' supervisees to supervisors, nor make any recommendations or referrals, although the Registrar is able to provide general advice and direction about the options available to supervisees upon request.

Supervisees are free to read through the CV's of approved supervisors who have consented to making this information available to prospective supervisees. Supervisees may make contact with prospective supervisors independently, or may do so in conjunction with others who may be interested in forming a supervision group.

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(c) The practice of supervision

The Policy does not mandate a particular style or model of supervision, since this is a matter of personal preference and comfort between the supervisor and supervisee.

The Policy does set out some pragmatic guidelines around the practice of supervision and how it is to occur.

- Type: the Policy allows for individual (one on one) supervision and group supervision (a supervisor with more than one supervisees), or a combination of both.
- Medium: supervision may be delivered in person or online by videoconference; telephone is also permitted if either in person or videoconference are not possible for a valid reason.
- Frequency: the Policy requires a minimum of six separate sessions of supervision in each year.
- Costs: the cost of six sessions of supervision is borne by the parish or ministry unit to which the supervisee is licensed.



(d) The supervision agreement

When a supervisor and a supervisee have decided to commence the supervisory relationship, it is important that a written agreement is entered into setting out how the supervision will take place, the frequency of supervision, and what costs will be involved.

Whilst the supervisory relationship is sometimes described in terms of it being a 'covenant,' the term 'agreement' is used in the Policy. The form of the agreement is at Schedule B of the Policy. Upon being agreed to, it is signed and dated by both supervisor and supervisee, who keep a copy for themselves.

Supervisees forward a copy of the signed agreement to the Registrar by 31 March in each year. This is purely to enable the diocese to verify to an auditor its compliance with the recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the anticipated General Synod canon mandating professional supervision for Anglican clergy and licensed lay ministers. The agreement is the only form of documentation or reporting regarding professional supervision that is ever provided to the diocese. It is not added to any file kept by the diocese for the clergyperson or lay minister.