

Clergy Core Competencies

Core Competencies for Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers In Addressing Alcohol and Drug Dependence and the Impact On Family Members

These competencies are presented as a specific guide to the core knowledge, attitudes, and skills essential to the ability of clergy and pastoral ministers to meet the needs of persons with alcohol or drug dependence and their family members.

1. Be aware of the:
 - Generally accepted definition of alcohol and drug dependence
 - Societal stigma attached to alcohol and drug dependence

2. Be knowledgeable about the:
 - Signs of alcohol and drug dependence
 - Characteristics of withdrawal
 - Effects on the individual and the family
 - Characteristics of the stages of recovery

3. Be aware that possible indicators of the disease may include, among others: marital conflict, family violence (physical, emotional, and verbal), suicide, hospitalization, or encounters with the criminal justice system.

4. Understand that addiction erodes and blocks religious and spiritual development, and be able to effectively communicate the importance of spirituality and the practice of religion in recovery, using scripture, traditions, and rituals of the faith community.

5. Be aware of the potential benefits of early intervention to the:
 - Addicted person
 - Family system
 - Affected children

6. Be aware of appropriate pastoral interactions with the:
 - Addicted person
 - Family system
 - Affected children

7. Be able to communicate and sustain:
 - An appropriate level of concern
 - Messages of hope and caring

8. Be familiar with and utilize available community resources to ensure a continuum of care for the:
 - Addicted person
 - Family system
 - Affected children

9. Have a general knowledge of and, where possible, exposure to:
 - The 12-step programs – AA, NA, Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, Alateen, A.C.O.A., etc.
 - Other groups

10. Be able to acknowledge and address values, issues, and attitudes regarding alcohol and drug use and dependence in:
 - Oneself
 - One's own family

11. Be able to shape, form, and educate a caring congregation that welcomes and supports persons and families affected by alcohol and drug dependence.

12. Be aware of how prevention strategies can benefit the larger community.

Source: "Core Competencies for Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers in Addressing Alcohol and Drug Dependence and the Impact on Family Members" DHHS. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2004.

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