Spiritual Directors International Mission Statement

Throughout human history individuals have been called to accompany others seeking the Mystery we name God. In this time, Spiritual Directors International responds to this call by ending the holy around the world and across traditions.

The Purpose and History of Spiritual Directors International

Spiritual Directors International is a global learning community that serves and supports the ministry and service of spiritual direction emerging from the contemplative traditions of many faiths.

Spiritual Directors International seeks to strengthen the interfaith network of colleagues and those seeking spiritual guidance by developing program, publications, and contemplative practices.

Spiritual Directors International began in 1989, in a gathering of spiritual directors of Christian faith at Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA, USA. In the ensuing years, the community has become one of many nations and faiths.

Spiritual Directors International is 501 © 3 not for profit religious organization incorporated in California, USA.

Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct flows from lived reverence for God, self, and others but is not inevitably the reality of every spiritual direction relationship. Therefore, these guidelines are meant to inspire members of Spiritual Directors International toward integrity, responsibility, and faithfulness in their practice of spiritual direction.

I. The Spiritual Director and the Self

Personal Spirituality

1. Spiritual directors assume responsibility for personal growth by:
   a. Participating in regular spiritual direction
   b. Following personal and communal spiritual practices and disciplines.

Formation
2. Spiritual directors engage in ongoing formation as directors by:
   a. Continuing to discern their call to the ministry of spiritual direction
   b. Nurturing self-knowledge and freedom
   c. Cultivating insight into the influences of culture, social historical context, environmental setting, and institutions
   d. Studying scripture, theology, spirituality, and other disciplines related to spiritual direction.

Supervision

3. Spiritual directors engage in supervision by:
   a. Receiving regular supervision from peers or from a mentor
   b. Seeking consultations with other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.

Personal Responsibility

4. Spiritual directors meet their needs outside the spiritual direction relationship in a variety of ways, especially by:
   a. Self care, wisely balancing time for worship, work, leisure, family, and personal relationships
   b. Addressing the difficulties multiple roles or relationships pose to the effectiveness or clarity of the spiritual direction relationship
   c. Removing oneself form any situation that compromises the integrity of the spiritual direction relationship.

Limitation

5. Spiritual directors recognize the limits of:
   a. Energy by restricting the number of directees
   b. Attentiveness by appropriate spacing of meetings and directees
   c. Competence by referring directees to other appropriately qualified person when necessary.

II. The Spiritual Director and the Directee
Covenant

1. Spiritual directors initiate conversation and establish agreements with directees about:
   a. The nature of spiritual direction
   b. The roles of the director and the directee
   c. The length and frequency of direction sessions
   d. The compensation, if any, to be given to the director or institution
   e. The process for evaluating and/or terminating the relationship

Dignity

2. Spiritual directors honor the dignity of the directee by:
   a. Respecting the directee’s values, conscience, spirituality, and theology
   b. Inquiring into the motives, experiences, or relationships of the directee only as necessary
   c. Recognizing the imbalance of power in the spiritual direction relationship and taking care not to exploit it.
   d. Establishing and maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries with the directee
   e. Refraining from sexualized behavior, including, but not limited to, manipulative, abusive, or coercive works or actions toward a directee.

Confidentiality

3. Spiritual directors maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of the directee by:
   a. Protecting the identity of the directee
   b. Keeping confidential all oral and written matters arising in the spiritual direction session
   c. Conducting direction sessions in appropriate settings
d. Addressing legal regulations requiring disclosure to proper authorities, including but not limited to child abuse, elder abuse, and physical harm to self and/or others.

III. The Spiritual Director and Others

Colleagues

1. Spiritual directors maintain collegial relationships with ministers and professionals by:
   a. Developing intra- and interdisciplinary relationships
   b. Requesting a directee who is in therapy to inform his or her therapist about being in spiritual direction
   c. Securing written releases and permission from directees when specific information needs to be shared for the benefit of the directee
   d. Respecting ministers and professionals by not disparaging them or their work.

Faith Communities

2. Spiritual directors maintain responsible relationships to communities of faith by:
   a. Remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability, and support
   b. Appropriately drawing on the teaching and practices of communities of faith
   c. Respecting the directee’s relationship to his or her own community of faith

Society

3. Spiritual directors, when presenting themselves to the public, preserve the integrity of spiritual direction by:
   a. Representing qualifications and affiliations accurately.
   b. Defining the particular nature and purpose of spiritual direction
   c. Respecting all persons regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression,
national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, and any other preference, personal characteristic, condition or status.

For Reflection

Spiritual Directors International recognizes that cultural and environmental factors may require these guidelines to be contextualized for different types of spiritual direction experiences. Spiritual Directors International encourages individuals, enrichment, formation, and training programs, religious institutions, healthcare systems, spirituality centers, supervision groups or circles, and peer groups to review and re-appropriate these guidelines. To facilitate dialogue and re-appropriation of these guidelines, Spiritual Directors International offers these questions for reflection:

a. How do you and your community define terms such as “spiritual”, “spiritual direction,” “formation,” and “supervision?”

b. How do you and your community understand potential difficulties associated with “multiple roles and relationships,” “imbalance of power,” “Boundaries,” and “confidentiality?”

c. How might the various guidelines contribute to the authenticity of your practice of spiritual direction? Your community’s practice of spiritual direction?

d. How might you adapt these guidelines in your particular cultural or institutional setting?

e. What ethical concerns in spiritual direction do you and your community foresee that these guidelines do not address?

Adoption Resolution

“There is unanimous consensus by the Coordinating Council that these are the official Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Spiritual Directors International. It is our joy to promulgate these guidelines for distribution. We hope that our colleagues will strive to accept these as their personal guidelines.”

- Adopted by