

Churches Together for Healing

Guidelines for Good Practice in the Healing Ministry

The healing ministry is Jesus' ministry entrusted to us, always to be exercised with reverence, empathy, love and compassion. Those offering ministry are not 'healers': they represent the Church fulfilling her commission received from Jesus Christ and minister in humility through the power of the Holy Spirit. The guiding principle is to recognize the presence of God in those receiving this ministry and honour God's presence in them.

1 **Prayer and preparation.** The healing ministry is based on prayer to God the Father in union with his Son, Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Those involved in this ministry should be prayerful, stable, regularly practicing Christians who acknowledge his healing love and are willing to pray and listen for guidance in order to minister appropriately to others.

2 **Self-care.** Those involved in the healing ministry should be sufficiently self-aware to recognize their own spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs for healing and for reconciliation. They should endeavor to care for their own well-being and be willing to receive ministry for themselves, in order to be available to express the grace and healing love of Jesus Christ.

3 **Safety.** All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure the safety of the person ministering as well as those receiving this ministry. People have a right to know what is being provided and how they will be ministered to. Those involved in ministering should make adequate provision for their own safety. They should also be aware of current legislation in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

4 **Accountability and regulation.** Everyone involved in the healing ministry needs clear lines of accountability in order to recognize who holds relevant authority within the local situation and within their denomination. All reasonable steps should be taken by those involved to ensure their awareness of current law as it applies to this ministry, e.g. data protection, informed consent. Legal liability issues must be considered from an insurance viewpoint. Existing denominational regulations should be also followed.

5 **Training and supervision.** Individuals should receive appropriate training in this ministry and be kept up to date with developments and its ecumenical expression. Healing team leaders must ensure that members have opportunities for training, a common understanding of good practice and adequate supervision. Everyone involved should be able to understand and agree to accept these guidelines for good practice for the healing ministry.

6 **Competence and boundaries.** Persons in this ministry should be competent in listening and related pastoral skills and, where appropriate in the ministering of the Holy Sacraments. They should be aware of their personal limitations and ensure that they are properly prepared and fit to be involved. If fitness is doubtful or compromised or there is a conflict of interest, they should withdraw from ministering to others. Professional boundaries with healthcare professionals and chaplaincies should be observed.

7 **Personal conduct.** The healing ministry is part of the message of the gospel. The personal conduct of everyone involved should encourage confidence in this ministry and not undermine it, nor

be judgmental or discriminatory. Language, personal hygiene, general appearance, body language and touch used by those ministering should be appropriate, considerate, respectful and courteous towards those receiving it. No-one should be ministered to against their will.

8 Confidentiality and public statements. People's privacy and dignity should be respected and protected. Any limitations to confidentiality should be explained in advance and any disclosure should be restricted to relevant information. It should be conveyed only to appropriate people, normally with the person's consent, and not misused in any way. Any information retained should be kept in accordance with current legislation on data protection.

9 Counselling and psychotherapy. These specific treatments, as distinct from pastoral care and listening, should only be provided by accredited counsellors and therapists who adhere to the codes of ethics and practice of their regulatory organizations and who have professional insurance cover. Those involved in the healing ministry should be aware of more specialized related ministries and be ready to refer when necessary and with the permission of the person needing further care.

10 Deliverance. Denominations have their own rules concerning the deliverance ministry and ministers should abide by the rules of their own denomination. It is strongly recommended that denominationally authorized advisors should be consulted when this ministry may be needed. Professional indemnity insurance does not usually cover ministers for the deliverance ministry.

11 Partnership. The healing ministry should be carried out collaboratively, where appropriate, with chaplains and representatives of our ecumenical partners, whilst recognizing that they may be bound by other codes of conduct and denominational regulations.

12 The Church and professional and voluntary healthcare. The healing ministry complements most forms of professional and voluntary healthcare: mutual understanding and respectful relationships should be actively encouraged.