

## Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct flows from lived reverence for all of Life, 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 ministry and service 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 and continuing education by:

- a. continuing to discern their call to the ministry and service 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 sacred texts, theology, spirituality, psychology, 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.

### II. The Spiritual Director and the Spiritual Directee

#### *Covenant*

1. Spiritual directors initiate conversation and establish understandings with spiritual directees about:

- a. the nature of spiritual direction
- b. the roles and responsibilities of the spiritual director and the spiritual directee

- c. the length and frequency of direction sessions
- d. the compensation, if any, to be given to the spiritual director or institution
- e. the process for evaluating and terminating the relationship.

### *Dignity*

- 2. Spiritual directors honor the dignity of the spiritual directee by:
  - a. respecting the spiritual directee's values, culture, conscience, spirituality and theology
  - b. inquiring into the motives, experiences or relationships of the spiritual 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 spiritual directee
  - e. refraining from sexualized behavior, including, but not limited to: manipulative, abusive or coercive words or actions toward a spiritual directee.

### *Confidentiality*

- 3. Spiritual directors maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of the spiritual directee by:
  - a. protecting the identity of the spiritual directee
  - b. keeping confidential all oral, electronic and written matters arising in the spiritual direction sessions
  - c. recognizing and disclosing to the spiritual directee the limitations of confidentiality of electronic communications
  - d. conducting spiritual direction sessions in appropriate settings
  - e. addressing legal regulations requiring disclosure to proper authorities, including but not limited to child abuse, elder abuse and physical harm to self and others

## III. The Spiritual Director and Others

### *Colleagues*

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

### *Faith and Spiritual Communities*

- 2. Spiritual directors maintain responsible relationships by:
  - a. remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability, and support
  - b. appropriately drawing on the teachings and spiritual practices of spiritual communities
  - c. respecting the spiritual directee's relationships to his or her own communities.

*Society*

3. Spiritual directors, when presenting themselves to the public, preserve the integrity of spiritual direction by being in right relation with persons and organizations:

- a. representing qualifications and affiliations accurately
- b. defining the particular nature and purpose of spiritual direction
- c. seeking opportunities to be spiritually available to the underserved
- d. living in an ecologically responsible and sustainable manner
- e. respecting all persons regardless of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, religion, spiritual tradition, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, any preference, personal characteristic, condition, or status.