



**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

# Ethical Ministry: Resource book for Facilitators and Participants

## Half-day Refresher Program

A continuing education program for:

Ministers, Candidates, Pastors, Chaplains, Pastoral Practitioners,  
Church Engagement Leaders and Lay People engaged in ministry.

**2018 Case Studies for: Boundaries**



## Acknowledgement

This program has been adapted from material developed for the UCA Synod of VicTas by Rev. Lauren Mosso and Rev. Sharon Hollis, and is used with permission.

For further information please contact:

Rev. Clare Brockett

Uniting Mission & Education, Synod of NSW and ACT

t. 0427 708 216

e. [clareb@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:clareb@nswact.uca.org.au)

## Online Resources

The Refresher Case Studies can be downloaded from the UME website:

([ume.nswact.uca.org.au/ethical-ministry-half-day-refresher-program](http://ume.nswact.uca.org.au/ethical-ministry-half-day-refresher-program))

along with

Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Ministers

Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders

Guidelines for Councils of the Church when implementing the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders

Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Lay Preachers

Uniting Employees will find their Code of Conduct in the Learning Campus area.

## Themes

- 2018A: Boundaries
- 2018B: To be advised

# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgement / Themes..... 2**

## **Process Tools**

Expectations for Participants..... 4

Ground Rules for Group Discussion..... 5

Safe Paired Sharing..... 6

## **Case Studies**

Introduction to the Case Studies ..... 7

Case Study 1 ..... 8

Case Study 2 ..... 8

Case Study 3 ..... 9

Case Study 4 ..... 10

Case Study 5 ..... 10

Case Study 6 ..... 11

Case Study 7 ..... 12

Case Study 8 ..... 13

Case Study 9 ..... 13

Case Study 10 ..... 14

Case Study 11 ..... 14

Case Study 12 ..... 15

Case Study 13 ..... 15

Case Study 14 ..... 16

Case Study 15 ..... 17

Case Study 16 ..... 18

Case Study 17 ..... 18

## Expectations for Ethical Ministry Participation

Ethical Ministry is the NSW/ACT Synod's mandated professional development program for Ministers, Candidates, Pastors, Chaplains, Pastoral Practitioners, Church Engagement Leaders and Lay People engaged in ministry.

The Ethical Ministry program includes a two-day foundation course which covers theological foundations for ethical ministry, healthy boundaries, power and vulnerability, issues relating to positional influence, transference, accountability and supervision. The Code of Ethics is explored in this setting. The course is run two times a year at the Centre for Ministry, and is compulsory for candidates for ordained ministry, those applying for Ministry of Pastor, and those applying for admission to UCA ministry from other denominations. The course is open to anyone to attend.

The Ethical Ministry program includes two compulsory half-day refresher workshops each year, run by Presbyteries in association with Uniting Mission and Education.

### Participants' required preparation:

- Contact your Presbytery secretary to book into each session;
- ensure you have a current Code of Ethics; re-read it and bring it to training;
- PREPARE BY** reading through all the case studies, considering how the Code of Ethics might be relevant to them and the subject of the workshop;
- EITHER:**  
prepare a one page reflection on one of the cases in relation to your ministry practice;
- OR:** reflect on an ethical situation relevant to the theme from your own ministry and write a brief case study similar to those in the Workbook (about half a page, no real names) This could be discussed in paired sharing. Email a copy to the Facilitator and UME for future use.
- Case studies and reflections **MUST** be handed to the facilitator to comply with Assembly participation requirements.

### Introduction to Boundaries issue

Read *Boundaries 101: How They Keep Your Church Healthy*, an online article by Dr Bill Wilson, The Center for Healthy Churches:

<http://chchurches.org/boundaries-101/>

## Ground Rules for Group Discussion<sup>1</sup>

1. Arrive on time, remain for the entire session, and do not wander in and out of the session.
2. Unless you're expecting an emergency call, please turn mobile phones off. If you must take a call, please leave the room before doing so in order to minimise the interruption. Devices should only be used for reading the relevant materials for the session, not for Facebooking the conversation.
3. Listen. Hear what the other person is saying. Let them finish talking. Think before you respond. The same word or phrase may mean different things to different people, so it may be helpful to ask a question for clarification rather than making an assumption.
4. Talk about yourself and your own experience. You may ask questions of others, but do not challenge the validity of another's personal experience or point of view. Code of Ethics case studies are meant to be used as tools for learning more about how the Code applies to our own ministry practice. Sometimes discussions may need to hold a wide range of views, and guidance may be needed from the Facilitators to ensure that the spirit and intention of the Code of Ethics is being upheld in the discourse.
5. Keep your comments brief and to the point, so everyone has a chance to speak.
6. Do not generalise from your experience and feelings to the experience and feelings of others. Let people speak for themselves.
7. Do not attack, or try to hurt, or pass judgment on anyone, whether or not they are present.
8. Treat this group session as a confidential conversation; do not repeat elsewhere what is said here.
9. Stay on topic.
10. Please be responsible in discerning what material is appropriate for you to share in the wider group, what would be better suited to the 'paired sharing' and what should be shared only with your supervisor.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://lbgrc.msu.edu/resources/groundrules-for-discussion-and-support-groups> (accessed 17 May 2013).

## Safe Paired Sharing

This is an invitation to engage with the topic on a more personal level, and to integrate your learning with your ministry practice. Participants are requested to keep discussions confidential, but at the same time to remember that paired sharing is in no way intended to take the place of a conversation with your supervisor. We are all vulnerable people. Collegial respect and care for one another are essential elements of Code of Ethics training, and of course they are also essential for ministry.

Sharing an example from your ministry could include:

- An actual (de-identified) situation that you feel comfortable to discuss in this setting
- A 'hypothetical' situation that could possibly happen to you or someone else – what steps would you take to resolve it, or how might you prevent a breach of the Code of Ethics? What choices might you make in this situation?
- You might start out with a situation when your own boundaries were violated by another person (de-identified) – but the fruit of the discussion would more likely be found in changing places. Instead of staying with what happened to you, what might the other person in the situation have done differently so they would not have acted unethically towards you? Or fruitful discussion might be found in thinking about how in your own ministry practice you seek to avoid such violations.

You may find it helpful to take some time at the beginning of this session to silently reflect and gather your thoughts. This could be a good way to work through which issues you feel safe about sharing in this context, and which ones you would rather save to discuss privately with your supervisor.

The suggested format for the paired sharing time is as follows:

### **Paired Sharing:** (1 hour)

- Share for 15 minutes each: In pairs think of an example from your ministry that relates to the topic. How did you resolve it? What did you learn from it? How are you practising ministry differently as a result?
- Dialogue with each other 10-15 minutes – What insights have we gained about prevention of ethical breaches in ministry practice?
- End with (5-10 minutes): – What would you like to bring to the group about your own experience, or about this discussion? (Don't discuss the other person's experience with the wider group.)

## Case Studies:

### Introduction to the Case Studies

The following case studies form the basis of the program. This is a deliberate choice based on the recognition that ethical issues in ministry often require dealing with complex and difficult situations and people. The way we respond shapes our ministry and integrity. Hence, although the case studies are somewhat artificial, they draw on real life situations and therefore offer shades of grey. In each case considered, participants are invited to consider how they would respond in a similar situation.

The case studies reflect varying ministry situations, and are written by people from our own Synod, reflecting real life issues and experiences.

Discussion questions are included at the end of each case study. The questions are generic so as not to lead the conversation, but to provide a framework for a lively and thoughtful conversation.

Remember to refer to relevant sections of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice, Lay Leaders Code of Conduct, Lay Preachers Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice, and the Uniting Code of Conduct, and any other local code of ethics prescribed for your ministry context.

**Participants need to choose 1 case-study to reflect on from the 17 case studies in this booklet. This reflection will need to be handed to the facilitator.**

**Facilitators need to choose 2-3 case studies for the group to discuss.**

**Participants should be provided with the whole booklet.**

## Case Studies involving Boundaries

Participants: Choose one case study to reflect on.

Facilitators: Choose 2-3 case studies for discussion within the session.

### Case Study 1:

#### Themes: Retired Ministers, dependency, pastoral confusion

Rev Steve works in a placement which is blessed with two retired ministers. He has found them a great source of support. After a tricky patch following some tense discussions with some Church Council around budget and mission planning, Steve found himself in frequent conversations with Joy who is one of the retired clergy. He gets along well with Joy as they share similar theology and philosophy of ordained ministry. A new issue has arisen with Church Council and Steve is making almost nightly phone calls to Joy for her advice. Joy is beginning to feel uncomfortable and wonders how she might approach a conversation, for she is concerned about what other people might begin to think.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1(g)**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

### Case Study 2:

#### Themes: School Chaplaincy, pastoral relationship,

Cathy works in a school as Chaplain. She has been in a pastoral relationship with Kim, a student, following the death of her mother. Cathy was invited to visit the family at home to arrange the funeral and for subsequent follow-up pastoral care visits. It is now several months later and Cathy feels a strong bond with Kim. On recent visit where it was just Cathy and Kim in the house together, Kim spoke about how fond she was of one her other teachers whom she felt she could talk about anything with and who was helping her with her grief by giving advice. Cathy worked out that the teacher was not one of the wellbeing team staff, yet this teacher was suggesting that Kim might be depressed. Cathy was concerned that this was complicating existing role boundaries and beyond the expertise of the staff member. Cathy needs to work out what she should do.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 3.5**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 3:

### Themes: Dependency issues, time management, conflicting opinions, emotional blackmail

Paula had almost finished her first year in a new placement. At the first Church Council elections, Barbara was elected as the new Church Council chairperson and Pastoral Care team leader. Paula was nervous about the new appointment as Barbara was already amongst her more 'needy' members. Barbara took enthusiastically to her new roles. Paula quickly found Barbara in her office more and more, wanting to discuss different aspects of the church's life, without notice. Barbara had strong opinions on how the church should operate and took significant offense when Paula did not respond positively to her opinions. Paula often found herself caught off guard. When Paula suggested they make a time for discussion, so that both could be prepared, Barbara was offended and took this as a brush off.

In addition to this Barbara would often text or call Paula at all times of the day and night, to let her know she was unwell, to give an opinion, or alternatively to enquire as to Paula's well-being and to let her know Paula was 'in her prayers.' Paula rarely responded to these texts. However this lack of response only seemed to encourage Barbara's need for personal connection as well as heighten her sense of anxiety about Paula's perceived lack of care for her.

Paula decided to put a number of strategies in place to manage Barbara, including not responding to text messages unless urgent, not answering phone calls unless she was in a place to be able to talk for some time, and insisting on a regular fortnightly appointment time to discuss any issues with Barbara. Barbara took great offence to this suggestion, and informed Paula that her actions were becoming significantly detrimental to her mental health and may mean that she would need to resign from her positions and consider leaving the church entirely.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 3.3.c,d**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 4:

### Themes: Retired minister, Collegiality vs pastoral responsibility,

Louise is a new minister in placement within a congregation with a number of retired ministers. Whilst getting to know the congregation she feels a growing gratitude for how supportive and collegial these ministers are.

One Sunday David, one of the retired ministers, reflects to Louise that the congregation was not happy with the way the vote for Louise's calling to the congregation was done. David tells Louise that he has forwarded a complaint to the Presbytery on behalf of the congregation, expressing concern about the placement.

Louise asked David if perhaps he could confide in her the names of people that were participating in this discussion. David responded, "No, no dear! Chaplaincy code. I hold them confidentially in my heart, but will continue to seek out and care for these people." Louise, at this stage a little confused, but still questioning asks David, "What seems to be the problem about the placement?". The answer: "You're not what we had in mind really, you're a woman... and that will take a lot for us to get used to, and I am a good minister, so people naturally tell me these things in good faith."

Louise was called away at this stage to meet with a visiting family. She noted this conversation down to speak a little later with her supervisor. She has a lot of questions to explore. Meanwhile, Louise ponders the intricacies of the pastoral/collegial relationship with David.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 3.1**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 5:

### Themes: special relationship, pastoral responsibility vs personal attraction

Mandy had been in a specified ministry placement for three years. Over the last 12 months she has been a member of a task group to develop a strategic vision for the placement. She realises she is looking forward to attending these meetings because of the presence of Jonah, who is a member of her congregation. Mandy realises she has growing feelings for Jonah and wonders how she can ethically balance her personal feelings with the pastoral responsibility.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders: Paragraphs, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5**

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.4 (i&ii), 4.3, 4.4**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 6:

**Themes: Colleagues, past minister/present minister, continuing friendships, personal friendship vs. pastoral responsibility.**

Beth had just started a new placement within a congregation. She decided to meet with Bruce, the outgoing minister, to talk and open the door to an ongoing collegial friendship. Beth and Bruce met over coffee and lunch, and shared openly about the congregation and its needs, and Bruce's new placement as well.

Bruce confides that he and his family have ongoing friendships with a number of members in the congregation, that they still celebrate different life events together, meeting up for lunches, dinners and often attending the same parties.

Bruce also shares about a pastoral matter for a member of Beth's new congregation, that needs prompt follow up. Beth tells Bruce thanks for letting her know, and that she will follow up as soon as she can. When Beth gets in the car she makes a note to follow up as soon as she gets home, and also puts in a reminder to let Bruce know that it has been followed up, that it may be taken off of his mind. She is thankful for Bruce's honesty, but aware of the complexities of friendship and pastoral needs she must navigate.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 3.1,**

### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 7:

### Themes: University Chaplaincy, professional and personal boundaries

David had just arrived in his first placement as chaplain on a university campus. This campus had over 20,000 students with another 600 or so staff members and he knew the task of getting known was going to be huge. David had a great passion for technology and believed that he could use his knowledge of and experience in social media to assist him to become known on campus.

He began by creating a web page for the chaplaincy department, created a Facebook page for the chaplaincy and linked that into his personal Facebook profile to keep track of the newsfeeds. He also started up a blog to share his thoughts and experiences on chaplaincy at the University and linked this to the Facebook page and website. He explored the possibilities of linking resources, groups, networks and friends through all of these cyber-based tools. This meant that he was spending a large amount of his time on campus, and at home, in front of his computer posting updates, creating resources, finding articles to post, writing his blog, sharing photos he had taken on campus and generally creating a cyber-presence for himself.

One day, whilst David was sitting in one of the cafes on campus with his head buried in his computer and his phone on the table next to the coffee cup, a student came up to him to say hi.

“Hi, my name is Michael. I’ve seen you around on Facebook a bit and love the family camping photos you posted from your recent holiday. How old are your kids?”

David felt very uncomfortable, as he hadn’t intended to have his holiday photos or his family a topic of conversation on campus. He wanted to invite students and staff to talk about themselves.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders: Paragraphs 2.2, 2.5**

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.5, 2.4e(i&ii)**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 8:

**Themes: personal friendship, favouritism, jealousy, conflict**

Kathleen was delighted when she was called to be the Minister at Valley View Uniting because there were lots of families with children in the congregation. Her children got on well with the children in the congregation, and quickly settled into life in a new town. They formed close friendships with the children from one of the families in the congregation, inviting each other to birthday parties, going to swimming lessons together after school, and for the occasional sleepover. Elspeth and her husband Hamish became friends with the children's parents Anna and John. Elspeth found they could really talk to each other about issues that were important to them, and they laughed a lot together. Elspeth was grateful to have Anna on Church Council. Things were going very well, Elspeth thought, until she received an e-mail from Blanche, another member of the congregation, accusing her of favouring Anna's position in a recent Church Council matter.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 2.4, 4.1(a)**

### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 9:

**Themes: pastoral responsibility, past minister staying in congregation, conflict of roles**

Joseph had finished his time as the convenor of the Pastoral Care Team, but remained a member of St Thriving Parish Mission. The role had seen Joseph visit extensively and also conduct many funerals. Deborah was the new convenor and was gradually working out the role in this large and busy mission. Six months into her new position. Deborah overheard Joseph say to an elderly couple, 'Don't worry Deborah with that, she is so busy. I can pop round and chat with you. After all, I know your family so well.' This was followed by Joseph requesting to take a funeral for a local man he had pastorally cared for during his battle with cancer.

*You may decide whether Joseph and Deborah are members of the laity or in specified ministry (active or retired; paid or voluntary).*

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders: Paragraphs 2.2, 2.3,**

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 2.4e(i) , 3.1g, 3.6, 3.7(e)**

### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 10:

**Themes: tension, Pastor, divisive decisions, authority**

Clarice looks after the worship team. Creating rosters and planning creative expressions of worship is her passion and she has done it well for the past 4 years. Joanna has just been appointed Pastor and as she begins her ministry, feels Clarice has too much authority in an area Joanna feels should be hers. Seeking to establish firm boundaries from the start, Joanna makes the decision to release Clarice from further responsibility. Clarice feels unfairly humiliated before the whole congregation and is very upset. To Joanna's shock this divides the whole church. Some support Joanna as she seeks to establish herself, while others feel for Clarice and feel she has been unjustly treated.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders: Paragraphs 2.1, 2.2,**

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 3.5c, 3.6b**

### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 11:

**Themes: past and present ministers, social vs pastoral situations**

Richard enjoyed being the Minister at Suburban Congregation, and was much loved by the congregation. He flourished in ministry there, and his family flourished too. As he prepared to retire from ministry at the end of his extended placement, he and his wife Hermione decided to purchase a home in the area so they wouldn't have to move again. Hermione was delighted, as she would be able to keep up with her friends in the Bible Study. Richard was happy to be invited to family events of congregation members, and was honoured to be asked to give the speech at a 'big' birthday party for one of his former parishioners. When Richard arrived at the party, the new Minister, Kate, looked surprised and shocked to see him there. After his speech, Kate quickly left.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 3.1g,**

### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 12:

### Themes: School chaplaincy, social interaction, professionalism and integrity

Christine was new to school chaplaincy, and when some of the other staff members invited her to go out to the pub after the Awards Night she was delighted to accept the invitation. She shared laughter and conversation with her new colleagues, and one of them said 'You don't seem like a Minister – here, have another beer!' The conversation turned to gossip about some of the other staff members, and complaints about the Principal, and Christine began to feel uncomfortable.

*You may decide whether Christine is ordained or lay*

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders: Paragraphs 2.2, 2.3**

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.5, 3.7**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 13:

### Themes: Retired Minister staying in congregation

David had lived in Homeville for twenty years. A former minister of the congregation and now retired, he was well known throughout the district, and had developed relationships with many families and the local funeral director.

When Robyn began her first placement in the town, David maintained his ongoing association with the funeral director, and expected to be called when members of the community died and be the first point of contact for grieving families, and subsequently conduct the funeral.

Initially Robyn was happy for this to happen, but over time began to feel that David's actions were having an adverse effect on her ministry.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 2.4e, 3.1g**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 14:

### Themes: Retired Minister staying in congregation

Paul was feeling blessed when responding to a call from the Fresh Springs Regional Congregation to be their sole Minister. Paul was skilled in nurturing faith and growing mission had agreed with the JNC that developing meaningful relationships, offering sound pastoral care and leading in meaningful worship would be the main focus of his first year.

Upon arrival Paul was handed a ready-made preaching roster for the ensuing 12 months which included a now retired Minister as a regular preacher at each of the 4 worshipping communities, indeed, there was not a Sunday that the retired Minister was not leading at least 2 services. Some services were also allotted to Lay Preachers. Paul realised he would not be in regular contact with each Worshipping community and in one case would only be meeting with that Worshipping Community every 2 months to lead worship.

A brief conversation with the Chairperson of the Church Council revealed that the retired Minister had been in placement at Fresh Springs some seven years ago, and had provided Supply Ministry prior to Paul's arrival. The Church Council valued his ministry, especially as he had such long standing relationships.

As Paul concentrated on establishing good working relationships with the Church Councillors and Elders, he thought of inviting the retired minister to be an Associate Minister with clear role recognition, boundaries and accountabilities. Paul's desire for clear boundaries deepened as he began visiting families, only to find the retired Minister was also continuing to visit them, in some cases very regularly and often at their request.

Paul was trying to meet with the retired Minister, who always seemed to be unavailable. The retired Minister did not have a computer or work with emails. Nor did the retired Minister attend Church Council meetings, preferring to send messages via the Chairperson. At the most recent meeting the Chairperson reported that the retired Minister did not want to get in the way and that he did not want to be a Minister in Association as he was retired.

Paul wondered how he was going to claim his place as the Minister called to lead the Fresh Springs Regional Congregation without causing division given the circumstances. He was hoping to find help with the Chairperson but that too was proving a challenge.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 2.4e, 3.1g**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 15:

### Themes: Retired Minister staying in congregation

Susan had been at the Peaceful Fields Linked Congregations for over 1 year now. She had settled in well with the five congregations. She depended on a dedicated team of skilled lay preachers and retired ministers to help cover all worship services and they worked together well. It was not possible for one person to cover all five on the same day.

Susan reflected that this placement was a very good match. She delighted in being so well received and in the support received from all of the congregations, elders and church council members. There was real promise in what was possible in the future which was reinforced when she visited members who she was getting to know really well.

It was on one such a visit that Susan was asked why she was against conducting baptisms. Taken aback, Susan said she was not and had indeed conducted a number of baptisms in the time she had been there as minister. Susan asked why such a question was being asked. The member said that in recent times four baptisms had been conducted in her congregation, all led by the retired minister. People assumed that Susan did not want to do them herself. Susan assured the member that she was not against baptism and thanked the member for asking.

Enquiries soon revealed that while Susan led worship in the other linked congregations, the retired minister was introducing himself to young families, offering baptism, which he then led.

Susan knew the retired minister. They met regularly. At no time had he indicated that he was conducting baptisms. There was no record of baptisms being held. The church council was unaware the situation. It was time for Susan to have a serious conversation with the retired minister and, it would seem, with the church council. Maybe, in a very pastoral way, she would need to work with all the congregations to inform them of proper processes. She decided upon a series of 'getting to know the Uniting Church and how we live out our theology and faith'. She did wonder however how best to tackle the situation with the retired minister.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 2.4e, 3.1g, 3.2a, 3.9bcd**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 16:

### Themes: Confidentiality, Pastoral Care, Interdisciplinary Teams, Aged Care chaplaincy

Kerry's responsibility as an aged care chaplain is in the context of a multi-disciplinary team. She's found that most of what is spoken about in a pastoral visit doesn't need to be in a daily electronic record. However sometimes for the health of the person concerned, and in order to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to care, she needs to share this information in a wider group. She's been wondering recently if she can trust all staff in this wider group to keep the information to themselves. She's noticed family members who are very curious about the health of other residents they see frequently while visiting their own family member. They will often ask staff how they are doing, what is going on. They may appear to have 'particular' information, suggesting it is ok to tell them more, because they already know half the story. There can be a sense of entitlement to knowledge, because 'this is my father's home.'

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 3.7, (a) (d) (e) (f).**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?

## Case Study 17:

### Themes: civil chaplaincy, stress management, self-care

Sisilia, as a chaplain working in a large hospital, finds that she's often dealing with trauma. Sometimes she's first on the scene. She's often called on because of her significant skills in helping families and staff with critical incidents. Compared to her previous placement as a minister in a congregation, this chaplaincy role is fast paced and intense. While Sisilia has settled into the new rhythm of ministry, she's wondering if it's healthy to always be at the front line of crisis care. Talking with her supervisor, she's reminded about how easy it is to lose sight of the bigger picture, or to become consumed by the enormity of tragedy. Who does she draw on for personal support? She's aware of particular people that she leans on during critical incidents, sometimes appropriately, sometimes not. Sometimes she believes she's the only person in her role that can respond to these situations, and so she ends up working in a solo role.

Sisilia is aware that she's constantly on the edge of ill health. She regularly becomes run down, and struggles to keep professional boundaries. She knows that her own fragility is affecting others. It's been a long time since she took a decent break. When challenged about this by her supervisor she talked about her belief that people she works with won't manage without her care. She's become pivotal to the pastoral care systems in place in the hospital. Sisilia's line managers at times expect her to work hours that are beyond what is reasonable. Sisilia is not confident that she can challenge these expectations.

**Read this story in the light of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice: Paragraphs 3.4 3.5 3.8. 3.9**

#### Reflection and Interpretation

1. What ethical issues around boundaries does this case study present?
2. What are some appropriate ways of responding?



