Creating & Supporting Lay Pastoral Care Teams

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Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law.
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.
~ James Vila Blake

Welcome

Assumptions

Parish care is different from pastoral care
Parish care = cards, meals, rides
Pastoral care = visiting, presence

By vocation, training, and call, the Minister is primary resource as pastoral caregiver
Lay people are essential partners in this ministry

Definitions

"Pastoral care is the faithful ministry of a religious community to the needs of people in face-to-face relationships. This ministry comes from a genuine concern for each person, caring about her as a person of unique worth, and caring for her as a mutual responsibility."
~ Paul Johnson, A Theology of Pastoral Care

"Pastoral theology is the science of the care for souls."
~ Catholic Encyclopedia
Sources

- Person to person
- Lay ministry team
- RE teachers
- Worship services

Parish and Pastoral Care

Parish Care
- Writing cards
- Making/delivering meals
- Transportation
- Medical equipment loans
- Elder buddy system

Pastoral Care
- Visiting people who are ill or hospitalized
- In mental health crisis
- Can't get to church
- Dying
- Illness or death in family

Education about
- Caring for elderly parents
- Living wills, etc.

Explore Your Vision

- What kind of care do you want to share in your community?
- Why?

Creating Teams

- Vision of pastoral ministry
- Selection/training of leadership
- Selection/training of caregivers
- Communicating process and vision
- Design program

Identifying Need

- Identifying needs in the community is relatively easy...
  - Joys & Sorrows
  - Informal networks
  - Religious educator/teachers
  - Administrator
  - Minister
  - Committees/groups
- Collecting the information in one place... not so much.

Skills for Volunteers

Parish Care
- Availability
- Sensitivity
- Follow-through
- Task oriented

Pastoral Care
- Great listener
- Pastoral presence
- Trustworthy
- Commitment over time
- Sense of ministry

Volunteers accepted
No training needed
Selection process
Extensive training needed
Infrastructure to support widespread involvement
- greatest number of volunteers
- greatest number of recipients

Managing Volunteers
- recruitment
- appreciation
- vision-casting

Parish Care Program Design

Collect information about how folks can help
- initial survey
- reaching new members and friends
- system to collect, maintain, update and share this info

Collect information about who needs care
- clear way to gather info from multiple sources
- communication with caregivers
- record-keeping: impact

Parish Care Coordination

- team-based
- coordinator is member of leadership team
- very simple record-keeping
- communication with staff

Pastoral Care Program Design

Significant change in purpose
- doing → being

Significant change in task
- presents → presence

Significant change in relationship
- mutual/social → focus on other

Shifts from Social to Pastoral

external subjects: weather, world & local events
- maintaining congenial atmosphere
- comfort through small talk
- mutual sharing of stories & experiences
- being pleasant, positive
- religion: difference between churches, services, ministers
- people in general

the person
- accepting tension areas
- comfort through facing
- helping person share him/herself
- being understanding, empathetic
- Spirit, God and the holy and our relationship to it
- the person’s significant relationships

Explore the Shifts

Talk about the shifts.
Why are they so important?
Pastoral Care Program Design

All pastoral care team programs need:

- vision of care for congregation
- process for selecting/training
- system for collecting/sharing information about who can help and who needs help
- continuing education/support
- oversight from Minister/trained person

Role of Minister

- minister’s role privileged because of vocation, training, and call
- minister’s own pastoral responsibilities
- minister at center of any pastoral care program
- mandated reporting
- code of professional ethics

Training for Pastoral Caregivers

Led by minister and pastoral/service professionals

- developing pastoral identity
- deep listening
- confidentiality
- identifying emergency situations
- skill-building: life cycles, bereavement and grief, death and dying; hospital and nursing home visits
- boundaries and limit-setting

Boundaries

- clear limits essential to well-being of care recipient and caregiver
- limits must be clear and conveyed up front
- pastoral care team needs practice and ongoing support setting limits
- limits v. boundaries

Explore Boundaries

“Does this mean you won’t be driving me to my doctor’s appointment?”

Establish reasonable expectations about the level of care available.

Talk about the boundaries essential for pastoral caregivers. Why are they so important?
Small Group Ministry Model

Leadership
- leadership recruited and trained by minister
- leadership team of lay ministers to care providers
- minister facilitates monthly meetings in SGM format, which are spiritual not logistical

Care
- assigned by team leader/minister
- follow a small number of people, stays with person
- shares information with team leader
- regular but infrequent meetings with other providers
- opportunities for continuing education

Pastoral Associates Model

Congregational Charge
- broad and explicit lay ministry program
- congregation empowers, sometimes elects

Leadership Team
- application process for leadership team
- portfolio model
- minister facilitates monthly meetings

Care providers
- assignments by team leader
- follow a small number of people, stays with person
- regular but infrequent meetings with other providers
- opportunities for continuing education

Expanding Pastoral Reach

Pastorally-focused gatherings and conversations
- adulting
- caring for elderly parents
- parenting
- facing economic hardship
- end of life

Multigenerational connections
Adult education and faith development
Small group ministry

Resources

Care Ministry

UUA
http://www.uua.org/care/team

UU Congregations
First UU Church of Richmond, VA

First UU Church of San Antonio, TX
http://uusat.org/our-programs/pastoral-care/

UU Congregation of Columbus, IN
http://uucci.org/connection/pastoral-care/

New England Region

Rev. Sue Phillips
or any member of the New England Team
https://www.uua.org/new-england/staff-contacts
617-948-6415
Love will guide us, peace has tried us,
  hope inside us will lead the way
  on the road from greed to giving.
Love will guide us, through the hard night.

If you cannot sing like angels,
  if you cannot speak before thousands,
  you can give from deep within you.
You can change with world with your love.

Love will guide us, peace has tried us,
  hope inside us will lead the way
  on the road from greed to giving.
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