

A.6. Pastoral Care Policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Mercy Services Mission and Philosophy Policy (A.1) talks about Catherine McAuley and subsequent Mercy ministries welcoming among their collaborators people who are neither Sisters of Mercy nor Catholic¹. This inclusive approach applies at Mercy Services and is reflected in the broad range of backgrounds and beliefs of Mercy Services staff, volunteers and clients. This diversity is valued and respected in all areas, including pastoral care.

Pastoral care means acknowledging and nurturing the whole person - their values, spirituality, interests, strengths, humour and aspirations. Pastoral care involves “being with” a person/group - allowing them to share their thoughts, emotions and feel they are being accompanied through their experience.

Pastoral care is expressed in the way a person/organisation spends time with, relates to, and talks about, people. An attitude of pastoral care means seeing each person as deserving of respect, care and encouragement. This attitude can be expressed through:

- providing non-judgemental support and encouragement of each person in his/her religious tradition and/or personal belief system;
- assisting the person in their efforts to find meaning and hope – sometimes with rituals and resources;
- not seeking to change people, but offering them opportunities where, if they wish to, they can make the review and modify the elements of their life; and
- listening to a person as they try to understand and express their thoughts, feelings and experience and providing options for specialist assistance if these are desired by the person.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy and procedure aims to clarify the role of pastoral care as it applies to Mercy Services staff, volunteers, clients and others.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Mercy Services will provide pastoral care to its staff, volunteers, clients, and/or significant people in the life of clients. A pastoral care approach is integral to how all Mercy Services staff should relate to staff, volunteers, clients, and/or significant people in the life of clients.

Additional pastoral care activities and the employment of a specified Pastoral Care Worker will be undertaken to the extent that resources allow.

¹ Mercy Services Mission and Philosophy Policy (A.1) Appendix 3 (Page 8)

4.0 PROCEDURES

a. A spirituality of Pastoral Care at Mercy Services

The use of inclusive language and imagery is a way of demonstrating our respect for the perspective of Mercy Services staff/volunteers and others. This may mean:

- Always “inviting” people to participate in spiritual activities rather than “asking” or “requiring” participation;
- Paying staff for their time spent in approved pastoral/spiritual activities (e.g., funerals, workshops);
- Referring to God using a full range of symbolic terms (not just as “Father”);
- Using rituals that are easy for people to understand – e.g., lighting candles, familiar pictures/objects as a focal point (not using rituals unfamiliar to other faith traditions, such as inviting people to make the hand movements of the “sign of the cross”. Likewise a Mass would only be used where all participants are Catholic);
- using scripture translations and other readings/prayers that have gender neutral language, where appropriate.

When Mercy Services offers spiritual activities/prayer services to an individual this will be done in ways that respect the spiritual expression/perspective of that person.

When Mercy Services offers spiritual activities/prayer services to groups of Mercy Services staff, volunteers, clients, and/or significant people in the life of clients this will be from a Christian perspective using inclusive language and imagery.

As Christianity from a Catholic perspective is inseparable from the history and theological principles of Mercy Services it is acceptable to use these elements within Mercy Services spirituality. This would be done in accordance with the inclusive principle stated above. It may involve:

- Recognising major religious feast days/occasions in Day Centre activities, reflection in the Mercy Services newsletter;
- Inviting the Bishop or other Catholic leader to bless or lead prayers at the opening of new buildings/programs;
- Holding an annual remembrance service for those who have died in November (a month traditionally used within Catholicism to remember those who have died);
- Using at least one reading from the Bible during prayer services²;
- Sending cards with words and images that acknowledge the religious significance of Christmas.

² Mercy Services Mission and Philosophy Policy (A.1) Appendix 3 (Page 8)

b. The role of the Pastoral Care Worker

When Mercy Services employs a Pastoral Care Worker this person will have qualifications/experience in Pastoral Care or equivalent background.

This position will assist identify and address the spiritual and emotional needs of Mercy Services staff, volunteers, clients/residents, and their families/support people. The extent of this assistance will be largely determined by the number of hours for which the Pastoral Care position(s) is funded. The first priority will be to assist those in palliative care and those distressed by the death of a Mercy Services staff, volunteer, or client/resident. Pastoral care will whenever appropriate link those needing assistance with other more long-term pastoral care options. Should there be sufficient time, the Pastoral Care position may provide additional assistance including:

- assist clients/residents with disability and life stage adjustments;
- organise/conduct funerals/liturgies/prayer services as needed, including an annual service in November celebrating the life and the memory of all our clients, volunteers and staff who have died during the past twelve months;
- assisting Mercy Services staff develop their skills and confidence in providing pastoral care within the context and of their particular positions;
- recruit, train and support a team of volunteers Pastoral Care Associates to assist in the provision of pastoral care by Mercy Services;
- be available for discussions with Mercy Services staff/volunteers on emotional and spiritual issues; and
- organise opportunities for staff to reflect on the significance of their work and recharge their energy.

Pastoral Care will be provided in ways that are respectful of all religions and other spiritual perspectives while at the same time presenting the particular theological and spiritual traditions of Mercy Services.

c. Relationship between Pastoral Care Worker and the pastoral care role of all Mercy Services staff

A pastoral care approach should be an element of how all Mercy Services staff relate to others. All staff should take a holistic approach to clients and treat the client as a person deserving dignity and respect.

d. Distinction between Pastoral Care and Employee Assistance Program

Pastoral care involves acknowledging and caring for the emotional and spiritual needs of people. The Pastoral Care Worker has limited time and expertise in dealing with some matters, particularly those requiring a

professional psychological intervention. In general, the Pastoral Care Worker's will encourage Mercy Services staff to use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in addition or instead of being supported by the Pastoral Care Worker.

Mercy Services staff can make use a free and confidential EAP for professional counseling regarding work or personal issues. This service is paid for by Mercy Services and supplied by Hunter New England Area Health Service. Counsellors are available by phoning 4921 2822 to hear a recorded message listing the counsellors names and contact telephone numbers. The choice of counsellor is up to the Mercy Services staff person. Mercy Services staff simply phone the counsellor of their choice and make an appointment.

e. Relationship between the Pastoral Care Worker and Ministers of Religion

In general the Pastoral Care Worker will assist Mercy Services staff/volunteers/ clients to seek assistance from a Minister of Religion with their spiritual needs in addition or instead of being supported by the Pastoral Care Worker. This will enable the person to receive ongoing assistance which is linked to, and resourced by, their chosen spiritual tradition.

5.0 REFERENCES

1. Australian Standards	a) nil
2. Legislation	a) nil
3. Professional guidelines	a) nil
4. Codes of Practice	a) nil
5. Codes of Ethics	<p>a) Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/1201</p> <p>b) Australian Psychological Association Code of Ethics http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Code_Ethics_2007.pdf</p> <p>c) The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Registration Requirements http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx</p> <p>d) Integrity in the Service of the Church https://www.catholic.org.au/media-centre/media-releases/cat_view/10-organisations/38-national-committee-for-professional-standards</p> <p>e) Mercy Services Code of Conduct</p>
6. Evidence	<p>a) Susan Sullivan (2011) Current Issues for Catholic Health Australia Members in the Provision of Pastoral Care http://www.cha.org.au/images/PCPaper_IssuesPaperFINAL.pdf</p>
7. Mercy Services Values	a) Justice, Respect, Care, Unity, Service

6.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A.01 Mission and Philosophy
- A.03 Code of Conduct – Staff/Volunteers

- C.01 Management Roles and Responsibilities
- C.02 Strategic Planning
- C.03 Operational Planning
- C.04 Program performance and monitoring
- C.05 Quality Improvement
- C.06 Risk management
- E.01 Service Guarantee
- E.03 Meeting Individual Needs
- E.13 Cultural Diversity
- E.20 Responding to deterioration in client health
- F.04 Learning and development
- F.06 Management of Poor Conduct or Performance

7.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH STANDARDS

Aged Care Accreditation Standards	Home Care Standards	Disability Standards	EQUIP Standards
1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.9, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 4.2, 4.3	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 5.2, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.2	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.2.2, 1.6.3, 2.2.2, 2.2.5, 3.1.3, 3.1.5

8.0 DOCUMENT CHANGES RECORD

Dates of change	Section altered	Natures of changes made
20/04/2011	all	Policy created
10/10/2012	All Sections	Organisation name updated.
02/11/2015	a) 1.0 Introduction/Background b) 4.0.a A spirituality of Pastoral Care at Mercy Services c) 4.0.b The role of the Pastoral Care Worker d) 4.0.c Relationship between Pastoral Care Worker and the pastoral care role of all Mercy Services staff e) 4.0.d Distinction between Pastoral Care and Employee Assistance Program f) 4.0.e Relationship between the Pastoral Care Worker and Ministers of Religion g) 5.0 References h) 6.0 Other related policies i) 7.0 Relationship to Standards	a) Minor changes and additions b) Re-order paragraphs and add a paragraph on pastoral care to individuals c) Add more detail (primarily from the Pastoral care position description) d) Re-written to make more concise e) Minor re-wording including allowing for Pastoral Care Worker to support staff in addition to EAP f) Minor re-wording including allowing for Pastoral Care Worker to support staff in addition to Minister of Religion g) Additional references included h) Additional policies referenced i) Added Aged Care and updated Disability Standards
Review due 02/11/2018		