



THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS EVERY
PASTORAL CARE FACILITATOR NEEDS
TO KNOW ABOUT MANAGING PERSONAL...

Crisis

TIP SHEET



Disclosures

From time to time, pastoral care facilitators may receive disclosures that require an immediate 'duty of care' (providing protection and safety to individuals at risk). Each organisation should have their own critical incident guidelines to follow. While not an exhaustive list, disclosures may include the following:

SUICIDAL IDEATION	SELF-HARM	CHILD ABUSE
Thoughts of ending one's life. It may be a fleeting thought or well planned	Causing injury or mutilation to one's body, typically in the form of cutting/burning	Physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse, neglect or commercial exploitation
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	SERIOUS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY	HOMICIDAL IDEATION
Spousal abuse, whether physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or financial	Reporting of a crime that's either been committed or is about to be perpetrated	Thoughts of killing someone (whether an idle threat or thought-out plan)

What is a personal crisis?

Crises typically manifest when a combination of five critical factors occur.

- 1 A person's challenges (e.g. mental, emotional, physical, relational, financial, moral and/or spiritual obstacles) become insurmountable.
- 2 A person feels their normal ways of handling or dealing with problems have become untenable.
- 3 A person feels as though they have exhausted their resources or exceeded their social support provisions.
- 4 A person's emotions have spiralled out of control leaving them with overwhelming sadness, grief, hopelessness or panic.
- 5 A person's thoughts become disoriented, disorganised and confused, often resulting in concrete thinking (e.g. black and white, all or nothing).

Responding to Personal Crisis

Generally, when someone discloses that they're in crisis, beyond actively listening to their concern, consider engaging the following action steps:

STAY CALM	VALIDATE	ENQUIRE	ANALYSE	ENCOURAGE
Remain open and non-judgemental; be supportive and stay calm	Validate concerns; be patient and empathetic	Make direct enquiries and encourage transparency	Conduct a risk analysis; evaluate threat to self or others	Encourage and where applicable, report or refer professionally



NOTE:

Talking about self-harm/suicide or domestic violence/abuse, does not encourage a person to start thinking about harming themselves. Rather, it encourages and enhances personal engagement. If you feel you're out of your depth, immediately enlist the support of a senior Pastoral Care facilitator and seek professional advice.

Responding to serious disclosure

In addition to relying on your organisation's policies, relevant professional guidelines or legal requirements (in your jurisdiction), consider the following checklists for Suicidal Ideation and Domestic Violence.

SUICIDAL IDEATION	
✓	Gather background information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family history of suicide • Personal history (i.e. past attempts)
✓	Identify current risk factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current drug/alcohol use • Any specific plans • Harmful or lethal means (resources to carry out a plan) • Likelihood of impulsive behaviour
✓	Identify current protective factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, spouse, parent support • Upcoming events (i.e. graduation or birthday/anniversary celebrations)
✓	Seek immediate advice from, or refer to, a Medical or Mental Health Professional
✓	Provide phone numbers of regional Suicide Prevention or Crisis Support Hotline

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ✓ **Create a safe disclosure environment**
 - Free from distractions (i.e. children)
 - Private setting to avoid hesitation or embarrassment if they become upset
- ✓ **Gather background information**
 - Duration of concerns
 - Past incidents or occurrences (i.e. date/time/location/witnesses)
- ✓ **Ascertain whether there is ongoing risk, and if required, create a safely plan**
- ✓ **Seek immediate advice from and/or refer to local law enforcement, legal aid or Crisis Support Hotline**
- ✓ **Emphasise that domestic violence/abuse (whether verbal, emotional, physical or sexual) should never be tolerated. Violence is always an unacceptable way to resolve issues in a relationship. No one is deserving of mistreatment (they are not to blame)**



NOTE:

Be aware of and communicate legal confidentiality requirements or limitations in your area. Keep careful detailed notes (especially if confidentiality must be broken in order to provide a 'Duty of Care'). Write everything down. Be sure to date and sign your notes.

