The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care
Manitoba Region
Strategic Plan

Promoting Excellence
In Spiritual Health Care and Counselling Practice, Education, and Research
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Introduction

The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC/ACSS) is a national organization with regional associations that is concerned with a holistic approach to health, well-being and personal development, with a special focus on spiritual and religious care.

CASC/ACSS is an inclusive association committed to the professional education, certification and support of people involved in spiritual health care, and counselling. CASC/ACSS provides educational programs for people who are preparing to become spiritual health practitioners, chaplains, and community-based spiritual care professionals (i.e. ministers, elders, rabbis, etc). CASC/ACSS provides additional education and certification for supervisors and specialists.

The vision, purpose, mission, goals, and values of CASC Manitoba are rooted in those of the national organization. At the same time, the regional association informs and contributes to the life of CASC/ACSS throughout the country. We deeply appreciate the richness of this interrelationship.

Purpose

*CASC/ACSS is committed to education, certification and research in support of spiritual care professionals in their practice of spiritual care, counselling, and education.*

Mission

*To promote excellence in spiritual care and counselling practice, education, and research.*
Background

Who is CASC MB serving?
CASC Manitoba members serve the public throughout the province. Spiritual Health Care Practitioners work in a wide variety of public and private institutions, including the health care system, where they are active in tertiary, acute, palliative, and long term care in both rural and urban settings. They also serve in corrections, counselling, educational institutions, and many faith communities.

What services does CASC provide in Manitoba?
CASC Manitoba members are skilled and competent professionals providing high standards of service in multiple fields, including crisis support, advance care planning, end of life care, addictions, mental health, palliative care, ethics, policy development, transitional care, and community programs. An integral part of multi-disciplinary teams, they bring unique spiritual perspectives that contribute to the holistic well-being of individuals and institutions.

How does CASC deliver spiritual care services?
The primary focus of spiritual health interventions is the human interaction and compassionate presence of the practitioner. We strive to listen deeply to the pain and joy of those around us.

CASC’s Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and supervised training programs instil competencies and produce spiritual health practitioners with a clear professional identity as members of allied health teams.

Many organizations and institutions also benefit from countless hours of volunteer spiritual and religious care that is supervised and supported by CASC/ACSS certified practitioners.

What impact is CASC generating in Manitoba?
CASC Manitoba is a significant partner with different levels of government, community agencies, health care facilities, correctional centres, educational, and faith communities. While keeping the costs to the system to a minimum, CASC Manitoba is influencing policy and building capacity in the midst of increasing social, political, ethical, and legal challenges.

At the national level, CASC Manitoba members contribute extensively to the continuing development and growth of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care as a clear voice advocating for the safe and competent provision of spiritual care throughout Canada.
Why a Strategic Plan?

In the fall of 2015, a delegation of CASC Manitoba members met to take stock of the current status of the organization in the province, and to envision the most strategic pathway ahead. They discussed the base values guiding the association, examined its strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, and emerged with some key themes to guide CASC Manitoba activities in the months and years to come.

The idea to develop a CASC Manitoba Strategic Plan was born out of a growing appreciation of the challenges and opportunities facing the association in our region. The regional organization is deeply indebted to the hard work and passion for excellence in spiritual practice and education of those whose vision has placed CASC on the map as the standard in spiritual care.

However, budgetary concerns and shifting priorities of employers are placing the future of the organization at a delicate juncture.

CASC MB Strategic Plan

There is much promise in the competence of existing and emerging leaders who are eager to help shape the future of CASC MB as a major player in Manitoba’s spiritual health arena.

The CASC Manitoba Strategic Plan is aligned with the Provincial Strategic Action Plan, and CASC members sit on high-level committees and working groups for the Manitoba government and the provincial regional health authorities. There are multiple avenues for significant ongoing collaboration.

To that end, this strategic plan outlines four key areas in which to focus our efforts: Professionalism; Marketing, Promotion and Advocacy; Research; Clinical Education.
Vision, Mission and Values

The vision of CASC Manitoba is to provide excellent spiritual health care and education that is person-centered, accessible, diverse, ethical, sustainable, compassionate, and evidence-based.

The national organization is formally “committed to education, certification and research in support of spiritual care professionals in their practice of spiritual care, counselling and education,” and exists “to promote excellence in spiritual care and counselling practice, education and research.”

CASC and its regional bodies work to:

- Set standards for and monitor professional practice, education and certification.
- Accredit educational centers in a variety of settings.
- Prepare persons through competent supervision for professions in spiritual health care, counselling and education.
- Provide a network of support and encouragement for its members.¹

¹ Quotes in this section are from www.spiritualcare.ca
Values

The principles and values that guide this strategic plan begin with love, a clear understanding that we are loving and beloved at the same time.

We celebrate a deep awareness of our connection with a source outside of ourselves (the divine, nature, the potential of the human spirit), an affection that enables a wideness of understanding of the human condition—a sense of unity that makes us human and leads to loving action.

We value our sense of belonging, and of acceptance as we recognize that every human being is worthy of love in spite of brokenness. This awareness leads to a sense of collaboration and compassionate service. We welcome opportunities for growth.

Other core values include integrity, healthy spirituality, generosity, transformation, and wisdom.

Highlights of SWOT analysis

Three strengths form the foundation of the organization:

- A strong focus on competencies, both in training and in practice.
- Continuing professional development and accountability.
- A sense of collegiality and support among local members and the wider national community.

Four limitations pose challenges:

- Limited cultural and faith diversity among members.
- Lack of widespread institutional understanding and support for CPE and CASC certification.
- Inadequate resources for marketing, promotion and advocacy.
- Budget concerns and cutbacks in health care facilities and government structures are affecting CPE education.

Four Opportunities give rise to optimism:

- Collaborative efforts are underway with stakeholders on standards and scope of practice for Spiritual Health Services Practitioners.
- Collaboration in the implementation of Manitoba’s Spiritual Health Care Strategic Plan.
- Opportunity to define and implement guidelines for the role Spiritual Health Care Practitioners on hot topics (e.g. Medical Aid in Dying, and Advance Care Planning).
- Ongoing collaboration with partners and growing recognition of the importance of Spiritual Health Services across disciplines, such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Social Workers, and Mental Health Professionals.
Priorities derived from SWOT Analysis

1) Professionalism.

Spiritual Health Care as a profession is in the formative stages. As such, its scope of practice is not widely understood, and it is frequently mischaracterized as primarily providing religious services. A lack of understanding of Spiritual Health Care Practitioners as professionals in the workplace diminishes the credibility of the profession, and creates unnecessary risks for clients and institutions.

It is equally troubling to know that credentials and standards established by our professional association are not currently required for many spiritual health positions.

To address the strategic goal of advancing the professional status of Spiritual Health Services, CASC Manitoba will enhance its efforts to:

- Communicate the scope of practice of qualified Spiritual Health Practitioners, so that standards are known, understood, and respected by CASC members and their employers.
- Consult on the development of standardized job descriptions and requirements for effective staffing of spiritual health positions in the province.
- Increase efforts to provide quality spiritual health care education for all Manitobans (rural, corrections, military, law enforcement, government, educational institutions, industry/business) in ways that are accessible, diverse, evidence-based, compassionate, ethical, and sustainable.
- Seek ways to ensure greater diversity of spiritual expression among members, including spiritual, religious, and humanist.

2) Marketing, Promotion and Advocacy.

Spiritual Health Care Services will benefit when members, employers, and professional colleagues better understand the essential value of spiritual care, the capabilities of practitioners, and the range of services within our circle of influence.

To address the strategic goal of increasing the communication capacity and expanding the influence of Spiritual Health Services, CASC Manitoba will enhance its efforts to:

- Continue to seek broader engagement with members by communicating regularly, highlighting benefits, developing education resources, providing mentoring services, and maintaining an interesting and informative online presence.
• Work collaboratively with relevant networks to provide consistent messaging geared appropriately to various audiences (members; industry professionals; general public).

• Provide education for professional colleagues in workplaces.

• Promote broader community engagement through effective use of social media, newspaper articles, advertising, and collaborative conversations. Highlight the inclusive and diverse nature of services and clientele.

3) Research.

Evidence-based research has become an important tool in efforts to increase the footprint of Spiritual Health Services. We can learn more about leading practices by drawing on studies conducted throughout the world, and contribute by doing follow-up work in our fields.

To address the strategic goal of developing the base of research that supports Spiritual Health Services, CASC Manitoba will enhance its efforts to:

• Envision CASC Manitoba as a research hub that will access work conducted elsewhere, communicate relevant information to members, and encourage local research initiatives.

• Assist members by highlighting helpful material, promoting education opportunities, assisting with funding, encouraging publishing efforts.

• Collaborate with other professions and establish links with research associations.
4) Clinical Education

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is the CASC/ACSS-accredited method of training with a well-established track record of producing highly professional Spiritual Health Practitioners. Education standards include a Master’s degree, four units of clinical training, a five-year peer review cycle, a Code of Ethics, and accountability processes.

CPE is currently in a transitional stage in Manitoba. A new group of qualified supervisors is emerging; new methods of delivering the education are being envisioned; support from host institutions is not assured. CASC also recognizes an opportunity to develop a more spiritually and ethnically diverse group of practitioners, while students’ needs for more flexible study arrangements pose further challenges.

To address the strategic goal of delivering accredited CPE training throughout the province, CASC Manitoba will enhance its efforts to:

- Continue with succession planning so that qualified supervisors are entering the system.
- Identify, develop, and approach potential new markets. Emphasize recruitment by having members identify promising candidates.
- Develop ways to make CPE education more accessible to diverse students, and increase retention by providing greater flexibility in training opportunities and less onerous processes.
- Invite broader participation, collaborate with stakeholders and the wider community, and remain open to ongoing restructuring of the program in ways that continue to meet CASC standards.
Conclusion

This strategic plan condenses some of the conversations occurring among a variety of CASC members, including CPE supervisors — meetings driven by a desire to see the delivery of Spiritual Health Services more firmly embedded in institutions throughout the province.

It is our hope that CASC members will seriously engage the ideas expressed in this document and become involved in the process of shaping the landscape of Spiritual Health Care in our province.

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