A GUIDE TO THE VIRTUAL VISITING SEMINAR

The Virtual Visiting Seminar is a teaching tool that is used to replace the Verbatim Seminar in a Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. A Virtual Visit occurs when the chaplain intern conducts a pastoral visit with a volunteer who is recruited to assist the chaplain intern in the development of pastoral care skills.

This guide is based on the assumption that there are six chaplain interns in the Unit. If there are fewer or more chaplain interns adjustments to the number of volunteers and space requirement may be needed. This is assuming an intensive unit of CPE. For an extended Unit one session a week works best.

RESOURCES:

SPACE REQUIREMENTS: (Ideally the following but not absolutely necessary)

Three separate rooms with one-way mirrors and videotaping capacity. (If there are no rooms with one-way mirrors available it is possible to have the observer sit in the same room as the visit. The observer should not be in the sight-line of either the volunteer or the chaplain intern.)

A 'control room' with monitors to allow the Supervisor to watch each of the visits as they happen. (If there are no connections to allow for the Supervisor to observe away from the visit the Supervisor may also sit with the observer in the same room as the visit.)

Waiting area for the volunteers.

A room for the chaplain interns to organize before the first visit.

An area where the chaplain interns can review their tapes

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS:

A person to host the volunteers when they arrive and while they are waiting between visits. (This is not necessary but it enhances the experience of warmth for the volunteers and helps in future recruiting.) The supervisor can full fill this function or recruit a volunteer to do it.
Volunteers who are willing to be the subject of a pastoral visit.

SUPPLIES:

Each chaplain intern should have four blank videotapes at the start of the unit.

Coffee or drinks for the volunteers (Not essential but a friendly touch).

Parking vouchers or taxi chits for the volunteers to get to the sessions (Whatever it takes to keep the expenses limited for the volunteers).

THE VISIT:

FORMAT:

A. Chaplain interns work in pairs

B. Chaplain interns work with whole group

C. Shadow visiting

PROCESS:

A. The chaplain interns work in pairs for the first four weeks of the Unit.

Each session is scheduled for 2 hours.

The first session is on Friday of the first week of the Unit.

For the following three weeks there are three two-hour sessions each week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday).

There are three chaplain intern pairs and there are three volunteers at each session.

One of the chaplain interns watches his/her peer conduct a pastoral visit on a
volunteer for approximately 20 - 25 minutes.

The peer observer and the volunteer provide feedback to the chaplain intern who conducted the pastoral visit. It is the peer observer's responsibility to animate the feedback session. After the volunteer has given his/her feedback the volunteer leaves the room and the two peers continue the feedback session. (See Appendix)

The Chaplain Supervisor may join the feedback session at any point.

After the feedback session the peers exchange roles with the observer conducting the visit and the other peer observing.

The volunteers rotate to one of the other pair of peers and a second pastoral visit takes place.

The visit and the feedback session are video taped.

Each visit and feedback session should be completed within a one-hour time frame.

At each new session the peers rotate amongst themselves so that they work with a different peer. Over 10 sessions each peer will work twice with each other peer.

Each chaplain intern selects one visit each week to analyze in writing. The analysis is very similar to the analysis section of the Verbatim. (See Appendix) This written analysis is submitted to the supervisor for comments and/or discussion.

B. During the next three weeks (Weeks five, six and seven) of the Unit there are two two-hour sessions scheduled each week (Tuesday and Thursday).

One volunteer is recruited and one student conducts a pastoral visit while the supervisor and all the peers observe behind the one-way mirror. (If there is no one-way mirror available those observing can sit in the same room as the visit but out of sight-line of either the volunteer or the intern.)

Each pastoral visit lasts 45 - 50 minutes.

After the visit all the peers, supervisor and the volunteer provide feedback to the chaplain intern conducting the visit. Very similar to a verbatim seminar except the human subject is live and everyone has witnessed the visit.

The supervisor facilitates the feedback session.

After the volunteer has given his/her feedback the supervisor thanks the volunteer
and helps them leave the room and leave the centre.

The feedback session continues with the peer group and the supervisor. The whole session including feedback is video taped.

The total time for these sessions is up to two hours.

C. For weeks eight, nine and ten of the Unit, the supervisor accompanies each chaplain intern individually as they do their ward visits.

The supervisor goes into the patient's room with the chaplain intern and observes the interaction with the patient/family.

The chaplain intern chooses which patients to visit. The patients may be new or someone that the chaplain intern has previously visited.

The chaplain intern introduces the supervisor as a colleague who works in another area of the hospital. Sometimes the patient engages the supervisor but most of the time the chaplain intern is able to carry on a conversation with very little reference to the supervisor. Either way it is a good learning opportunity for the chaplain intern.

After the chaplain intern has visited 2 or 3 patients the supervisor and the chaplain intern go to a quiet area where they debrief. The supervisor gives the chaplain intern feedback on what has been observed.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are recruited before the Unit begins.

Thirty-six volunteers are needed during the Unit. It is advisable to have a couple of volunteers that are willing to be called at the last minute in case of illness by a scheduled volunteer.

Volunteers are recruited through a number of sources: local churches, the community volunteer bureau, the hospital volunteer department, advertise on the local TV channel or word of mouth. One year's volunteers can recommend family or friends. Volunteers can be recruited anywhere.

Keep in contact with potential sources of volunteers. Formally thank everyone who gives names of potential volunteers.
When advertising or setting up a booth at a volunteer fair use the hospital/university logo.

Never push anyone into volunteering. The soft approach works best.

Be up front with expectations. Volunteers need to know that they are coming to help potential clergy learn how to do a pastoral visit. The volunteers come with the expressed intention of being teachers.

Volunteers need to know that they will participate in a pastoral visit where they may deal with personal issues. The volunteers need to know what the chaplain interns are studying.

Volunteers need to know that another chaplain intern will observe the visit and the visit is videotaped. Volunteers need to know that they are expected to give honest feedback to the chaplain intern doing the pastoral visit.

Volunteers need to know that the visit is kept confidential and that the focus of learning is on the chaplain intern.

Volunteers need to know that the chaplain intern and/or the supervisor are the only people to see the videotape. At the end of the Unit all videotaped visits are destroyed to ensure confidentiality.

Volunteers need to know that the videotapes do not leave the learning centre but are viewed on site. The chaplain interns are not permitted to take the videotapes home. This is to ensure confidentiality.

Volunteers in the pair section (A) need to know that the visit is expected to last 20 - 25 minutes. The volunteers will do two visits. The total time commitment is approximately two hours.

Volunteers in the group section (B) need to know that the visit is expected to last 45 - 50 minutes. They will do one visit and the total time commitment is approximately one and half hours.

Mail out appointment cards to the volunteers to confirm the time and place of the visits. Make reminder phone calls the day before the volunteers are expected.

If the volunteer needs parking or a taxi chit to assist them in coming to your centre, offer the appropriate assistance.

It is important to assess potential volunteers and do not accept them if your instincts tell you not to. It is easier to thank them before you start than to deal with problems later. Exclude anyone who wants to convert the chaplain interns to their point of
view or wants to preach their own 'gospel'.

Always accept responsibility for problems: the customer is always right.

Have the volunteers sign a consent form when they agree to be a part of the chaplain intern's learning. (See Appendix)

**PROCEDURE:**

At the beginning of each new Unit the chaplain interns gather three quarters of an hour before the volunteers on the first day of the Virtual Visiting Seminar to familiarize them with the physical layout. The chaplain interns need to know which rooms they will be using, how to arrange the chairs, how to adjust the lighting, how to start the videotaping and where the observer will sit.

The supervisor or a designated host welcomes the volunteers and seats them in a waiting area. If coffee/drinks are available they are offered.

Before the first visit of each session the chaplain interns decide which peer is working with whom, who is conducting the first visit and who is observing and which volunteer they will work with first and which volunteer they will work with for the second visit. It is important that each of the volunteers rotate to a different student pair after the first visit. The supervisor supplies the names of the volunteers and ensure that all the chaplain interns know with whom they are working and which rooms they are using.

The chaplain intern meets the volunteer in the waiting room and introduces himself or herself to the volunteer just prior to the visit.

The chaplain intern escorts the volunteer to the interview room.

The chaplain intern ensures that the videotaping is in place and the tape started.

The chaplain intern explains to the volunteer exactly what is to occur. Chaplain interns tell the volunteer that this is a pastoral visit. That the visit is observed by a chaplain intern peer, that after the visit the chaplain intern peer and the volunteer will give feedback on the visit, and that the whole session is videotaped for the benefit of the chaplain intern's learning. The chaplain intern assures the volunteer that everything is kept confidential.

The chaplain intern thanks the volunteer at the end of the visit and invites his/her peer into the room for the feedback session.
The chaplain intern who observed facilitates the feedback session. (See Appendix) The peer asks the volunteer to share their experience with the visit and helps the volunteer articulate their observations and feelings.

When the volunteer has given all of their feedback the peer responsible for the feedback session thanks the volunteer and helps them back to the waiting area.

If this is the first visit of the day the peer reminds the volunteer that they will be working with a second set of chaplain interns who will conduct a second pastoral visit.

After the last visit the supervisor or the host asks the volunteers how things went. Ask for feedback from the volunteers on everything from rooms to how the people are enjoying their visits. The host thanks the volunteers for their time and asks them if they would be willing to be contacted in the future for another teaching session with a different group of students.

If one of the volunteers is upset or has some unfinished issues they should be given the opportunity to meet with the supervisor to help them find closure. The time with the supervisor could occur immediately following the last session or at a convenient time for the volunteer and the supervisor.

SUPERVISOR:

The supervisor rotates so that he/she can observe each of the chaplain interns. At the beginning of the unit the supervisor watches each of the chaplain interns in rotation. By the third session the supervisor has seen one visit by each of the chaplain interns. This helps the supervisor understand each chaplain intern's level of competency. Once the baseline is established the supervisor may use other criteria to choose which visits to follow.

*If this is the first time the Virtual Visiting Seminar has been used the Supervisor may ask a volunteer to come prior to the beginning of the Unit and allow the Supervisor to conduct a pastoral visit in the setting which the chaplain interns will use. This gives the Supervisor first hand experience with the process.*
APPENDIX #1

Your feedback is important to chaplain intern's learning. If you feel comfortable giving verbal feedback that would be very much appreciated. You can make written comments of the back. Thank you for your help. This is invaluable for the chaplain interns and their ultimate effectiveness as visitors.

Chaplain Intern __________________________ Volunteer
(Optional) __________________________

Date ______________

INTRODUCTIONS:

1. Did the chaplain intern introduce himself or herself to you?

2. Did the chaplain intern clearly tell you who they were?

EXPLANATIONS:

1. Did the chaplain intern explain the session to you clearly?

2. Did the chaplain intern tell you the time limits of the visit?

3. Did the chaplain intern explain the videotaping and observer?

4. Did the chaplain intern invite feedback from you after the visit?
LISTENING SKILLS:

1. Did the chaplain intern maintain eye contact?
2. Did the chaplain intern smile?
3. Did the chaplain intern sit too far away? Too close?
4. Did you feel the chaplain intern understood what you said?
5. Were there too many questions? Too few?
6. Was the chaplain intern gentle or probing?
7. Whose agenda was followed? Yours or the chaplain intern's?

COMFORT MEASURES:

1. Did the chaplain intern make you feel at easy?
2. Did you feel comfortable with the chaplain intern?
3. What helped you feel comfortable with the chaplain intern?
4. Did you trust the chaplain intern? Why? Why not?

BENEFITS:

1. Did you feel better or worse after the visit?
2. What would have made the visit better from your point of view?
3. Would you go to this person again if you had something to work out?
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I understand that as a volunteer in the Clinical Pastoral Education course I will participate in pastoral interview sessions. A pastoral visit may include personal issues.

I understand that all the sessions in which I will participate will be videotaped for teaching and learning purposes. I understand that all personal information, which I share during these pastoral visits, will be kept in confidence. I understand that I may discontinue the pastoral visit at any time should I feel uncomfortable.

I will immediately contact the supervisor of the Clinical Pastoral Education program should I have any concerns or questions about my participation in the volunteer program.

I am willing to participate in the pastoral teaching program.
VOLUNTEER RECORD

Date: __________________ Phone: __________________

Mr. _____ Mrs. _____ Miss _____ Ms _____ Dr _____ Rev _____

__________________________________________________________________

Last Name (please print)     Initial     Given Name

__________________________________________________________________

Street Address
APPENDIX #4

ANALYSIS:

Theological Implications: How would you interpret the significance of this person's experience, using Christian religious symbols? Suggest scripture passages or stories, which might be useful resources for preaching a helpful sermon to persons like this who might be in your congregation. Does his/her religious faith seem to foster healthy or unhealthy processes? How do human relationships influence religious faith and practice? What is the relationship between intellectual, emotional, physical, social and vocational factors in this person's religious experience? Any new insights into the relationship between psychotherapy and the church's ministry of reconciliation? What realities of the Christian faith were communicated to this person, and how?

The Person: What was the presenting problem? Did any other problems emerge? How has she/he handled hopelessness, dependency, anger, fear, embarrassment, pride, etc.? Do conscience, impulses, or external factors rule the person? Any clear symptoms of neurosis, psychosis, character disorder, or grief? How would you describe his/her personal maturity? What strengths and weaknesses do you find in him/her, which may be germane in dealing with his/her problems?

Relationship: Describe the degree of rapport that is established, and account for it. In his/her attitude toward you does she/he seem ingratiating, manipulating, critical, dependent, hostile, etc.? What does she/he seek from you? Do you see any evidence of 'transference' in this relationship? How do you feel about him/her? Did you seek to manipulate him/her, direct him/her, understand him/her, or did your behaviour suggest indifference, anxiety, or rejection of him/her? Any evidence of the counter-transference phenomenon? What do you feel you can do or would like to do for him/her? Were age, sex, or status factors influential in this relationship? Did you feel comfortable with the problem and/or emotions evident here?

Techniques: Summarize any tendencies noted in your own responses, taken singly and together. Advise-giving, clarifying, defensive, sermonizing, direction-changing, informative, interpretive, minimizing, structuring, probing, reassuring,
understanding, personally-involved, etc. type of responses. Did you experience positive feelings toward yourself? Which parts of the contact were most difficult to handle and why? How would you do it differently next time? How personally 'involved' did you become? Did it help or get in the way? Should any referral be considered? To whom? Why?

APPENDIX #5

ROLE OF THE OBSERVER

The goal of the feedback session is to provide as much information to the intern so they will improve their listening skills, their theological analysis and their goal setting. If you can create an atmosphere of trust then critical feedback will be heard and become a learning experience. The value of this experience is in the learning and if everyone were skilled before we started there would be no need to provide this opportunity. We are here not to prove how good we are but to learn.

1. You are responsible to guide the discussion after the visit is finished.

2. Ask the intern doing the visit to outline their goal for the visit. Ask the intern if they felt that they accomplished their goal.

3. Involve the volunteer in the feedback discussion.

4. Be sensitive to the needs of the volunteer as well as those of the intern. After the volunteer has provided their reflections, thank them and escort them back to the waiting area. If this was the first visit remind them that there will be another visit with a different group of chaplain interns.

5. Provide your feedback to the intern in terms of listening skills.

6. Provide feedback and initiate a discussion around theological concerns.

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