

# **Guidelines for Spiritual Directors and Trainers of Spiritual Directors**

## **Background**

For over 20 years the Retreat Association has been hosting regular conferences for those involved in training spiritual directors. Arising out of the 2013 conference a working party was formed to create a set of Spiritual Direction Guidelines published in 2016. These have become a living document that is discussed and revised as appropriate at conferences. A link to this document can be found [here](#).

## **Towards Training Guidelines**

At the 2019 conference a working party to develop guidelines for spiritual direction training was established. The intention of these guidelines is to assist those who might want to establish a new course and also to enable those who have established courses to have something that helps them review and revise their courses.

## **Key Principle of the Working Party**

The working party has had three meetings so far. A key principle undergirding its work is that the guidelines should help ensure that the process of training spiritual directors is congruous with the process of spiritual direction itself. Thus the training should be an experience akin to spiritual direction and minimise ways of working that might be counter to the approach of spiritual direction.

## **Key areas of focus**

The shape of the guidelines that is emerging has three aspects.

1. **Pre-requisites:** Identifying the key requirements of participants and the implications of these on a training programme.
2. **Course process and content:** A framework for thinking about the content and processes that enable the appropriate development of participants.
3. **Expected outcomes:** a description of the dispositions and abilities that someone who has completed a course should manifest in order to be considered ready to accompany others. The Spiritual Direction Guidelines Section D provides a broad description of this.

## **Ongoing Dialogue**

The working party is interested to hear from those involved in spiritual direction and the training of spiritual directors on any matters that might be helpful or informative as we continue to develop the guidelines.

The bi-annual Spiritual Directors Training Conference will provide the ongoing forum for consulting and refining these guidelines.

## **SD Training Working Party:**

Lois Baldwin (Coventry ecumenical SD Course), Susanne Carlsson (Rochester and Canterbury Dioceses), Cis Delmege (Portsmouth Diocese), Ruth Grant (St Antony's Priory), Nick Helm (Hereford Diocese), Fiona Di Leo (St Albans Diocese), Alison MacTier (Retreat Association), Hilary Spong (Cornwall ecumenical SD Course)

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## **Spiritual Direction Trainers Conference 9-10 February 2021**

An important aim of this conference is to facilitate the sharing of practice in our courses in a way that enables reflection, mutual support and development.

As part of this, we are going to ask participants to bring their responses to the following five questions.

1. What are the requirements that participants are expected to meet in order to participate? (This might be particular experiences, prior training, qualities, etc...)
2. What effect do you intend your course to have on participants?
3. Describe the dispositions of a spiritual director that your course seeks to develop.
4. Describe how you develop discernment in participants.
5. What would be the five most significant features of your course's content and process?

*SD Training Working Party November 2020*