

Centers for Spiritual Living

Department of Ethics and Professionalism Co-Chairs

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*Serving Our Member Communities
with Love, Integrity and Wisdom*

You Can Avoid an Ethics Complaint



From Our President

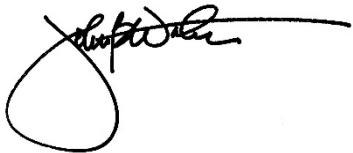
All activities involving ethics and professionalism reside within the Office of the President of Centers for Spiritual Living. The professional standards for our Ministers, Practitioners, and lay leaders reflect our commitment to Divine Love, respect, and accountability in the world. Our intention is that these standards be implemented always through spiritual practice, open dialogue, and the recognition of Divine Presence.

When our Licensing & Credentialing Department receives a communication calling into question the conduct of a Minister, Practitioner, or member of a Center's elected or appointed leadership, the information is reviewed by our Ethics and Professionalism Committee Co-Chairs. A determination is made as to whether an ethics violation appears to have occurred, and how that possible violation would best be resolved in accordance with our organization's policies and procedures.

What is an ethics violation? An ethical violation within our organization refers to any and all misconduct, malpractice, and/or unlawful activity engaged in by a Minister, Practitioner, or lay leader serving a Centers for Spiritual Living Member Community. Violations include without limitation, breaches of fiduciary responsibilities to any individual or spiritual community, failure to fulfill obligations, breaking agreements of confidentiality, sexual misconduct, and willfully sustained actions that are out of alignment with Centers for Spiritual Living Organizational Design Model, Bylaws, and Policies & Procedures Manual.

This brochure is designed to help you and your community understand the complexities involved when a charge of ethics violations occurs and explains what resources are available to help you avoid this kind of complaint

Sincerely,



Rev. John Waterhouse, President

How do I contact the Department of Ethics and Professionalism?

Contact the Licensing & Credentialing Manager by phone at (720) 279-1634, by fax (303) 526-0913, or mail at Centers for Spiritual Living, 573 Park Point Drive, Golden, CO 80401.

Resources on Ethics

Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional, 1990, by Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith.

Ethics in Pastoral Ministry, 1996, by Richard M. Gula.

Ministerial Ethics and Etiquette, 1987, by Nolan Bailey Harmon.

Resources on Accountability and Financial Management

Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations: Policies and Practices, 2007, by John Zietlow, Jo Ann Hankin, and Alan G. Seidner.

The Nonprofit Board Answer Book: A Practical Guide for Board Members and Chief Executives, 2011, by BoardSource.

Nonprofit Financial Management: A Practical Guide, 2011, by Charles K. Coe.

Not-for-Profit GAAP 2014: Interpretation and Application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, 2014, by Richard F. Larkin and Marie DiTommaso.

Not-for-Profit Accounting Made Easy, 2007, by Warren Ruppel.

When the Ridiculous Suddenly Seems Wise*

Sometime at a moment of exhaustion, carelessness, or lack of perspective, an ethical fallacy that would strike us as ridiculous may suddenly feel wise and practical, transforming unethical behavior into the ethical ideal. Here are a few.

- It's not unethical if it's not detailed in Policies and Procedures.
- It's not unethical as long as no law was broken.
- It's not unethical as long as we can name others who do the same thing.
- It's not unethical as long as we didn't mean to hurt anyone.
- It's not unethical even if the person had it coming, provoked us, deserved it, or was really asking for it.
- It's not unethical if we did not anticipate the unintended consequences of our acts.
- It's not unethical if we can say: What else could I do? Anyone else would've done the same thing. It came from the heart. I went with my gut. It was the smart thing to do. It was just common sense. I just knew that's what the client needed.
- It's not unethical as long as no one complained about it before.

**Excerpt from Ethics in Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Practical Guide, Fourth Edition, by Kenneth S. Pope, Ph.D., ABPP, and Melba J. T Vasquez, Ph.D., ABPP. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.*

FROM THE ETHICS POLICY OF CENTERS FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING

KEY REMINDERS FOR MINISTERS

We commit to fully serve our home Center and agree to be good stewards to members and attendees of our Centers, their assets, and all Center resources.

We observe the highest standards in all monetary dealings with our congregants, clients, and students.

Our personal funds are never co-mingled with Center funds.

We maintain generally accepted standard accounting procedures (GAAP) with respect to Center finances.

We are aware of our influential position with respect to our congregants, clients, students and staff and do not exploit their trust.

We avoid relationships with all congregants, clients, students, and staff that would impair our professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation.

We conduct ourselves with utmost of sexual propriety, spiritual credibility and accountability.

We do not have a sexual relationship or behave inappropriately with a counseling client or with the partner of a client.

We do not disclose client confidences, including names or identities of clients, to anyone.

We understand that the behavior of a minister directly influences the well-being of the community as a whole.

KEY REMINDERS FOR PRACTITIONERS

We respect the right of our clients to make decisions for themselves, without offering advice.

We do not attempt to counsel or advise in any manner.

We respect the art and skill of all healing professions, regardless of method, religion, or philosophy.

We use spiritual principles as the basis for all guidance in teaching and healing work.

We do not disclose client confidences, including names or identities of clients, to anyone.

We do not enter into any relationship with a client/student that could impair our professional judgment or our spiritual integrity.

We maintain sexual propriety with our clients/students and practice honorable behavior with everyone we encounter.

We do not represent ourselves as counselors.



KEY REMINDERS FOR ELECTED LEADERS WITHIN OUR MEMBER COMMUNITIES

Members of the elected leadership within a Member Community are the accountable and liable individuals of the organization. Accountability means taking the responsibility of ensuring the organization follows the laws, behaves in an ethical manner, and does not waste the resources trusted in its care.

Basic Accountability Protections

- Have policies and procedures in place for good internal controls and accuracy.
- Provide oversight, understand the financial statements, and ask questions.
- Analyze data to determine course corrections.
- Budget effectively with periodic reviews and adjustments so the budget is used as a management tool.
- Financial statements should include a balance sheet, income and expense report, check register, details of restricted and non-restricted funds, and a cash flow statement to show the ability to pay upcoming bills.

Basic Financial Management Protections

- Involve as many people as possible.
- Use accounting software to print checks if at all possible.
- Keep all unused checks in a locked cabinet or closet.
- Limit the number of people with access to the checks.
- Limit check signers to elected leaders and management.
- Pay only from invoices.
- Require two signatures for all checks. For direct deposits, require two signatures on the check request form.
- Never sign a check that does not have adequate documentation attached, such as a valid invoice or contract.
- Never sign a check that is written to you.
- The person preparing the check should never sign the check.
- Someone other than the person preparing and mailing the checks should receive the unopened bank statement and review the contents before it is reconciled.
- The use of debit cards in spending the Center's money undermines the function of the above protections.