

All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association



INFORMATION BOOKLET

All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association

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All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association

Background History

A group of experienced spiritual directors met in October 2001 in The Milltown Institute, Dublin, in response to a need experienced by many practitioners in the area of spiritual guidance. Their aim was to form a representative body. They agreed on the need for an ecumenical, broadly-based professional organisation to offer support to the practitioners of spiritual guidance, akin to that enjoyed by counsellors.

They invited thirty seven practitioners to become founder members to assist in the setting up of an Association for Spiritual Guidance. A number of committees were founded to help with this process, namely, Ethics, Credentialing and Accreditation, Events planning and Registration. This booklet contains some of the fruit of their labours. Requirements for two forms of accreditation [Path One and Path Two] have been included in this second edition of the information booklet along with criteria for Associate and Full membership.

Patronage was received from the Milltown Institute, All Hallows, CORI, and the University of Wales, Lampeter for the launch event which was held in Milltown Park on the 27th April 2002.

Thus, the All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association (AISGA) was formed and was registered as a company limited by guarantee in April 2003.

The founder members group consisted of thirty eight practitioners engaged in the ministry of Spiritual Guidance. They were representative of the various colleges, institutes and schools of theology and spirituality and religious formation in Ireland and Northern Ireland.



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Founder Members

Una Agnew, Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, John Bennett, Grace Dieu Retreat House, Waterford, Carmel Boyle, An Croí, Ashbourne, Phyllis Brady, Chaplain, Milltown Institute, Frances Canavan, Spiritual Director, Monica Comerford, Manresa House, Rose Marie Conlon, Spiritual Director, Adult Ed Clogher Diocese Tom Cooney, Pastoral Dept., Milltown Institute, Jim Cogley, Spiritual Director Eleanor Dorgan, All Hallows, Kevin Egan Behavioural Sciences Dept., All Hallows Jeanne Estella, Spiritual Directors International, John Finnegan, AISGA Chairperson; Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, Bernadette Flanagan, Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, Denis Gleeson, Spiritual Director, Brian Grogan, President, Milltown Institute, Elizabeth Hanna, Rector and Spiritual Director, Angela Higgins, Manresa House, Martin Hogan, Mater Dei Institute Geraldine Holton, An Croí, Ashbourne, Eileen Houlahan, Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, Maria Jansson, Rector and Spiritual Director, David Kelly, Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, Michael Leonard, Maynooth, Finbarr Lynch, Manresa House, Anne Lyons, Grace Dieu Retreat House, Dermot Mansfield, Manresa House, Bernadette McCarrick, Spiritual Director, Johanna-Mary Merry, Pastoral Dept., Milltown Institute, Gerard Moore, AISGA Secretary, Laurence Murphy, Manresa House, Conall O'Cuinn, Manresa House, Leon O'Giollain, Manresa House Brian O'Leary, Spirituality Dept., Milltown Institute, Myles O'Reilly, Anamcharadas Ciary Quirke, Manresa House, Kevin Scallan, All Hallows, Michael Serrage, Grace Dieu Retreat House

The following were elected to the original Board of Directors:

Una Agnew, PhD., Phyllis Brady M.A.(Pastoral Leadership.), Kevin Egan PhD., Jack Finnegan, DD.(Chairperson), Elizabeth Hanna, M.A. (Spir.), Eileen Houlahan, M.A. (Spir.), Geraldine Holton, M.Sc. (Counselling), Gerard Moore, M.A.(Spir), (Secretary), Laurence Murphy, S.T.L., Lic.Psych.



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The current Board of Directors consists of:

Una Agnew, PhD , Thomas Cooney, (Pastoral Counselling) (Secretary) (Treasurer),
John Finnegan, DD (Chairperson), Éibhlís Nic Uaithuas, Spir. Dir. (Denver US)
Anne-Marie Dixon, M.Ed, Counselling, Debbie Moore, MA (Pastoral Theology)(Sup
Practice), Michael Serrage MSC

GENERAL PRINCIPLES *including* AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Name of Association

The registered name of the association is All Ireland Spiritual Guidance
Association (AISGA). Co. Registration No.370474

Contact address and phone number

AISGA
c/o Milltown Park
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Phone: 01- 2776303
Email: info@aisga.ie
Web: www.aisga.ie

1. The aims and objectives of the Association

- a. To promote high standards of practice amongst its members who are spiritual guides, spiritual directors, spiritual counsellors, spiritual practitioners, spiritual consultants and spiritual supervisors.



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- b. To be a self-governing non-profit organisation, which promotes a code of ethics and discipline among its members.
- c. To represent its members with civil, religious and church organisations.
- d. To address directives on behalf of its members in matters relating to the practice of spiritual guidance, spiritual direction, spiritual counselling, spiritual practitioning, spiritual consultancy and spiritual supervision.
- e. To regulate for its members spiritual guidance, spiritual direction, spiritual counselling, spiritual consultancy and spiritual supervision through accreditation and credentialing.

2. Membership

- Requirements for associate and full membership of AISGA may be found in the section on “Criteria for Membership”
- Application forms for membership can be obtained from AISGA at the above address. A stamped addressed A4 envelope is required.

3. Subscriptions and fees

- Membership subscriptions, application processing fees and late application fees will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.
- Each subscription shall be payable in advance and shall become due on the first day of January in each year.
- Each member shall be liable for the payment of his/her annual subscription until he/she has submitted his/her registration in writing to the secretary or unless he/she has been expelled from the association. A member shall remain liable for any subscription which fell due prior to the date of his/her registration or expulsion.



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- Each member whose subscription for the current year has not been paid before the first day of February shall be “in arrears of subscription” and his/her rights of membership as defined in the criteria for membership may be suspended until the arrears have been paid, together with a late application fee.
- If a member shall be in arrears of subscription on the first day of May, his/her name may be removed from the roll by the Board and he/she shall thereupon cease to be a member.

4. The Board of AISGA

- The Board of the AISGA, hereafter called the ‘Board,’ shall consist of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and as many members as is agreed at the Annual General meeting, which shall take place in May of each year. It shall be the responsibility of the Board to uphold the rules and regulations, articles, the codes of ethics, the criteria of full and associate memberships, in the interest of the members of AISGA, their clients and the public at large.
- Officers of the Board shall hold office for a period of three years, after which the board will elect one third of its members to remain for an additional term of office in the interests of continuity. The remaining members may be deemed eligible for re-election at the AGM.
- An Ethics Committee shall also be elected at this time to deal with issues of ethical practice. This committee shall hold office for a period of three years, after which they may be deemed eligible for re-election.

5. Breach of Ethics

The ethics committee may recommend the cancellation of entitlement to full membership when it is deemed necessary and appropriate to do so.

Notification of such cancellations shall be conveyed in writing to the member concerned by the Secretary of the Association.



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6. Appeals

The member shall be notified of the right to appeal this decision to the board of AISGA.

Criteria for Associate Membership

Associate membership is open to persons who are:

- Interested in the area of spiritual guidance, spirituality.
and/or
- Working towards becoming members of AISGA
and/or
- Undergoing training as a spiritual guide
- Willing to abide by the AISGA Code of Ethics

Benefits of Associate membership:

- Network of support for those involved in the area of spiritual guidance
- Notification of AISGA conferences, workshops and events
- Reduced fee at conferences, workshops
- May avail of AISGA insurance scheme
- Are update on issues and developments in the world of spiritual guidance



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Requirements for Associate membership

A yearly subscription fee for “Associate Membership” payable in advance with completed application form. The subscription will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.

N.B. Associate members may not represent themselves as full members of AISGA

Criteria for Full Membership

There are two paths by which Associate Members may gain Full Membership of AISGA.

Path One

A. Core Courses

Applicants are required to **give evidence** of having satisfactorily completed courses that include each of the following areas: -

1. Spiritual Guidance
2. Spirituality
3. Scripture
4. Theology
5. Psychology – Psychotherapy – Counselling

Minimum requirement is for **one-year full time** or **two year part-time** study at:

- (a) Third Level Institute recognized by AISGA
- (b) Spirituality Centre/Programme recognized by AISGA.



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Course details and photocopies of all relevant certificates etc must be submitted with the application

B. Experiential training / practice

Applicants are required to give evidence of having completed 80 hrs practice of spiritual guidance including hours worked during training and of having received 40 hrs supervision in relation to this practice.

The supervised hours can include supervision by peers and supervisor during training.

The 'Supervisor's Report Form' (page 6 of Full Membership Application Form) must be fully filled in and signed by the supervisor as evidence of compliance with this clause in relation to hours of supervision and practice. This form must then be attached to the application form for full membership.

C. On-going supervision and renewal

All applicants are required to **give evidence** of on-going supervision and renewal in their ministry by attaching photocopies and certificates of attendance etc, to their application.

D. Code of Ethics

All applicants are required to formally **accept and abide** by the AISGA Code of Ethics.

E. Insurance

Practising members are required to have **Public Liability** and **Professional Indemnity Insurance**.

F. Application process

Application forms for full membership may be obtained from AISGA office. The completed form together with all the relevant documentation, copies



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of certificates, supervisors reports and references, where appropriate, should be returned to AISGA at the above address along with the current administration fee to cover the cost of processing.

This fee will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.

G. Accreditation Process

Applications for membership are considered by the accrediting / credentialing committee who meets at least twice a year. They submit their proposals to the Board of Directors for approval.

The applicant will be notified of the Board's decision, and if the application has been successful, the full membership fee will become due for payment. Full membership commences when the fee has been received by AISGA.

A certificate of full membership will then be awarded to the applicant.

An applicant who is not successful with their application for Full Membership may continue as an Associate Member of AISGA and may re-apply for full membership at a later date.

H. Duration of Membership

Full Membership is for five years and is dependent upon payment of an annual subscription. *Associate and full membership* subscriptions will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.

I. Renewal of Membership

After five years AISGA full members make a formal application to renew their membership. They shall provide **evidence** of ongoing **supervision** and commitment to **professional and personal renewal** as per the AISGA code of ethics.

J. Review of Criteria

The accrediting/credentialing committee will review the above criteria and propose any changes to the Board of Directors for approval.



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Path Two

A. Equivalency clause for Experienced Directors

Since accreditation for spiritual guidance is relatively new, certain experienced Spiritual Guides/Directors who can provide evidence of having already fulfilled the criteria (or their equivalence) as stated in Clause A, **and who are supported by two referees** recognised by AISGA, may be admitted to full membership at the discretion of the accrediting/credentialing committee. **The two references** specified must be submitted with the application form.

B. Relevant Clauses Binding

Applicants by Path Two are bound by all the relevant clauses of Path One, C to J. above.

Benefits of Full membership

- Network of support for those involved in the area of spiritual guidance or spirituality
- Notification of AISGA conferences, workshops and events
- May represent themselves as **Full Members** of AISGA
- Reduced fee at conferences, workshops
- May avail of AISGA insurance scheme
- Are updated on issues and developments in the world of spiritual guidance
- May be included in the directors list of full members on the website, www.aisga.ie



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction names an ongoing but entirely voluntary relationship. It accompanies persons on their spiritual journey, befriending their spirit and entering into the spiritual process with them in ways that foster spiritual growth in all of the realities of a person's life. In the Christian tradition spiritual direction attends to, facilitates and supports a person's openness and responsiveness to the Divine Spirit. The spiritual director listens contemplatively, listens with active empathy and understanding to the unfolding of a sacred story that is trying to launch itself into a fruitful future and free itself from the hurts and wounds that bind a person to the past. Spiritual direction is concerned with spiritual growth, spiritual healing, and spiritual transformation. This takes place within a current of spirituality that expresses a divine-human relationship. Ultimately the focus is on divine intimacy.

Does it have other names?

Spiritual direction is also called spiritual accompaniment, holy listening, spiritual companioning, and spiritual guidance. A spiritual guide can be a soul friend or a spiritual mentor. All of these modalities share the same focus on God or a person's sense of the Sacred. It is about a deepening understanding of the divine or the sacred as it emerges in every dimension of life, personal, social and relational.

How often does a person go to spiritual direction?

Individuals usually go for spiritual direction for an hour once a month. It is important to note that spiritual direction does not offer quick one-off solutions. However, many spiritual directors are happy to see people according to their felt needs and circumstances. This relationship may be of short-term or long-term duration.



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What happens during a session?

During a session, the focus is on whatever aspect of life the person wishes to bring to it. Time is also found to discern God's presence (or absence) in the events being narrated. Spiritual directors sometimes talk of looking for "God-seeds" in the stories they hear. The session may contain moments of prayer and reflective spaces.

Do spiritual directors receive supervision?

Yes. Most spiritual directors receive personal spiritual direction and qualified supervision. If you wish you may ask to see their *Code of Ethics and Practice*.

What about confidentiality?

Please note that all spiritual directors are ethically bound to confidentiality. Even in supervision, no names are given and identity is kept strictly confidential. Again, you will find the rules of confidentiality in the Spiritual Director's *Code of Ethics and Practice*.

Why would a person undertake spiritual direction?

Individuals usually go for spiritual direction because they have begun to question the meaning of their lives or yearn for a deeper, more spiritual life. They may seek direction because they want to develop a more responsive relationship with God in every aspect of life. Spiritual direction can also help a person develop a set of spiritual practices that are in tune with the current realities of life, personality and temperament. Spiritual direction may also help a person develop inner peace and identify a life direction open to the whole of creation.

How much does it cost?

Talk to your spiritual director about this.

There are usually no fixed fees, though spiritual directors have to pay utility bills like everyone else. Most practitioners operate a sliding scale based on a person's



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financial situation and capacity to pay. AISGA currently recommends €40 per session or more for those who can afford it. This helps to subsidise services for those who are less financially comfortable.

Is spiritual direction another form of psychological therapy?

While spiritual direction has some similarities to counselling and psychotherapy, it is also very distinctive and requires a different giftedness, formation, and expertise on the part of those who offer it. Some spiritual directors are happy to accompany persons who are receiving counselling or psychotherapy from accredited practitioners. Unlike contemporary forms of counselling and psychotherapy, traditions of spiritual direction share a history that is almost two thousand years old.

How do I find a qualified spiritual director?

AISGA list on its website www.aisga.ie , the contact details of spiritual directors who are accredited full members of AISGA. Training centres also will have their own qualified practitioners.

What if I don't feel comfortable with a spiritual director?

Spiritual direction works best when the person feels at ease with the director: someone with whom you can be yourself and feel open and honest in his/her company. If for whatever reason this is not happening, you are perfectly entitled to change, though it would be good to talk things over honestly with the director before terminating the relationship. Good spiritual directors understand this and respect the other person's decision.

How does a person become a spiritual director?

People become spiritual directors as a result of a discerned call from God to engage in this work. This call has been recognised by others who are experienced in these matters. Then, natural talents and spiritual gifts are enhanced by recognised education and appropriate practical preparation. Training Centres



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usually require that a person has a basic knowledge of theology before applying and programmes last, on average, **two years**, which consist of course work and a supervised practicum. AISGA list on its website a number of training locations in Ireland.

Code of Ethics©

PREAMBLE

Spiritual Guidance has a long history. Persons in search of a deeper relationship with God tend to seek out another who helps them on the journey. Models of spiritual guidance vary from the formal to the more informal. In the more formal approach, there is a structured relationship with clear presuppositions, specific aims and a corresponding methodology through which the Spiritual Guide provides a service to the client. Fees for this service are common. The focus for the meetings is firmly on the client's desire to deepen his/her relationship with God. Both the Guide and the client set up the working alliance and are attentive to the activity of the Holy Spirit within it. The Guide is one who is also personally engaged in the inner work of spiritual transformation. At the same time he/she continues to grow in the skills and expertise necessary for the task of spiritual guidance. The work is of care and friendliness (not friendship) directed at fostering the relationship between the client and God. Guides usually avail of supervision and are certified/accredited. In this broad sense, spiritual guidance can be regarded as a professional service, which needs to be governed by a Code of Ethics.

This Code of Ethics includes:

- Aspirational aims to guide members of All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association Limited (hereinafter called "AISGA") towards the highest ideals of good practice as Spiritual Guides.
- A set of rules of conduct and practice for members in the ethical practice of spiritual guidance that are required to be adhered to for so long as each person subscribing to such rules is a member of AISGA.

Members of AISGA agree to adhere to the Code of Ethics and the rules and regulations used to implement it for so long as they are members of AISGA.

What is the purpose of the Code of Ethics?

The Code of Ethics serves as:



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- a norm to protect the client and the Spiritual Guide from the unethical application of spiritual guidance.
- a standard for its members re conduct, training and continuing education.
- a foundation for settling complaints through the procedure for instigating, investigating, resolving and appealing complaints of unethical conduct. This is set out in the Appendix, *Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures*.

Who is it for?

The Code is applicable to members' **work related activities** that are part of their professional spiritual guidance work. Included in this are private practice, group work, teaching, supervision, consultancy and other such interventions/engagements within the remit of spiritual guidance.

TERMINOLOGY

Spiritual Guidance

Spiritual guidance may take place in a one-to-one or group setting in which a trained person helps another/others to grow in an ever-closer relationship with God and to live out the consequences of this relationship.

Spiritual Guide

The person who provides the service of spiritual guidance.

Client

The person / persons who seek spiritual guidance.

Membership

There are two degrees of membership.

- Associate Member:
Associate member is one who is actively interested in the area of Spiritual guidance/spirituality and who is working towards becoming full members of AISGA
- Full Member
A full member is one who is accredited by AISGA for engagement in the professional practice of spiritual guidance in private practice, group work, teaching, supervision, consultancy and other such interventions/engagements within the remit of spiritual guidance.



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I THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND THE SELF

Personal Spirituality

1. Spiritual Guides assume responsibility for their personal growth by:
 - a. developing a prayer life through engaging in personal and communal practices and disciplines;
 - b. availing of regular spiritual guidance.

Formation

2. Spiritual Guides engage in ongoing formation by:
 - a. continuing to discern their call to the ministry of spiritual guidance;
 - b. nurturing self-knowledge and freedom;
 - c. cultivating insight into the influences of culture, socio-historical context, environmental setting, and institutions;
 - d. studying scripture, theology, spirituality, psychology, and other disciplines related to spiritual guidance;
 - e. contributing according to their ability to ongoing research in the field of spiritual guidance.

Supervision

3. Spiritual Guides engage in supervision by:
 - a. receiving regular supervision from a mentor or in a peer supervision group;
 - b. seeking consultations with other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.

Personal Responsibility

4. Spiritual Guides meet their own needs outside the spiritual guidance relationship in a variety of ways, especially by:
 - a. self-care, wisely balancing time for prayer, work, leisure, family, and personal relationships;
 - b. refraining from practising spiritual guidance when their physical or psychological condition impairs attention and judgment;
 - c. Removing themselves, in so far as possible, from any situation that compromises the integrity of the spiritual guidance relationship, e.g. dual or multiple relationships. (see II.4 below)

Limitations

5. Spiritual Guides recognize the limits of:
 - a. Energy, by restricting the number of clients;



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- b. Attentiveness, by appropriate spacing of meetings and clients;
- c. Competence, by refraining from entering new areas that involve additional skills without further study, training, and supervision and by referring clients to other appropriately qualified persons when necessary.

II THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND THE CLIENT

Covenant or Contract

- 1 A contract¹ is established between the Spiritual Guide and the client and includes agreements about:
 - a. the nature of spiritual guidance;
 - b. the roles of the Spiritual Guide and the client;
 - c. the frequency and length of guidance sessions;
 - d. the nature and limits of confidentiality;
 - e. the kind and amount of remuneration, if any, to be given to the Guide or institution;
 - f. the process for evaluating and terminating the relationship.

Dignity

- 2 Spiritual Guides value the dignity of the client by:
 - a. respecting the client's gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race, membership of any community (all prohibited by the Equal Status Act 2000, i.e., once a person is over 18 years they can't be refused service on grounds of age.), culture, values, conscience, theology and spirituality, even when these are different from those of the Guide;
 - b. avoiding judgmental and defensive stances in the clear awareness of their own beliefs and convictions, and the capacity these have to create bias and prejudice;
 - c. respecting the unique process through which an individual becomes aware of spiritual, religious, moral or other values;
 - d. recognizing the imbalance of power in the spiritual guidance relationship and taking care not to exploit it through behaviours such as sexual abuse, sexual harassment, bullying and spiritual abuse.

Sexual Boundaries

- 3 The function of boundaries is to protect the nature of the spiritual guidance relationship and the vulnerability of both client and Spiritual Guide. The

¹ Spiritual Guides are understood to be acting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of AISGA when they make such a contract.



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crossing of sexual boundaries is always an ethical violation. Hence Spiritual Guides do not:

- a. engage in sexual intimacy with current clients;
- b. engage in sexual intimacy with former clients until a reasonable time, (not less than five years), has elapsed since the termination of the guidance relationship;
- c. undertake spiritual guidance with persons with whom they have been or are at present engaged in sexual intimacy;
- d. engage in any kind of sexual harassment within the spiritual guidance situation, i.e. solicitation, physical advances, verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature, or anything that might reasonably be construed as sexual.

Multiple Relationships

- 4 In so far as possible Spiritual Guides will avoid being in more than one role with a client. In situations where dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable the Spiritual Guide will take great care:
 - a. that the dual or multiple relationship between Guide and client be carefully monitored, especially through supervision, and every effort made to avoid conflicts of interest;
 - b. that any influence the Guide may have through a non-guidance relationship not be used to the Guide's own advantage or the client's harm;
 - c. not to engage in business or other financial affairs with clients;
 - d. not to exploit persons sexually or otherwise over whom they hold supervisory or training influence.

Confidentiality

- 5 Spiritual Guides maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of the client by:
 - a. protecting the identity of the client;
 - b. keeping confidential all oral and written matters arising in the spiritual guidance sessions;
 - c. storing only such information as is essential for the process in written or electronic form;
 - d. conducting guidance sessions in appropriate settings;
 - e. observing legal regulations that require disclosure to proper authorities,² including but not limited to child abuse, elder abuse and physical harm to self or others;
 - f. making prudent arrangements to see that confidentiality is preserved in the event of death, incapacity, retirement, or other form of withdrawal from work as Spiritual Guides

² It is the responsibility of members to inform themselves of their legal obligations and the procedures to follow when reporting allegations.



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- g. allowing the client access to all personal data kept in electronic or written form.

III THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND OTHERS

Colleagues

- 1 Spiritual Guides maintain collegial relationships with other professionals and display an openness to an inter-disciplinary approach by:
 - a. developing intra- and interdisciplinary relationships, networking;
 - b. requesting a client who is in analysis or therapy to inform his or her analyst or therapist about being in spiritual guidance;
 - c. securing written releases and permission from clients when specific information needs to be shared for the benefit of the client;
 - d. honouring the contribution of other professionals.

Faith Communities

- 2 Spiritual Guides maintain responsible and respectful relationships to communities of faith by:
 - a. remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability, and support;
 - b. appropriately drawing on the teachings and practices of communities of faith;
 - c. respecting the client's relationship to his or her own community of faith.

Social Responsibility

- 3 Spiritual Guides have a responsibility to the wider society as well as to their individual clients. They show this by:
 - a. keeping in mind issues of peace, justice, equality, reconciliation, ecology, etc. without in any way diminishing the integrity of their commitment to individuals;
 - b. seeing if spiritual guidance can be made available at times to those who cannot afford to offer remuneration;
 - c. advertising in a way that is prudent and discreet;
 - d. representing their academic and professional qualifications and accreditations accurately;
 - e. respecting all persons regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, any preference, personal characteristic, condition or status or membership of a community;



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- f. modelling a way of living that contributes to the faith life and spiritual development of people.

RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES

- 1 Members have a responsibility to be familiar with this code and to inform clients that such a code exists. Lack of awareness is not in itself a defense to an allegation of ethical misconduct.
- 2 Whenever a member has a question regarding the Code of Ethics, the member should consult the Ethics Committee for information, clarification and direction.
- 3 If members receive complaints of unethical conduct against them, they shall promptly report the complaint to the Ethics Committee.
- 4 If a member becomes aware of a lesser infringement of the Code of Ethics which is not threatening to the well-being of the member or others, (e.g., where boundaries are crossed, but not violated), he or she is encouraged to approach the member in question with the purpose of resolving the matter through clarification or remonstrance.
- 5 All ethical violations are recognized as serious. Where an alleged violation appears to be a serious threat to the well-being of the member or others, members shall refer the matter to the Ethics Committee by informing the Chairperson of the alleged violation. The Ethics Committee begins an investigation as soon as possible. The procedure for dealing with a complaint shall conform to the norms outlined in the Appendix, Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 6 If the complaint is upheld, actions which may be taken include reprimands, suspension, termination of membership, reporting to other relevant bodies or reporting any criminal matters to the relevant authorities.
- 7 Action to terminate or suspend membership may also be taken on foot of conviction for an offence, a finding of any civil liability that may, at the discretion of the Board, have an adverse affect on AISGA, expulsion from another professional organisation or other such suspensions even if such matters are not related to the activities of the member governed by these rules of ethics.
- 8 All members are expected to cooperate with the investigation process. Failure to cooperate is itself a violation of the Code and may be considered grounds for suspension or termination of membership.
- 9 Only those who were members of AISGA at the time that the alleged violation of the Code took place may be investigated and disciplined.



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- 10 A member may be temporarily suspended from AISGA pending the resolution of any accusation, investigation or prosecution of a criminal matter, whether or not directly related to that member's role that is governed by AISGA or referred to by the code of ethics.
- 11 A member may be temporarily suspended from AISGA pending the resolution of any accusation, investigation or prosecution of a civil matter, whether or not directly related to that member's role that is governed by AISGA or referred to by the code if such matter may, in the sole opinion of the Board of AISGA affect AISGA in any way.

APPENDIX

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

AISGA aims to promote high standards of practice— and a professional code of ethics and discipline among its members. AISGA is unable to directly supervise or monitor compliance by its members with the agreed codes of ethics. Nonetheless, it has a duty to investigate any complaint which alleges violation by a member of the codes of conduct and/or standards of behaviour in the course of his /her relationship with a client, colleague or member. (see; preamble of code of ethics)

The following complaints and disciplinary procedures which follow the principals of natural justice, set out the action to be taken by the Board of Directors in the case of a complaint being brought against a member of the organisation. AISGA is committed to fair, just and uniform procedures and practices.

General Principles

1. No disciplinary action will be taken against a member until the case has been fully investigated and the member has had an opportunity to state his or her case. ***Suspension may take place if such an investigation and opportunity to allow the member to state his or her case occurs as soon as reasonably practical after such suspension.***
2. At all stages in the procedure the member will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him/ her and be provided with all available evidence before any hearing takes place.
3. At all stages the member will have the right to be accompanied by a person of his or her choosing. The member's chosen companion will be entitled to address the hearing but not to answer questions on behalf of the member, unless the companion is a legal representative.
4. A member will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.



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5. At all stages of the procedure the matter should be dealt with without undue delay.
6. Information relating to any disciplinary proceedings, including witness statements and records of any sanction imposed, shall remain confidential except in the case of the matter being required by the Gardai or PSNI.
7. If a complaint/disciplinary procedure is made against a member, such a member has an obligation to notify AISGA.

Procedures

1. Complaints should be made in writing to the **Chairperson of the AISGA Board of Directors**. If the Chairperson has a conflict of interest regarding the complaint, then the Vice- Chairperson should assume the responsibility for the Chairperson throughout the procedure.
2. The Chairperson shall inform the member who is the subject of the complaint of its receipt and will provide the member with a copy of the Complaints Procedure, the name of the complainant and the substance of the complaint. The chairperson shall inform the member of the steps envisaged thereafter.
3. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall inform the Board of Directors of the complaint and the Board of Directors shall refer the matter to the **Standing Ethical Committee** to carry out a preliminary investigation. The Standing Ethical Committee shall be composed of at least five persons who are full members of AISGA.
4. The Standing Ethical Committee shall carry out its functions expeditiously, mindful of the anxiety which any complaint involves for all parties concerned. It shall carry out a thorough preliminary investigation which will include interviews with the complainant and any witnesses proposed by the complainant. It shall seek necessary consents to obtain any documents relevant to its investigation. It shall interview the person who is the subject of the complaint (respondent) and inform him/her of the procedure being followed and of his/her right to be accompanied during the interview. It shall inform the respondent of the evidence gathered in relation to the complaint and afford the respondent the opportunity and adequate time to make a full response. It shall interview any witnesses proffered by the respondent in support of his/her response.
5. The Standing Ethical Committee shall submit a report of its investigation to the **Chairperson of the Board of Directors**. The Report should contain all statements of evidence gathered and all documents received. It should state whether, in the opinion of the Standing Ethical Committee, there is a case to answer. If it considers that there is a case to answer the Standing Ethical Committee shall make recommendations as to whether conciliation ought to be



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attempted between the two parties or, whether the matter should be sent forward for a full hearing of the Board of Directors.

6. AISGA has a policy of reporting reasonable suspicion or knowledge of child abuse discovered during the course of its investigation, to the appropriate authorities. If such child abuse is against an adult, when that adult was a child, no report shall be made without the consent of that adult unless the full Board of Directors of AISGA consent in writing if the Directors are of the opinion that such reporting is prudent and proportional in the circumstances.
7. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall present the Report to the **Board of Directors** which shall determine the means by which the complaint should be brought forward. If a full hearing of the complaint is considered necessary, the Board of Directors shall appoint a **Disciplinary Sub-Committee** to conduct the hearing.
8. The **Disciplinary Sub-Committee** shall be provided with the Report of the Standing Ethical Committee and shall conduct a hearing of the complaint on a date and time which is convenient to the complainant and the respondent and at which all the evidence in support of and contradicting the complaint will be heard. In advance of any hearing, the complainant and the respondent shall receive any documents, to which it is proposed reference will be made, in the course of the hearing, including the Report of the preliminary investigation.
The respondent will have the right, in person or through a representative to question the complainant and any witnesses called by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee.

If indicated, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee may request to consult with legal experts. Such persons may meet with the Disciplinary Sub-Committee in private, but normally shall not be present and in no circumstances participate in its final decisions or vote.

9. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee, having heard all available evidence, shall determine whether, in its opinion, the complaint is sufficiently well founded to justify the imposition of penalties.
The following actions may be recommended:
 - Advice that the complaint is unfounded
 - Admonishment – this is meant to be educational, when a member has been unaware of having violated the Code of Ethics
 - Formal reprimand – this is a serious rebuke of the member, based on the assessment that the member has accepted responsibility for the violation and guarantees in writing that it will not reoccur.
 - Suspension of membership for a stated period
 - Termination of membership.

10. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall inform the complainant and respondent of its determination and the right to appeal. It shall communicate its determination to the **Chairperson of the Board of Directors** for implementation. The respondent



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shall be permitted to appeal a determination of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee within fourteen working days of notification thereof. The appeal grounds thereof shall be notified in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall appoint an **Appeals Committee** to conduct the hearing. *The number of this Appeals Committee shall consist of at least six persons, one of whom shall be a member of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee but such person will not have a vote in any decision of the Appeals Committee.*

11. If the right to appeal has not been exercised, the Board of Directors shall accept and implement the determination of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee. The Chairperson will communicate this decision to the complainant and the respondent.

If the right to appeal has been exercised, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors will communicate its decision in relation to the appeal to the complainant and the respondent as soon as possible thereafter.

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Training Centres

Training Centres usually require that a person has a basic knowledge of theology before applying and programmes last, on average, **two years**, which consist of course work and a supervised practicum. AISGA lists on its website a number of training locations in Ireland.

Manresa

Spiritual Direction Training: duration 2 years (A Diploma Programme)

Outreach of Manresa Training in Galway or other locations outside Dublin

Contact: Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality, 426 Clontarf Road, Dollymount,
Dublin 3

Ph: 01-8331352, Web: www.manresa.ie



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Anamcharadas

Spiritual Direction Training:

Contact: anamcharadas@eircom.net

Grace Dieu

Spiritual Direction Training:

Contact: Heart Network, Ennismore, Cork.

John Bennett, email: jpbennett@eircom.net

Mike Serrage, email: mikeserrage@eircom.net

An Croi

Spiritual Direction Training:

The Stables, Bachelors Lane, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Contact: 041- 9805050 email: ancroi@eircom.net Web: www.ancroi.ie

Vincentian Formation for Spiritual Directors

Spiritual Direction Training:

Contact: All Hallows College, Gracepark Rd, Dublin 9

Sr Éibhlís NicUaithuas DC, email: eibhlisnicuaithuas@daughtersofcharity.ie

M: +353 87 417 0628, Web: www.allhallows.ie

Training for Supervision

Supervisors Association of Ireland (SAI)

Contact: c/o All Hallows College, Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Phone: 086 880 8592

Email: info@saivision.ie

Web: www.saivision.ie

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