SAFE MINISTRY TRAINING BENCHMARKS

Introduction

This document has been developed by the Professional Standards Commission as a set of national Benchmarks in Safe Ministry Training for the Anglican Church of Australia.
Safe Ministry:
- honours God;
- values and respects people; and
- is free from abuse and harm.

Purpose of the National Benchmarks

The purpose of the national Benchmarks is:
- to set a high and consistent standard in Safe Ministry training across the Anglican Church of Australia; and
- to facilitate mutual recognition of training between dioceses.

References to *Faithfulness in Service*

Many of these benchmarks in Safe Ministry training are linked to Standards or Guidelines in *Faithfulness in Service*.

Acknowledgement

The nature and content of Safe Ministry Training has been the topic of cross-denominational discussion in Australia since 2005. During 2006 and 2007 the National Council of Churches in Australia Safe Church Training Agreement produced a set of standards for Safe Ministry Training. These Benchmarks are built upon those standards.

Recommendations for delivery of Safe Ministry training

These Benchmarks address the specific content of Safe Ministry training. Given the sensitive nature of the material presented in Safe Ministry training, attention needs to be given to the style of delivery of training.

It is good practice for Safe Ministry Training to occur in a face-to-face workshop setting where participants are given the opportunity to experience the content through guided learning experiences, opportunities to explore the concepts through exercises and case studies over a period of at least 5 hours.

Because a number of persons who have been abused have made a disclosure at Safe Ministry Training events it is advisable to provide pastoral support at the training.

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Each diocese should:
- ensure that the content of its Safe Ministry Training adequately deals with the contents of the Benchmarks;
- ensure that workshop presenters are appropriately qualified and experienced;
- ensure that the presentation is consistent across workshops, and
- regularly review and refresh their workshop material.

Workshop development guidelines

Each diocese should have regard to the following guidelines in developing workshops
- prepare workshop presenter session notes for consistency of presentation;
- provide each workshop participant with a workbook or handouts;
- provide resources for presenters – powerpoint presentation, overhead transparencies, additional scenarios, videos, DVDs, etc;
- encourage the use of a variety of workshop activities: group discussions, individual or group tasks – including scenarios, sample documents;
- provide a checklist for the suitability and safety of the training venue;
- provide and workshop evaluations (by participants), and
- provide support documents, eg. implementation kits.

Workshop ground-rules

Each workshop presenter should establish ground-rules for the workshop which will include:
- conducting an OH&S and hazard check of venue;
- providing a workshop overview which includes the topics covered, and if in a face-to-face workshop, breaks, housekeeping, including hazards;
- dealing with housekeeping issues(eg. mobile phones, punctuality after breaks, etc);
- outlining workshop standards for confidentiality, support , interaction, respecting opinions;
- providing an opportunity to explore the expectations of participants, and
- advising the availability of pastoral support for the participants.

Records, refresher training and evaluation

Each diocese should:
- establish a system for the retention of records of participants' completion of workshops;
- ensure records of participants' completion of workshops are kept in the prescribed manner;
- ensure refresher courses are undertaken every 3 years, and
- establish a system for the ongoing evaluation of its Safe Ministry Training: content, materials, delivery and effectiveness.

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Course Content

The contents of a Safe Ministry Training course should include the following key concepts. Many of these are found in Faithfulness In Service (**FIS**) and appropriate references are identified in brackets.

1. *The Church's responsibility for Safe Ministry*
   (a) theological reflection on God's concern for the safety all people and God's call on our lives to care for and protect all people especially the vulnerable;
   (b) the church's duty of care in relation to ministry.

2. *Clergy and church workers: pastoral relationships, boundaries and use of power*
   (a) the nature of leadership and pastoral relationships (FIS 4).
   (b) appropriate boundaries in ministry and personal behaviour (FIS 6,7 and 8);
   (c) positional power within ministry & non-ministry settings;
   (d) communication in a ministry context including electronic communication (FIS 4.32-35; 5.45-46);
   (e) abiding by a code of conduct.

3. *Children and vulnerable adults*
   (a) values and behaviours relating to children, including rights & responsibilities (FIS 5);
   (b) vulnerable adults including situational vulnerability.

4. *Safe environments*
   (a) responsibilities of those in charge of programs and events (FIS 5.8);
   (b) social and cultural diversity issues;
   (c) identifying, assessing and managing health and safety risks (FIS 5.18, 5.33-38);
   (d) obtaining information e.g. health/medical, permission forms, privacy and record keeping (FIS 4.36-37);
   (e) handling critical incidents;
   (f) first aid requirements, including personnel, skills and equipment (FIS 5);
   (g) food handling/hygiene;
   (h) transport (FIS 5.39-40);
   (i) group supervision (FIS 5.25);
   (j) discipline and physical contact (FIS 5.41-44);
   (k) photos and images (FIS 5.47);
   (l) activity safety (FIS 5.26);
   (m) external service providers (FIS 5.24).

5. *Recruitment and supervision*
   (a) role/task descriptions for clergy and church workers;
   (b) diocesan requirements for screening and selection of clergy and church workers including risk assessment (FIS 5.19-20);
   (c) government requirements- relevant legislation;
   (d) supervision of clergy and church workers;
   (e) support and self-care of clergy and church workers.

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6. *Identifying suspected abuse/risk of harm*
  (a) perceptions about abuse;
  (b) values & attitudes about abuse;
  (c) possible barriers to protecting children and the vulnerable;
  (d) information about abuse, effects and offenders;
  (e) facts and myths surrounding abuse (FIS 5.16-17);
  (f) definitions and indicators of abuse/harm;
  (g) definitions of the types of abuse (including grooming behaviours) and possible indicators (FIS 5.16);
  (h) the role of power in abuse.

7. *Responding to abuse*
  (a) appropriate responses to disclosures including ensuring safety;
  (b) supporting children and vulnerable adults after a disclosure;
  (c) supporting people who have received a disclosure;
  (d) government requirements - relevant legislation;
  (e) diocesan requirements;
  (f) government agencies responsible for child protection and vulnerable adults;
  (g) details of relevant legislation pertaining to child protection and vulnerable adults;
  (h) information on what is to be reported and methods of reporting;
  (i) responsibilities of mandatory reporters;
  (j) opportunities for voluntary reporting;
  (k) diocesan reporting policy and procedures when, how and to whom;
  (l) confidentiality;
  (m) support for those reporting;
  (n) support and safety of church communities after a disclosure.

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