

Outline for a Workshop on COMs and Pastoral Care for Church Professionals

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Welcome and Introductions

(Please share your name, your presbytery and function in your presbytery, why you chose this particular workshop, and what you hope to get from this workshop.)

The Responsibility of Presbytery to Provide Pastoral Care to Church Professionals-

BO – G-11.0103 (The presbytery has the responsibility and power)

g. “to provide pastoral care for the churches and members of presbytery, visiting sessions and ministers on a regular basis. (g-11.0502c)”,

In G-11.0502 is the ways the Committee on Ministry of a presbytery is to serve the church. Among the responsibilities given to the Committee on Ministry of a particular presbytery is-

a. “It shall visit regularly and consult with each minister of the presbytery. It shall report to the presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister of the presbytery is engaged. It shall require an annual report from every minister performing work which is not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or a higher governing body of the church”

G-11.0502c states: *“It shall visit with each session of the presbytery at least once every three years...”*

What Are the Challenges Facing Presbyteries Today in Providing Pastoral Care to Church Professionals?

Four Basic Models for Providing Pastoral Care to Church Professionals within the PCUSA:

1. Presbytery staff person (part-time or full-time)
2. Designated Pastor to Pastors (retired or paid, contracted counselors, etc.)
3. Committee Responsibility (COM, Pastoral Care Division, etc.)
4. Volunteer Pastoral Care Givers

Inherent Difficulties Are Present within Each One of These Models –

- Clergy reluctance to share with EPs, COMs, or anyone who has the power to adversely affect a minister’s present or future call the struggles, conflicts, or disappointments in their ministries.
- A ministry culture of “Lone Rangers” who are resistant to being held accountable to other ministry colleagues or structures of the church.
- Perceptions of favoritism, steeple status, “good-old-boy” networks, competency/experience, role expectations, etc.

What Does the Current Research Suggest About Ministers Who Are Thriving Rather Than Just Surviving in Ministry?

- They participate regularly in the “means of grace” (worship, prayer, Bible study, spiritual development practices, etc.)
- They belong to a competently facilitated group of peers who meet on a regular basis.
- They have the courage and the freedom to exercise their unique gifts for ministry in their current call.

What Can Presbyteries Do To Care and Support Church Professionals?