

Benefits of CPE

* It provides a better understanding of pastoral care and helps candidates focus on the specific nature of their call more clearly.

* We believe that it helps the Candidate to better understand themselves as well as to better minister to members of a congregation.

* A uniform experience and expectation for all candidates.

* spiritual, emotional growth; self-awareness;
improving skills and presence with people in a variety of life situations
learning to give and receive feedback
bringing biblical and/or theological reflection into conversation with the experiences encountered in the CPE setting - can be a faith clarifying experience!
brings to the surface psychological dynamics that may be useful in understanding oneself and others

* FIRST, CANDIDATES EXPERIENCE MINISTRY IN A SECOND SETTING BEYOND THE PARISH. THINK FIELD EXPERIENCE SHOULD NEVER BE IN JUST ONE TYPE OF SETTING.

SECOND, CANDIDATES LEARN TO DEAL WITH CRISIS MINISTRY. YOU GOT TO BE ABLE TO THINK QUICKLY ON YOUR FEET. THIRD, CANDIDATES LEARN THEIR WAY AROUND HOSPITALS AND HOSPITAL PERSONNEL, WHICH IS REALLY HANDY FOR THAT ONCE A YEAR MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT CRISIS CALL DURING PARISH MINISTRY. FOURTH, CANDIDATES ARE CHALLENGED TO THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR MINISTRY PURPOSE, STYLE, AND DIRECTION THROUGH THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE HOSPITAL. IF YOU HAVE A REASONABLE SUPERVISOR, THIS CAN BE A VERY DESCERNING EXPERIENCE.

* CPE is an excellent experience leading for greater self-understanding and pastoral formation.

* As a result of their CPE experience, our candidates have matured personally and gained confidence in their sense of call.

* Our candidates experience working with hospitalized and grieved persons and better understand their calling in respect to this special ministry. There is also a benefit from the peers that they work and reflect with.

* All of those who have taken CPE have found it beneficial, and the few

individuals who have been required to take it have thanked the CPM later. The greatest benefit seems to be in sorting out "personality issues," so we tend to require it of those who are difficult to get along with, or those who have significant issues with which they need to deal.

* The inquirer or candidate learns about themselves in ways that can not be duplicated in the classroom or during a church internship. Also they often realize and or learn skills that are very valuable as they seek and attain their first call.

* Intensely helpful in inq/candid getting to know themselves & dealing with motives for ministry. Also, good feedback setting.

* the first hand experience in a clinical setting, familiarity with the ways of hospitals, the supervision and group process of reflection is usually a positive for our candidates.

* 1) Better sense of self
2) Better sense of gifts for ministry
3) Better sense of what is involved in ministry
4) Allows the CPM to view the candidate in a supervised ministry setting outside of a local church.

* A minister better equipped to provide pastoral and spiritual care.

* I have seen candidates grow immensely in their self-understanding in their role as pastors. Some have gained confidence in ministering in critical circumstances.

* Benefits of CPE:

1. helps develop "pastoral identity" - gives them a feel for the role
2. increased self-awareness - they learn their strengths and their weaknesses, and how they handle stress
3. broader sense of ministry - having to minister to a wide range of people, in real crisis situations, gives them a vision for ministering to all people

Benefits of requiring CPE:

Some people approach ministry with an entitlement attitude - "God has called me to this role, and who are you to stand in my way!" I find that such

people will not make good Presbyterians unless they learn to function within a structure of authority, accepting that the collective wisdom of the Presbytery has set up guidelines and processes that must be followed. The CPE requirement is often the breaking point for such people. They can give a long list of reasons why it shouldn't apply to them. We hold firm, and in some cases there has been significant positive growth in the person once they finally give in.

The requirement was written because of the benefits of CPE. Those are the reasons we give the candidates. But this unnamed, side benefit of having the requirement has proven very valuable.

* Some people benefit from this experience and in can be helpful in training for pastoral care, albeit in a non-parish setting.

- * 1. Opportunity to strengthen pastoral care skills
- 2. Challenge to integrate suffering into the student's theology
- 3. Requirement to receive feedback in a group setting from other students/colleagues and intentional experience in being supervised and evaluated.
- 4. Opportunity to set goals and self evaluate throughout the CPE service.
- 5. Opportunity or challenge to articulate faith outside of a congregation and to a diverse population.

* The benefits of CPE are that it exposes the Inquirers/Candidates to a process that has the possibility of opening them up to becoming more aware of personal issues that will impact their ministry, it exposes them to critical thinking about their style of ministry, and it gives them an opportunity to grow in their pastoral care skills.

* Based on our collective experience, we found CPE to be mixed in quality. We don't feel the expense is worth requiring it.

* The benefits are both the growth in self-understanding and the ability to act effectively and perceptively in stressful pastoral and clinical contexts.

* CPE provides intensive training in pastoral care far beyond what most people would pick up in the ordinary course of parish life. The case study/verbatim and peer review provide invaluable feedback in a

structured and relatively safe setting. By relatively safe, I mean that CPE interns are not working in the often politically-charged setting of a congregation they are serving as pastor. The CPE supervisor's assessment of an Inquirer or Candidate is valuable to the CPM's ongoing evaluation of that person's gifts for (ordained) ministry. For Inquirers and Candidates, CPE can be enormously confidence-building and empowering, as they learn to use their prayer and inner resources to give appropriate pastoral care in health crisis cases.

- * It provides another tool for CPM to evaluate a candidate's readiness for ministry.

- * Gives inquirer's/candidates an opportunity to develop skills on hospital pastoral care with supervision and peer feedback. Expands self-understanding and places students in a role they will find themselves in repeatedly in the ministry.

- * We have had several candidates that were hesitant about doing CPE (felt it was redundant, they had already done internships in areas of care and calling, the cost, the time, etc.) We have not had one candidate that has regretted doing CPE after it was over. We have had some amazingly glowing reports on how much CPE meant to their understanding of themselves and their ministries. The evaluation for the CPM has consistently been an appreciation for the growth that we have seen in our candidates understanding of their call.

We have had candidates experience approved CPE programs in hospitals, Nursing homes, other care facilities (some focused on adults, some on children), homeless shelters. We have not had any trouble finding programs for the candidates, but sometimes the schedule and cost were had to be worked out

- * We like our students to take a summer condensed experience which gives them a solid look at the world of crisis situations in hospitals and tells them a great deal about themselves and their own ability to deal with sickness, death and/or mental illness prior to becoming the one person a congregation counts on being able to help others deal with these things. It is a training that can not be matched any other way.

- * ...it helps the student to know themselves a bit better....and helps them manage conflict better....if they have a

good CPE mentor they will learn more about themselves than they will with pastoral care.....and they should learn a great deal about pastoral care through this....

- * Great increase in self-awareness; accountability; discipline; spritual growth and maturity; another voice/voices (CPE supervisor and peers) helping to articulate growing edges

- * The main benefits are the teaching of how to function effectively in a medical setting and to develop a pastoral style which is healing. I sway this, even though the setting in which I took mine years ago wasn't all that good.

- * Most report growth in their self understanding,
In their ability to do pastoral visitation,
In their ability to help people in illness or difficulty,
In their ability to work with colleagues from different faith backgrounds.

- * Our CPM has consistently felt strongly that the CPE experience helps to shape pastoral identity and to help put candidates in touch with their own strengths and growing edges and explore how those might impact their present and future ministries.

- * The benefits have always been raved about by all of our inquirers/candidates after the course is over. The personal growth and development, the depth of self-knowledge in hospital settings & grief situations, the interaction of other students in group settings and introspection & reflection, the practice of pastoral skills in the hospital setting, etc. have been integral to their preparation for ministry. Not one has finished the program without being thankful for the opportunity, and felt it was a highlight of their seminary experience.

- * The students can valuable pastoral care experience and also very valuable self-awareness experience.

- * Pastoral experience + self-reflection.

- * I always ask, "Was CPE worth your time and money?" In every case, the answer has been "Yes".

- * CPM has required CPE during the two and a half years I've been on it, and without any discussion that I've heard concerning it. My hunch is that they thought it tested and honed the skills of those preparing to be pastors, but I can't be more specific than that. Whatever their original reason, in traditional Presbyterian fashion thoroughly it's grandfathered in!

* I think two primary benefits. First it can help candidates clarify their sense of call. Second it gives candidates a vehicle to address particular weaknesses or personal issues that could hinder their ministry.

* An enhanced self-knowledge, as well as a competency in dealing with complex pastoral issues.

* It is invaluable as an experience for self-examination and a definite asset in determining ones ministerial profile (type, image, style).

* CPE helps ministerial candidates build their pastoral identity as well as learn the art of pastoring to suffering people. It teaches them how to negotiate with medical staff who may not understand who they are and what their purpose is. It teaches them how to enter a room with authority and claim their legitimate place on a care team.

* Maturing of a person. Specifically in areas of identity in which they are not aware of themselves and committee needs further clarification.

* Better all-round education. Better insights about yourself, adding to psychological assessment.

* The advantage for me is the growth, self-awareness and maturity that the program generally offers

* Students gain a better self-awareness and pastoral identity. For me, then benefit is not pastoral care, but pastoral development. In a recent edition, Alban Institute's quarterly publication talks about this very thing, that CPE help fill the gaps in preparation that academic institutions and presbytery committees are unable to meet.

* According to my immediate predecessor on CPM, Kris Bair, the benefits of CPE are the practical experience and exposure to the kinds of situations pastors will face in ministry, and, even more importantly, the opportunities within a group experience to reflect theologically about their encounters in ministry.

* Gets them out of their comfort zone, has to work on group accountability, is one of the areas our students experience the highest level of personal and professional growth/confidence. Enables them to have more ease with hospital settings and ministry, a large part of the parish experience. Provides the CPM with another type of feedback on our students and their progress. Teaches interfaith/ecumenical relationships, and working

relationships within a non-profit setting. Gets students to assess their own personal beliefs and styles of doing ministry and to become more comfortable with the death and dying process, with various medical issues (practical and ethical), and learn their own styles of pastoral care, to try things out in a supportive setting and to assess what things they do/do not want to carry forward into their ministry. We do at times experience push-back from students about doing CPE, which we talk with them about, but it is a requirement from our Presbytery.

* 1. Gets students into the practical experience of making hospital calls. Teaches them about the world of medical testing and anxiety, as well as crisis and death. 2. Forces them to process said experiences with the supervision of a trained chaplain. 3. Exposes them to other individuals (perhaps from different faiths) who are learning with them. 4. They can witness/experience the sacramental ministry of ordained pastors in the hospital setting (if appropriate, etc.) 5. They can experience a non-church/ interfaith setting and for and order of worship.

* Better self-knowledge on the part of students.

* CPE is unlike any other aspect of preparation for ministry. It is specifically designed to help participants identify areas in which they "get in God's way" as they interact with, and attempt to minister to, others. It encourages students to explore their own personal histories and listen to those of others, thereby awakening them to the reality that their own life experience is not "normative." In our multi-cultural society, our ministers need to be familiar with traditions other than their own. In a good Interfaith CPE program, they learn how to engage in respectful conversation with those of other faiths, both among their peers and in the patient population. (At least that is the case in large city settings.) Our CPM benefits by seeing our Candidates through the eyes of supervisors in the final reports. In some instances, major psychological issues have surfaced during CPE, leading to more candid conversation with the Committee, allowing us to work more collaboratively in finding support for those candidates, helping them to better discern if and when to move forward in the ordination process.

* CPE is especially beneficial in providing self-awareness, as well as doing pastoral visitation in a hospital setting.

* CPE ALLOWS A STUDENT TO GET FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE IN EMERGENCY TYPE SITUATIONS AND ALLOWS THEM TO BE CRITIQUED IN THE PROCESS.

* IN MY EXPERIENCE, CPE has devolved into a universalist

view that devalues the faith with a secular humanist approach that is NOT Christian ministry. I am not impressed by much of what I see after my decades of ministry and do not encourage it.

* CPE is good for a couple of reasons

- a. The action reflection model helps learning in general.
- b. It allows people to learn about themselves
- c. It gives people experience in situations they may not have been exposed to previously
- d. It gives people the opportunity to interact with other seminary students who may differ from them theologically

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1) self-awareness of candidates
2) very practical ministry experience- especially in crisis situations
3) exposure to people of different backgrounds

* Candidates tell us that CPE is the hardest thing they have done and, at the same time, the most rewarding. They are thankful for the experience because they are convinced it has better prepared them for their future ministry. This is a benefit of CPE that the CPM recognizes and wants for all its candidates.

* While these do not apply to everyone all of the time, the benefits we've experienced are: Inquirers & Candidates gain important knowledge and come to significant realizations about themselves and their own "stuff;" their pastoral identity is strengthened; they are more at home in their own skin, having had the opportunity to develop as "reflective practitioners" of ministry. Many students tell us the experience is hard/difficult for them, but that they wouldn't trade it for anything. CPE has helped ground some of our more flighty students, and humble some of the ones who needed it (in a good way).

* The training in general equips for ministry. It gives one the tools for evaluation which are so necessary when we are serving in the church. The evaluation of verbatums is a useful way to see any problems in our techniques which might be corrected to make us better counselors or interventionists.

* **CPE gives the candidate a taste of traditional pastoring in intense situations, something they may not get in seminary or internships. It gives them the experience to focus on an area they may not go into. This is especially important for those candidates that may be interested in more specialized ministries. We are seeing a lot of interest in social justice ministry. It helps broaden their perspective of ministry and their faith.**

* We have found CPE to be beneficial not just in helping students learn how to make pastoral visits, but also in their processing of the experience. They are able to integrate their practice of pastoral care with their understanding of themselves. It gives them the opportunity to see how issues in their own families or backgrounds might influence the way they handle pastoral care situations (i.e., visiting a cancer patient may bring back the pain and grief that the candidate experienced when he lost his own parent to cancer). The supervisor and CPE group help the person process that and learn to deal appropriately with his own reaction.

* Many students have said the CPE experience is at least as valuable as the in-class learning on campus. The insights of themselves as ministers/pastors is so important.

* We feel that CPE is beneficial for several reasons, not the least of which is the practical hospital experience that students receive, as well as the opportunities for intentional reflection upon how students interact with others and how they develop their pastoral style.

* Self-awareness; growth in spirituality; growth in pastoral face to face experience in crisis situations

* Students who have had CPE generally feel it has been a beneficial experience. Having to relate to persons during medical emergencies and the death of loved ones has been instructive and helpful to the students. It has also honed their skills for later pastoral work. The CPE's generally include a kind of group therapy process which has been helpful to the students as well - to "see themselves as other see them", as it were. hope this helps.

* The candidates learn the important skill of figuring out what is "their stuff" and what is the "other person's stuff." The candidates learn about boundaries, pastoral identity, human behavior, psychological response to grief. CPE gives them an opportunity to do something that they willk do often in ministry - visit the sick. The structure of CPM gives students the opportunity to think psychologically about their own issues and about how they can keep those issues from getting in the way of truly ministering to another.

* We believe that the intensive ministry experience, the group process experience and the opportunity to work in-depth on personal issues in ministry in a supervised setting are very important pieces in our inquirers' and candidates' ministry preparation process.

- * Fuller preparation for some of the tasks they are likely to encounter in their futures as pastors.
- * CPE is not only a learning experience for ministry – it provides an in depth experience for the candidate to look inward and gain knowledge of one’s own self.
- * Helps strengthen many of the candidates pastoral and clinical skills, and helps the candidates own personal "issues" surface if there are such.
- * Candidates mature and “grow up” biggest benefit is they get to know themselves better—their strengths and weaknesses. The group meetings they have with other members of their CPE are the best things that we do in preparing candidates for their future work!!!!
- * The benefits of CPE are numerous. Many of us ministers on the CPM feel that it was the most important learning component of our seminary educations. Our experience is that we often encounter resistance from students to our requirement, but they often come back and thank us for requiring them to take CPE.
- * It is very helpful in the assessment process; Inquirers and candidates do not fail to grow in CPE.
- * It helps the inquirer/candidate to determine/reinforce their sense of call. It gives them current experience in what pastoral ministry involves.
- * Benefits include greater self-awareness
- * This is good preparation for the level of counseling most people will need to do in congregational ministry, and the group work also helps with preparation for dealing with group dynamics beyond counseling work. (Not saying that church people can be challenging, but that’s the point!)
- * Almost without exception the CPE experience confirms our inquirer and candidate’s calls to ministry. Only 1 candidate in my time on CPM has had not so good an experience with supervisor, but even for her, the overall experience was very good.
- * Perhaps the greatest benefit is that it forces the inquirer or candidate to examine themselves in terms of their commitment, their spiritual and physical strength as well as their ability to handle failure and criticism.
- * Pastoral experience and self reflection.

* We see so many benefits with CPE for each person. 1) They explore themselves and how they relate to others (and why). 2) They develop pastoral "language" while ministering to patients. 3) They gain experience ministering to people who are going through some of life's extreme circumstances.

* Excellent way to develop pastoral identity, explore sense of calling, give some of our younger candidates needed experience, etc.

* Thankfully most CPE programs have eased up from their past combative nature. Now CPE provides essential reflection on ministry, and ourselves in ministry. For many Candidates it provokes essential self-examination and reflection on the task of pastoral ministry. It also, challenges many of the issues in our lives that may get in the way of effective ministry or that could be destructive in our ministries. In our area there are two different CPE programs offered, one that is largely hospital based and the other that is congregation based. The former also allows for the Candidate to participate in other forms of institutional ministry, e.g., industrial chaplains.

