
VERSION 21

Conveners' Handbook

Adopted by the Executive Chapter
January 22, 2021

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, Inc. (CPSP) offers its programs in clinical pastoral training (CPT), pastoral psychotherapy, pastoral supervision, and psychotherapy supervision as a unique form of ministry and education. Respect for the trainee's person and his/her personal growth, professional development, and unique integration of the personal and professional functioning is central to the CPSP mission.

The *Standards* provide guidance to chapters and other CPSP structures as they do their work of accrediting programs, certifying and recertifying persons, and upholding ethical standards. They ensure consistency in practice and application to ensure the quality and effectiveness of CPSP- accredited training programs and proficiency of certified members.

The *Standards* should be read and applied in the light of the CPSP *Covenant* and *By-laws*, which they seek to implement; where The *Standards* fail to address specific individual circumstances, the spirit of The *Covenant*, informed by conversations with consultants, will govern.

In case of differences of interpretation, the English text will be authoritative.

The Standards Committee is the proponent for ongoing, systematic review of The *Standards*, in collaboration with the Standing Committees (*By-laws*, 7.04(f)); the Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee is the proponent for this document (hereinafter, Handbook).

This *Conveners' Handbook* (January 22, 2021) constitutes a *Standard* of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy.

The Covenant of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy

We, the CPSP members, see ourselves as spiritual pilgrims seeking a truly collegial professional community. Our calling and commitments are, therefore, first and last theological. We covenant to address one another and to be addressed by one another in a profound theological sense. We commit to being mutually responsible to one another for our professional work and direction.

Matters that are typically dealt with in other certifying bodies by centralized governance will be dealt with primarily in chapters. Thus, we organize ourselves in such a way that we each participate in a relatively small group called a chapter consisting of approximately a dozen colleagues. Teaching or counseling programs directed by CPSP Diplomates are the primary responsibility of the chapter.

We commit ourselves to a galaxy of shared values that are as deeply held, as they are difficult to communicate. “Recovery of soul” is a metaphor that points toward these values. We place a premium on the significance of the relationships among ourselves. We value personal authority and creativity. We believe we should make a space for one another and stand ready to midwife one another in our respective spiritual journeys. Because we believe that life is best lived by grace, we believe it essential to guard against becoming invasive, aggressive, or predatory toward each other. We believe that persons are always more important than institutions, and even the institution of CPSP itself must be carefully monitored lest it take on an idolatrous character.

We intend to travel light, to own no property, to accumulate no wealth, and to create no bureaucracy. We, as a community, are invested in offering a living experience that reflects human life and faith within a milieu of supportive and challenging fellow pilgrims.

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy

www.CPSP.org

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CHAPTERS

100. Foundations

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) takes both its name and form from the Roman collegium, a group of peers functioning in an egalitarian manner to develop, share, and promote their expertise.

The mission of CPSP is the accreditation of programs in clinical pastoral training and pastoral psychotherapy training, the qualification and certification of supervisors, and continuing professional education.

The essence of CPSP is relationship.

The heart of CPSP is competence and caring.

The genius of CPSP is the chapter.

110. General

The chapter is the primary expression of CPSP— by intention and design, the primary group, the primary experience, and the primary authority. Within the chapter, the ceaselessly reflexive use of a body of knowledge in interaction creates the reality that is CPSP.

120. Policy statement

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) is composed of chapters, and, in turn, supports chapters' development and functioning according to *The Covenant*.

130. Purpose

The purpose of this *Handbook* is to provide a frame for chapter conveners' understanding of and fulfillment of their role, and to assign responsibility and prescribe procedures for equipping and supporting conveners.

140. Applicability/scope

140.1 This standard provides for a systematic development and expression of the convener role, informed by CPSP practice and the behavioral and social sciences.

140.2 Scope

140.2.1 Applies to conveners of all chapters, including chapters in-formation.

140.2.2 Applies to the following Standing Committees (*By-laws*, § 7.01)

104.2.2.1 Accreditation Oversight

104.2.2.2 Certification of Individuals

104.2.2.3 Certification and Promotion of Chapters

104.2.2.4 Standards

104.2.2.5 Ethics

150. References

The following references are continually under review; where there are differences between the prescriptions in this *Handbook* and the following, the most current version of the references will be authoritative.

150.1 *The Covenant of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy* (hereinafter, *The Covenant*)

150.2 *The By-laws of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy* (By-laws)

150.3 *The Standards of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy* (*Standards*)

150.4 *CPSP Code of Professional Ethics and Principles for Processing Ethical Complaints* (*Ethics*)

150.5 *Accreditation Manual* (*Accreditation*)

150.6 CPSP web site (www.CPSP.org), which updates frequently

THE CHAPTER

200. The Work Task

The work task of the chapter – whether it be focused on the oversight of training programs (accreditation), qualification and certification of supervisors (certification), or continuing professional education (certification) – is the primary factor in determining the chapter’s identity. The priority or emphasis that emerges from interaction between protomembers reflects their needs and, in turn, the appeal that the chapter will have for others.

A chapter that does not understand and commit to its work task is a *basic assumption group*.

210. Mutual recognition of training programs (accreditation)

“Teaching or counseling programs directed by CPSP Diplomates are the primary responsibility of the chapter (*The Covenant*).”

Chapters whose membership includes diplomates (and now, pastoral psychotherapists) whose functions include the conduct of training or counseling practice have, as their work task, oversight of these programs. (See *Accreditation*, Chapter Two, for a life-cycle perspective on chapter responsibilities for accreditation.)

Authorization of training programs is a chapter function; authorization of a clinical supervisor is a chapter function. Review and approval of a training program’s readiness to proceed (preaccreditation) is a chapter function, in collaboration with the Accreditation Oversight Committee. (*Accreditation*, §§ 210-220; §§ 720-720.5)

220. Qualification and certification of supervisors (certification)

“Matters that are typically dealt with in other certifying bodies by centralized governance will be dealt with primarily in chapters (*The Covenant*).”

The chapter’s role is primary in determining a certified member’s entry into any form of supervisory training (*Standards*, §§ 410-410.1.3.6; §§ 450-480; § 510). The relationship between the training supervisor and a candidate for supervisory training must also be approved by the training supervisor’s chapter (*Standards*, § 410.1.3.6; § 460.2; § 510.4).

Both the decision to authorize a member’s entry into supervisory training and the approval of the supervisory relationship require action by a qualified chapter

(*Standards*, § 1130, 1110.2); just as for certification, the chapter must have at least four members of the same or higher-level certification present and participating in the decision. For the member, “critical mass” requires at least four clinical chaplains/pastoral counselors, or pastoral psychotherapists from his/her chapter; for approval of the training supervisor-candidate relationship, at least four diplomates.

230. Continuing professional education (certification)

Certification, as a work task, forms and informs the chapter as a *community of practice*.

Certification provides a pattern for self-directed, life-long learning, and a frame for the members’ continuous engagement with the clinical learning process. In every chapter, achieving and maintaining certification provides both the form and content for chapter life.

Opportunities beyond the chapter – the annual Plenary, National Clinical Training Seminars, and other events – are designed expressly to serve the community’s need for progressive and continuing development as clinicians and supervisors. The chapter has access to those who develop these programs – through its cluster representative to the Chapter of Chapters; through both standing and special committees; and (for chapters whose membership includes diplomates) to the Chapter of Diplomates.

300. The Convener

The convener role represents an alternative to mainstream, culture-bound conceptions about leadership – a joining of experience and theory to inform our practice within the covenant community. The role is informed by group relations theory, which identifies the behaviors (grounded in the *basic assumptions*) that distract the group from its work task; the role of *leader* (understood, by analogy with other systems, as exemplifying the group) is contrary to CPSP practice.

“...[A]ny leader is ignored by the group when his behavior or characteristics fall outside the limits set by the prevalent basic assumption.” (Bion, *Experiences in Groups*)

The role authorizes the incumbent’s initiative in ensuring that the chapter addresses a few, essential tasks – processes – in service to the chapter’s life and work together.

310 Authorizations

The convener (*Standards*, § 1120.1) is authorized and empowered to oversee

- 310.1 The scheduling of chapter meetings,
- 310.2 Coordination and general operation of the chapter, including accreditation program reviews, and
- 310.3 Communication with the regional representative and the Executive Chapter.

320 General operation of the chapter

Includes tasks assigned in other documents, to include

- 320.1 The oversight of programs in clinical pastoral and pastoral psychotherapy training through the accreditation life cycle (*Accreditation*, §§ 200-250.7)
 - 320.1.1 Review of all documentation related to accreditation
 - 320.1.2 Review of training programs' annual reports (*Accreditation*, Appendix A)
- 320.2 The certification of members (*Standards*, §§ 600-640.4.3), and annual review of certifications for renewal (*By-laws*, §§ 8.04-8.05)
 - 320.2.1 Reporting on chapter certification consultations, when the candidate is recommended for certification.
 - 320.2.2 Reporting (on the Annual Chapter Report) on recommendations for renewal of certifications.
- 320.3 Attending to ethical issues in personal and professional functioning when providing peer review and support (*Ethics*, §§ 100-140.4, 220-220.5), and
- 320.4 Processing ethical complaints (*Ethics*, §§ 320-320.2)

330 Included/implied tasks

- 330.1 Reporting any changes in chapter membership to Administrative Coordinator; confirming chapter's acceptance of new members, so that they may be invoiced.

330.2 Communicating proactively with members concerning new/information from the Governing Council committees, or other leadership.

330.3 Arranging for an outside consultant to assist the chapter in formation, conflict, transition, and chapter termination, or no less frequently than once every three years.

340 Other roles

Beyond the chapter, the convener participates in the selection (by consensus) of a Cluster representative to the Chapter of Chapters, a constituent element of the Governing Council. Through the Cluster representative, the chapter participates in the leadership of CPSP life and its processes.

400. Chapter Life

Within the chapter, the life of CPSP is present in its fullness – a small covenant community, bound by commitment to competence and caring *and to one another*. Members know one another and are known – both their practice and profession continually open and accountable to their peers. Chapter life is the heart and soul of the CPSP community.

Chapter members meet to build community, support one another, and challenge and hold one another accountable to the standards that guide our professional practice. In this way, the values and commitments expressed in *The Covenant* **Error! Bookmark not defined.** – collegial professional community; mutual responsibility; personal authority and creativity; persons over institutions – are exhibited most profoundly in our chapters.

To this end, both conveners and members should be familiar with *Standards*, as they apply to chapters.

410. Membership

Membership in a chapter is the basis for membership in CPSP.

CPSP's diverse community welcomes each member into the life and work of a CPSP chapter, without preference or prejudice as to race, ethnicity, national origin, class, age, physical disability, faith group background or affiliation, or sexual or gender identity, orientation or preference.

Members live and function in the spirit of the CPSP *Covenant*, in accordance with the CPSP *Standards*, according to their own chapter rules and traditions, which

shall be congruent with *The Covenant, By-Laws and Standards of CPSP*. (*By-Laws*, § 3.01.)

410.1 Chapters establish their own processes for inviting and receiving candidates into membership. Once a candidate has been accepted into membership, the convener will notify the Administrative Coordinator and then direct the candidate to the web site (www.CPSP.org) to “Joining CPSP,” to establish an account.

The new member will receive an invoice for annual dues, with payment instructions. The new member’s profile will be published once payment is received.

410.2 Emeritus members may continue to be active in their chapters, while paying dues at a reduced rate. (See www.CPSP.org, FAQ About Membership.)

420. Chapter Composition

420.1 Chapter membership is bounded – no fewer than six, no more than twelve members – because of the quality of interaction changes in groups that have too few or too many members. Too few members, and a chapter may lack diversity of perspectives, and become insular; too many, and the quality of intimacy suffers. The potential for knowing and being known is the basis for the criteria for chapter size.

420.2 Trainees may not be members of the same chapter as their clinical supervisor, nor should they join their supervisor’s chapter upon completing training.

420.3 Both the chapter certification consultation (for those seeking to be certified) and the annual review of certifications (for all certified members) require that the chapter have “critical mass,” that is, at least four members certified at the level for which consultation or review is being offered.

Assistance from a “sponsoring chapter” that is qualified to conduct chapter certification consultation and the annual certification review is required if the chapter lacks the required number of certified members, or has been “reauthorized, with conditions,” for the current year.

Qualifying chapter members for certification is a necessary step in being fully capable to perform the duties of a chapter.

430. Forming a chapter

Chapters may form from existing members joining together in new combinations, or may emerge from an existing chapter.

The creation of a new chapter (“in formation”) calls for consultation with and by request to the General Secretary and the Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee. (CPSP *By-Laws*, Article VIII.) The Committee will appoint a consultant to the chapter-in-formation.

Where one chapter has been birthed from another, both chapters are undergoing transition, and should both request consultation.

430.1 The consultant is, by design, separate from any history that may have occasioned the formation of a new chapter, and can guide the chapter through the selection of a convener, establishing a meeting schedule/pattern to support chapter life, and ensure fulfillment of all administrative requirements.

430.2 As a result of this consultation, the new chapter will

430.2.1 Select a convener.

430.2.2 Select a chapter name that is identifiable as a specific geographical location that does not overlap with or subsume other locations. (A city or town name would be appropriate, but a state would not because multiple chapters might exist within a single state. Names that might be deemed offensive are also not permitted.)

430.2.3 Have all members complete the membership process (§ 410, above), to include payment of annual dues.

430.2.4 Enroll no less than four and no more than twelve members. (The Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee may approve exceptions, on a temporary basis, for chapters that are newly forming or in transition.)

430.2.5 Establish a relationship with a “Sponsoring Chapter” approved by the Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee (*Standards*, § 1100) for consulting, mentoring, and certification or renewal of certifications.

430.2.6 Submit a completed New Chapter Form to the Administrative Coordinator (krista@csp.org).

430.3 The consultant continues in this relation to the chapter until released by the Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee.

440 Chapter Meetings

Chapters meet for a minimum of two hours per member per year to ensure enough time for case consultation, support, and accountability. (An older tradition recommends four hours per member per year.) Chapter meetings should be scheduled far enough in advance to avoid conflicts, allowing all members fully to participate.

The circumstances facing each chapter are unique; there is no one “best answer” for how address the work of the chapter, and the necessary business. Day-long meetings, and an

The circumstances faced by each chapter are unique, and may require occasional adjustment in the frequency and duration of meetings, as the members’ needs and the chapter’s responsibilities change, over time. Day-long meetings, with an occasional overnight, allow for the development of relationships that can then be maintained by electronic means. The essential ingredient in building relationships is time.

440.1 Essential tasks in chapter meetings, over the year, include

440.1.1 Examining The *Covenant* in depth, on a recurring basis.

440.1.2 Each member regularly presenting cases/issues for feedback and consultation.

440.1.3 Fostering deep relationships through the sharing of personal concerns, as well as socializing.

440.1.4 Monitoring each member’s personal well-being and professional functioning.

440.1.5 Reviewing members’ progress toward certification.

440.1.6 Reviewing members’ readiness to enter into supervisory training as supervisor-in-training or training supervisor candidate.

440.1.7 Providing guidance and support in opportunities for growth.

440.1.8 Encourage and provide for continuing education for all members.

440.1.9 Foster communication and discussion on timely topics or news from the larger community.

440.2 Stewardship of limited time is important.

440.2.1 Be mindful in the allocation of time for inquirers and visitors to chapter meetings.

440.2.2 Videoconferencing may supplement face-to-face meetings, and increase opportunities for participation, especially for members in distant or isolated places. Encouraging chapter participation in national or regional events e.g., Plenary, National Clinical Training Seminars) may strengthen relationships in chapters that cannot meet regularly in person.

RESOURCES

500. An Asset-based Approach

The term, “assets,” comprehends more than everyday usage would suggest – beyond the items found on a corporate or non-profit balance sheet. CPSP has significant intangible assets.

The knowledge possessed by individual members counts as an asset, so, too the organizational culture – our way of doing things. (Some of this is captured in our key documents; much more is not recorded, but is unspoken, tacit.)

Other assets are not “ours,” in the sense of being possessed or controlled, but may be available – resources that we may borrow, or may become available through strategic alliances, or through invention, or discovery.

New knowledge, or the renewed appropriation of old insights, can be counted as assets, also.

510. Clinical Training

The experience of clinical training provides a more or less common experience and vocabulary for understanding pastoral supervision and clinical chaplaincy. The experience of relationships within the training group provided the pattern (and the longing) for the continued availability of such relationships through chapter life.

The process by which Clinical Pastoral Training is conducted, within CPSP, builds on a fundamental insight about the individual – particularly one who has experienced disappointment or failure – and his/her relationship with a group; “the relationship to the group becomes all important, and that he judges himself by ethical standards which are determined by the group with which he seeks identification and whose approval he needs (Boisen, A., 1936, *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience*, p.172).”

520. Certification

The certification process – centered in the chapter – provides a work task for chapter life, and a design for continuing the clinical learning process into professional life. Through attention to the inner logic of the standards for training and certification, primary experience (both in training, work, and chapter life) – Bion’s *beta* – becomes digested, processed (the *alpha* function) into understanding.

Training and certification thus function both as knowledge base and organizational culture.

530. Consultation

Consultation – both receiving and giving – is familiar as part of the training experience.

The role of convener exhibits consultation in both aspects.

530.1 Receiving consultation

530.1.1 The chapter is expected to utilize consultation no less frequently than every three years, as part of the process for ensuring connection and continued awareness of the larger community.

530.1.2 The chapter is directed to utilize consultation when considering a complaint against one of its members (*Ethics*, § 320.3).

530.1.3 The chapter is directed to receive consultation from the Governing Council in monitoring the resolution of any complaints made against its members, in furtherance of redemption and restoration, as well as justice (*Ethics*, § 220.5).

530.1.4 The chapter is directed to receive consultation while in formation (*By-laws*, Article VIII).

530.1.5 The chapter is encouraged to receive consultation when experiencing conflict or transition.

530.1.6 The Standing Committees' role includes consultation, in their areas of responsibility.

530.1.7 The chapter may receive consultation from the General Secretary (*By-laws*, § 6.02b).

530.1.8 The convener may seek consultation from other conveners, or others.

530.2 Giving consultation

530.2.1 The convener may give consultation, either as an individual or in role.

530.2.2 When functioning as a sponsoring chapter, the chapter provides consultation, mentoring, and assistance in certification consultation and certification reviews.

540. Pastoral Report

A searchable archive of Pastoral Report, from its beginning, is now available at www.CPSP.org – a great resource on many aspects of the clinical pastoral movement.

550. Continuing Education – CPSP Events

Fostering participation in CPSP activities, including Plenary and National Clinical Training Seminars, is a chapter responsibility (*Standards*, § 1120.6). Providing for at least one member's participation (under chapter sponsorship) is encouraged. (*Standards*, § 1120.8).

550.1 Program contents for CPSP plenaries range from fundamentals of the clinical pastoral field to cutting-edge insights.

550.2 National Clinical Training Seminars (NCTS) provide developmental learning experiences targeted to members' identified needs, based on input from conveners and others within the region.