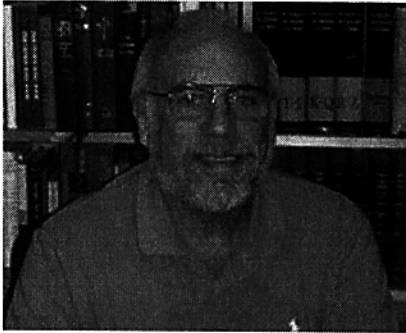


PASTORAL REPORT

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A Concept and Function of a Mentor in the CPSP by The Rev. Dr. Bill Scar, CPSP Diplomate



Abstract: *It has become the practice within our Pacific (Nautilus) Chapter to assure that each person seeking certification has a Mentor to nurture this process. I have been asked to provide a document that presents the context and expectations of this special role within our Chapter life. The following is NOT exhaustive, but it does present a reasonably complete presentation in concise form. As we continue to consolidate the documentation of our Chapter practices, this document is intended to be a basis for an authoritative description. Please especially note what the Mentor is not, and also that the Mentor becomes the advocate of the candidate within the entire process. At the end of this description, I will reflect on the importance of this material in the context of our field and the development of the CPSP. - The Rev. Dr. Bill Scar, CPSP Diplomate*

A Concept and Function of a Mentor in the CPSP The Nautilus Pacific Chapter

Background

For those considering the pursuit of certification within the CPSP, the starting place is the CPSP Covenant to which we subscribe. This is not a “creed” or a “contract”, or even a “pledge”. If you will examine the CPSP covenant closely, you will see that the foundation of our mutuality is *willful commitment* by persons who agree to journey together and become a “we”. It is within the circle of persons committed to one another that the freedoms of our organization exist. And, this is experienced within a matricular model, which was philosophically important to the CPSP founders in 1989 and 1990. In other words, the commitment to one another comes first...it precedes all other elements of our encounter of one another and our mutual growth within the CPSP.

Commitment is not the same as total acceptance; commitment does resemble a contract in that we agree to what each one of us has promised she or he will do; it is even more like a vow in its function, which is a promise you make to yourself about who you will be, and you make this promise in front of others and God.

You will remember that we each claim our alma mater based on having matriculated and not having graduated or yet

achieved anything of substance. Once the CPSP Chapter and the individual seeker agree to join with one another in the pursuit of certification, then it is the responsibility and honor of the Chapter members to put every reasonable and legitimate effort into supporting the success of every individual who participates. The implications of these stated values directly impact our understanding of notions such as support and criticism. There is no "other"; in a matricular model, criticism is in itself support.

The MENTOR

Our intent is that the Mentor embody the very best of matricular energy. Therefore, the Mentor is not a Psychotherapist, with the responsibility to evaluate and support the removal of pathological clinical impediments and the development of a healthy matrix of conscious and unconscious forces within the patient. The Mentor is not a Supervisor, with the responsibility to legally oversee the care of persons treated by the supervisee and journey with the supervisee in the process of direct service and ministry. The Mentor is not an Employer, with the responsibility to assure that the employee's work fulfills the goals and standards of the institution, identify proper compensation for the work of the individual, as well as assure that the institution is legally protected.

The Mentor **IS** the personal embodiment of the matricular commitment of the CPSP Chapter. The Mentor is responsible to assure that the Mentee is prepared personally and has completed all documentable requirements before being presented for professional review. The Mentor is responsible to identify struggles that get in the way of successful membership and ministry, and refer the Mentee back to the therapist, supervisor or employer to deal with issues properly in those arenas. The Mentor is also the advocate of the Mentee and most often represents the strengths and weaknesses of the Mentee to the Chapter, in a way that blesses the growth of the Mentee.

To fulfill the role of a Mentor, experience both in the field and within CPSP is essential. The individual must have been a certified clinical member of CPSP for at least a year and have served as a professional specialized pastoral care provider for at least two years. These are very minimal expectations, but they are necessary in order for the Mentor to understand the distinction of the role and serve as a qualified advocate. The Mentor is the first person the Mentee consults when questions arise about the pursuit of certification. If the Mentor is unable to satisfy the need of the Mentee, then the two of them will consult one [or another] of the available Diplomates. The Diplomates are always directly available to the Mentor.

The Mentor/Mentee relationship is recognized and approved by the Chapter members. Sometimes matters arise that prevent these two persons from working well toward the common goal. Any change of Mentor does require the approval of the Chapter members.

Certification Review

When the Mentor and Mentee agree that all requirements have been addressed in anticipation of the Chapter review for certification, then the Convener is informed of this readiness to proceed. In general, new candidates are reviewed in January and February, in anticipation of the annual certification renewal of all CPSP members that occurs during that time and is confirmed at the national Plenary in March. It is the Mentor who then presents the candidate to the certification committee and functions as the candidate's advocate within the meeting.

When the Chapter evaluates a candidate, it is engaging a person who is already an active participant in Chapter life. Every candidate has already been matriculated into the Chapter, whose members have already made a faithful commitment to journey with the person toward whatever goals, both personal and professional, that person has in his or her life in specialized pastoral care ministry. A certification process and interviews are a direct extension of the ongoing life of the Chapter and its members' affiliation with one another.

REFLECTION

One reported misconception about the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy is that it lacks "intentionality," because our lines of authority and accountability are minimally vertical in structure and our processes exist primarily within the local groupings of colleagues known as "Chapters". In the classic words, "Nothing could be farther from the truth." In fact, it was precisely the intention of the founders and subsequent members and leaders of the CPSP to make the changes in process that would restore and reinvigorate the field of specialized pastoral care ministry. We believed that it was indeed this very vertical structure and layers of administration that contributed to the lack of integrity and justice that were evident in the field in the 1980s, including the obscene amount of time and money that were absorbed within the certification and accreditation activities. The human consequence was that "vested interests" had to justify themselves and defend what was necessary for them to survive as institutions.

These negative developments were not led by people with wrong motives, but were largely reflective of what happens in most organizations as they age and develop and become established. Some of the most prominent leaders of the then existing certifying bodies were determined to respond with conscience to a situation that they themselves had helped to create: What had become established ceased to serve the real values of the field and stood in the way of addressing the needs of God's people at the end of the 20th century. Those leaders came together and became the founders of the CPSP.

The other misconception that continues without merit is that the CPSP is deficient in its standards. Our standards are almost precisely the same as our cognate groups in the field of specialized pastoral care ministry. We are bold to say that our processes is substantially superior, which we strive to evidence with missionary zeal and not critical judgment. The current irony is that so many leaders in the other groups now understand and support our processes, but most are hesitant to publicly celebrate what we have achieved and promoted because that would recognize the legitimacy of our organization itself.

Some of the most important manifestations of our CPSP ethic and logic are the ways we assist candidates to achieve certification within our Chapters. We are all volunteers and willfully choose to associate with one another and support one another. Mentoring is carried on in various ways among our Chapters and exemplifies the commitment of our colleagues in the CPSP to bring forth persons who are fit vessels for the work God has given us to do. The Pacific [Nautilus] Chapter continues to refine its use of the Mentor and, in the true spirit of the CPSP, we are pleased to share both our exploits and our failures with others, both within our own fellowship of Chapters and beyond to the field of ministry that we love.

Email: [The Rev. Dr. Bill Scar, CPSP Diplomate,](mailto:Bill.Scar@CPSP.org)
[Pacific {Nautilus} Chapter](#)

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