

Overview of the Pastoral Visitor Program (PVP)

(Part of Adelphicare.org)

Background

Pastoral or Spiritual care?

A question often arises about whether it is more appropriate to use the term pastoral or spiritual in relation to care. A rough distinction is that spiritual carers focus more on spiritual development of the people in their care - those issues relating to the person's inner being, or what is most central to their life. For Christadelphians, this of course means that God and His Son are central to our life. Pastoral has a broader understanding. One definition refers to emotional, social and spiritual support. In this Program we use the term Pastoral because the work we are doing is to help many people, not only Christadelphians, who have a broad life-context. At the same time, there will be focus on spiritual aspects of inner life - a Christ-centred inner life.

A pastoral carer or a pastoral visitor? What is the difference?

In a formal sense, a pastoral carer has more comprehensive training than a pastoral visitor. If you were thinking of a continuum, it might consist of, at one end, a pastoral counsellor - someone who is trained in psychology and active counselling and listening. In the middle - a pastoral carer who is trained and experienced in the theory and practice of pastoral care, and at the other end, a pastoral visitor - someone who simply wants to be an effective friend and visitor who has basic training in aspects of listening and responding in pastoral/spiritual situations. It is this latter category that is central to this program.

Aim of this Program

- To provide basic training in pastoral/spiritual work suitable for people who wish to simply become more effective when they visit people.
- To assist people care in a variety of situations but focussing initially on older people.
- This content is predicated on the principle that there is a minimum of fundamental aspects of pastoral care that should be developed by all pastoral visitors.

Scope

- Initial pilot offering in Maranatha Aged Care.
- There will be a review of the Pilot Program at the end of the offering.
- Carers anywhere will be welcome. Initially, the Program would be focussed on aged care.
- Eventually, there may be Cells in ecclesias or Cells in other entities such as Women at the Well.
- All Christian participants will always be very welcome.
- There is no timeline for development and offering. The Program will be offered as occasions or needs arise.

Mode of delivery - Basic

- Video online (Microsoft Teams app) or face-to-face where practicable, or mixed.
- One, one hour introductory, explanatory session.
- Six, 2 hour workshop sessions, or, 12, 1 hour sessions spread over 12 weeks with breaks in between.

- As one model, Sessions will include no more than 10 minutes of leader presentation. The remainder of the time will emphasise discussion by participants based on guided reading and prepared questions.
- A Pastoral Visitor Program Handbook will be provided electronically for participants.
- A key element of delivery is **flexibility**. The structure is six modules. These will be developed so that they might be delivered in a variety of ways as long as the content is covered.
- As there are no written assignments (apart from the verbatim Project – Module 6) so considerable emphasis is based on interaction between participants within workshops.
- The Program will be developed to enable maximum flexibility of delivery - guided reading, discussion, the notional 2 hour workshop is the basis.
- Flexible hours of delivery according to a local Cell's preference and availability. E.g. daytime (for retirees) after work for younger – working people, 3 weekends of 4 hours, evenings for working people.
- A major aspect of this Program is that it is assumed that people interested already have visiting abilities and that they are participating because they wish to hone them a bit more. **For this reason, prior preparation through reading and thinking is a vital element of a person's involvement.**
- Microsoft Teams will be used because it has no costs attached to it and it is relatively simple to use. There will not be screening of videos during a workshop and other aids, viz. e-slides, will be kept to a minimum.

Content

- Introductory session - Outlining the program and participation requirements.
- Module 1 – What is pastoral care and pastoral visiting?
- Module 2 – Basic caring: communication.
- Module 3 – Loss and grief: suffering and death.
- Module 4 – Ageing and aged care.
- Module 5 – Health issues in aged care.
- Module 6 – Project: Conversation with an older person.

Assessment

Completion

- At the successful completion of the complete program, a participant will be awarded a Certificate of Completion.
- Assessment will involve successful participation in each of the six workshop sessions.
- Preferably, the six sessions would be part of the same group but if a participant misses one or more sessions in a particular group, he or she may participate in a similar session in a later group.
- Practical experience by participants would be important (Module 6).
- One way of doing this might be for a participant to work with a spiritual care coordinator in an aged care home to link with an older person, have one visit (15 minutes), explore the person's spirituality and then complete a verbatim account of the visit. This could then be the subject of discussion between a participant and team leader and group in the final session.
- Another possibility is for the participant to record verbatim a visit with any of their older friends and discuss this as above.
- In either case, the participant will need to seek permission from the older person for the visit.
- Please note that the verbatim is not to be audio recorded.
- It would be good if a leader could be available to talk though issues raised by participants occasionally after their program is complete.

Requirements of participants

- A commitment to spiritual care.
- A commitment to attending and participating in workshops.
- Preparing for each workshop by reading the recommended articles and giving thought to the questions provided. These will be discussed in workshops.
- Workshop leaders will invite participants to answer the questions on a rotational basis during the workshop.
- Each group for the program will consist of a maximum of five participants.
- At the successful completion of the Program, the participant would volunteer to be a Pastoral Visitor at the aged care home where their training was arranged for a period of six months.
- Participants would be required to register as volunteers with the aged care home with which they are associated. (This is a local requirement.)

Personnel

Leaders. These will be qualified and experienced carers. On occasions, the discourse may be provided by suitable brothers or sisters with outstanding qualifications or expertise in a special field.

Costs. There will be no cost associated with the Program.

General

- Participants might come from any location even from within one group. (Video delivery.)
- It is envisaged that initially, participants will largely come from recommendations made by spiritual care coordinators in various CHomes. One of the principles of this program is that we are trying to increase the number of volunteer pastoral visitors in each home.

Administration of the Program

- The Association of Australian Christadelphian Ecclesias (AACE) has been invited to host the Program. One of the objectives of the Association is
To foster a support network to assist within a Scriptural framework, brothers and sisters and associated young people who may be experiencing difficult personal situations, supplementary to the caring services provided by ecclesias and other Christadelphian organisations.
- It is within this broad umbrella that the Pastoral Visitor Program would be conducted and in association with Adelphicare.org, also an entity of the AACE. Participants would be awarded a Certificate of Completion under the banner of the AACE.
- As much Australia-wide involvement as possible would be sought in contributing as leaders and participating in the Program.
- If a participant is associated with an aged care home and will volunteer in the home when the Program is complete, it will be necessary to complete the volunteer application process for that Home by midway through the Program.
- **Maranatha Aged Care (Brisbane)** would be involved first as the host of a pilot program.

Variations

- The premise for the above development is that interested and motivated people can gain a basic understanding of pastoral care.
- There may be some people who prefer to complete just one or two workshops of particular interest to them.
- A special offering of such a module can be made from time to time as either a video (not audio) meeting or face-to-face.
- The special offering would have the title associated with the session, e.g. Coping with Cancer.

- There need be no numbers limit on such an offering. The principles of offering would be the same – presentation and interaction.
- Those attending will be offered a Certificate of Attendance when the session has finished. There would be no assessment as required in the full PVP because it may not be possible for all participants to participate in discussion.
- Eventually, Module 5 might involve an optional component which could consist of a choice of, say, older people, young families, palliative care etc.
- Sessions could be advertised through the Adelphicare Newsletter.



Promo Leaflet for PVP

Do you care about others?

We're sure you do - otherwise you wouldn't be reading this! Most likely, you are already involved in a caring activity.

Would you like to care better?

We can help!

A pastoral visitor program

We are offering a short training program that will enable you to be a more effective carer. This program focusses on spirituality - the centre of a person's being. One person described it once as 'What makes you tick!' This may or may not involve religion. For Christadelphians, Jesus Christ is the centre of our being.

About the Program - Summary

- The training will involve 6x2 hour video workshops (Microsoft Teams) led by experienced and qualified pastoral carers.
- Assessment will involve the completion of all 6 modules of the Program.
- Successful completion of the modules will involve the leader in attesting to the attendance and participation of participants in discussion in all six modules.
- Successful completion of the Program will result in the participant receiving a successful completion certificate.

Will this lead to employment opportunities?

This is not a recognised Australian Qualifications Framework course so will not be recognised as formal training. It is not designed for this. It is designed to simply help you to visit more effectively.

However, it is likely that you will be accepted as a volunteer pastoral visitor in an aged care home. In fact, we would encourage you to ask management in a Christadelphian care home near you if you can join the volunteer team as a pastoral visitor.

Where do I need to live?

You can live anywhere in Australia and undertake the Program as long as you have a good internet connection.

Would you like to learn more?

Please visit <https://www.adelphicare.org/visitor> or send an email to editor@adelphicare.org to request more information.

We would really welcome your interest and involvement.

Please express interest in becoming involved in the Program by completing the [Contact Us](#) page on the Adelphicare website:

<https://www.adelphicare.org/visitor/index.html>

