

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program Process and Guidelines

Purpose

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) has a dual purpose. It is a ministry training program that provides instruction to CPE residents on dealing with persons in crisis. Typically, CPE programs are found in, but not limited to, hospitals, correctional facilities, hospices, or even law enforcement agencies. And second, it is a discernment tool for the resident to use in making career decisions. CPE programs provide an opportunity for the resident to explore feelings, examine faith practices and beliefs, and evaluate their own feelings of grief and loss.

Program Location

As stated, CPE programs are typically found in healthcare and corrections settings. Established programs administered by either the Association of Pastoral Educators (ACPE) or the College of Pastoral Educators and Psychotherapists (CPSP) can be found in virtually every part of the country and Canada. Saint Ambrose College accepts these programs and awards full academic credit upon completion. These programs, however, are difficult to get into. CPE is required by most seminaries so the list of applicants is long.

Saint Ambrose offers an alternative should admission to an ACPE or CPSP program not be available. Especially in more remote areas of the United States and Canada, it may not be logistically feasible to commute long distances to provide volunteer ministry. Also important is the fact outlying or remote areas may be most in need of pastoral care.

If this is your situation, follow these steps:

- 1) Locate a nursing home, hospital, senior living center, hospice, correctional facility or any other approvable pastoral care setting.
- 2) Interview the facility chaplain, or if one is not available, the executive director and make application as a pastoral volunteer. Saint Ambrose will furnish a letter of introduction if needed.
- 3) Request the facility chaplain act as your CPE supervisor. All certified chaplains or seminary graduates are familiar with the CPE program.
- 4) It will be necessary to verify and approve the facility chaplain's credentials. A form will be provided for this purpose. If approved, the Chaplain will be paid a \$250.00 stipend by Saint Ambrose for supervising your training.
- 5) If there is no facility chaplain, Saint Ambrose may appoint an approved CPE supervisor to oversee your program. He will be paid the same stipend.
- 6) Complete the "CPE Application."
- 7) Request the supervising chaplain complete the "CPE Supervisor Form."
- 8) If you are enrolled in a degree program, cost of the CPE course has been included in your tuition. You will not owe additional fees regardless of the location of your program.
- 9) If you are not enrolled in a degree program, the fee including the stipend Saint Ambrose pays the CPE supervisor will be \$500.00.

Program

To receive credit for a CPE course Saint Ambrose requires:

- 1) That you keep a daily journal or your CPE experience. Record interesting cases, encounters with patients and/or their families, and the outcome of your contact with them. In addition, record how you felt after each encounter. Did you feel sad? Did you feel angry at an uncaring spouse? Did you grieve with parents over the death of their child? Tell yourself what you learned, what you did right, and what you would do differently. Chaplaincy is different than anything you have ever done. Your journal will be a valuable future resource.
- 2) Hold periodic conferences with your supervisor, preferably every 40-80 work hours and discuss your journal entries. Learn how your chaplain supervisor handles like matters and hear how he/she learned from mistakes. The supervisor must submit a short report on your progress. It should be discussed with you and both of you should sign it. Forms will be provided.
- 3) At the end of your program, your supervisor will submit a course end summary of your performance.
- 4) A copy of your journal, periodic supervisor reports, and final evaluation form will be the basis for your grade.

I can guarantee you will find the CPE experience one of the most rewarding things you have ever done.