

ber that specialized training and licensing is necessary to serve as a counselor. It is important to be clear that a minister is not a counselor. It is important to acknowledge the limits of one's own competence and be willing to make referrals to professionals whose perspective is in line with the moral and ethical beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Professional Referrals

Policy: Each parish should maintain a readily accessible list of social agencies whose work is in line with the moral and ethical beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Best Practice: Catholic Charities has a parish counseling network that provides low-cost, short-term counseling to parishioners referred by the pastor or an individual designated by him. Talk to your pastor about this program.

Best Practice: Should a young person or parent/guardian request information regarding a counseling referral, it is advised that the ministry leader recommend that the family meet with their primary care physician and receive a referral within their insurance plan. It is not recommended that ministry leaders make referrals directly to counselors; however, in cases where the family does not have a primary care physician or requests a referral, ministry leaders making any type of referral should furnish at least three resource options.

Disclosure

We are partners with the parents/guardians of those to whom we minister and are to act as such. Transparency is an essential element of the youth ministry-parent/guardian relationship.

Policy: Youth ministry leaders recognize a young person's expectation of privacy relating to information the young person may share, and honor that in a professional way. While a young person may request that the youth ministry leader keep information confidential, a youth ministry leader may not under any circumstances ask or require a young person to keep their conversations with the youth ministry leader confidential. Moreover, a young person's privacy considerations do not extend to information regarding serious foreseeable and imminent harm to the young person or others. Examples of issues that would contravene a young person's privacy include, but are not limited to, child abuse, sexual/physical threats to others, abortion and suicidal ideation. In these situations, it is essential to seek the appropriate resources for assistance for the young person(s) and family(ies) involved in partnership with parent/guardian(s). If a minor discloses abuse in the home, the parents or guardian will not be notified, and a report should be made to Child Protective Services immediately. If a minor discloses abuse outside the home, the parents or guardian will be notified immediately, along with appropriate authorities.

Policy: Follow the principle of "going one up." Confidentiality does not mean secrecy. Going one up means sharing with your supervisor (e.g. pastor, pastoral associate, DRE, youth ministry coordinator) difficult conversations with and/or concerns for young people and/or their parents. This practice helps to ensure healthy decision-making, contextualizing of issues within the larger family situations, and awareness of the pastor to potential situations.

FINANCES

Budget

It is good stewardship for all youth ministries to keep a clear record of how money is collected and used.

Best Practice: Work with your pastor or parish manager to develop and maintain an annual budget.

Deposits and Expenditures

Policy: A record of all money collected and spent shall be kept and submitted monthly to the parish manager or pastor.

Policy: Youth ministries cannot keep separate checking accounts from the parish. Parish youth ministry is not a separate "club" but an intrinsic ministry of the parish.

Policy: All money must be deposited into the parish accounts. No collected money can be deposited into personal accounts.

RECORD KEEPING AND RETENTION

Policy: The following forms/electronic records need to be kept for the indicated time. All forms associated with an injury or other incident are to be kept permanently:

- Youth Ministry Information Sheet: 12 months
- Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheets: 12 months unless an incident occurs
- Volunteer Records: Permanently
- Permission Forms/Medical Release Forms: Permanently
- Incident Reports: Permanently

Policy: Ensure that there is a locked location to keep forms. Medical forms contain personal information and must be locked in a safe location.

Best Practice: Scan forms annually and place the electronic files on two password-encrypted USB drives. See storage policy below.

Policy: If forms are scanned, scan them annually and place the scans on two encrypted USB drives. Place one drive in the parish safe and keep the other drive in a secure location in case of fire. Create a binder for each year that contains the Youth Ministry Information Sheets and Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheets.

Best Practice: Consider electronic data and record-keeping programs such as MinHub.