

Hearts on Fire: Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders (FUMSDRL)

GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT

The Spiritual Leader and the Self

Ethical conduct flows from lived reverence for all of Life, self, and others but is not inevitably the reality of the practice of spiritual leadership. Therefore, these guidelines are meant to inspire members of FUMSDRL toward integrity, responsibility, and faithfulness in their ministries of spiritual direction and retreat leadership.

Personal Responsibility

Spiritual directors and retreat leaders assume responsibility for personal growth by:

- Participating in regular experiences of spiritual support and/or mentoring, such as spiritual direction or covenant groups
- Following personal and communal spiritual practices and disciplines
- Practicing self-care, wisely balancing time for spiritual practices, work, leisure, family, and personal relationships

Professional Formation

Spiritual directors and retreat leaders engage in ongoing formation and continuing education by:

- Continuing to discern their call to the ministry and service of spiritual direction and retreat leadership
- Nurturing self-knowledge and freedom
- Cultivating insight into the influences of culture, social-historical context, environmental setting, and institutions
- Studying sacred texts, theology, spirituality, psychology, and other disciplines related to spiritual direction and retreat leadership

The Spiritual Leader and their Ministry

Dignity

Spiritual directors and retreat leaders honor the dignity of those they serve by:

- Respecting the values, culture, conscience, spirituality and theology of others
- Recognizing the imbalance of power in spiritual direction and retreat leadership and taking care not to exploit it

- Establishing and maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries with those they serve
- Refraining from sexualized behavior, including, but not limited to: manipulative, abusive, or coercive words or actions toward others

Confidentiality

Spiritual directors and retreat leaders maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of those they serve by:

- Keeping confidential all oral, electronic, and written matters arising in spiritual direction sessions and retreat settings
- Setting ground rules regarding confidentiality and respectful behavior for all participants in group settings

The Spiritual Leader and the World

Faith and Spiritual Communities

Spiritual directors and retreat leadership maintain responsible relationships by

- Remaining open to processes of corporate discernment, accountability and support
- Appropriately drawing upon the teachings and spiritual practices of spiritual communities
- Respecting the relationships of those being served to their own communities

Society

Spiritual directors and retreat leaders, when presenting themselves to the public, preserve the integrity of spiritual leadership by being in right relation with persons and organizations:

- Representing qualifications and affiliations accurately
- Defining the particular nature and purpose of their ministries
- Seeking opportunities to be spiritually available to the underserved
- Living in an ecologically responsible and sustainable manner
- Respecting all persons regardless of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, religion, spiritual tradition, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, any preference, personal characteristic, condition or status.

These guidelines were adapted from the “Guidelines for Ethical Conduct” found on the Spiritual Directors International (website to reflect inclusivity of the ministries of both spiritual direction and retreat leadership represented by FUMSDRL members. Spiritual directors should consult the above-referenced guidelines on the SDI website for more guidance related specifically to the ministry of spiritual direction: <http://www.sdiworld.org/publications/guidelines-ethical-conduct> .

Adopted unanimously by the Board, November 18, 2016

Reviewed and approved by the Board, July 30, 2019

Name Change from Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders: Hearts on Fire (FUMSDRL) to Hearts on Fire: Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders (FUMSDRL) - January 20, 2017