



# POLICY DOCUMENT

**Title:** Spiritual Directors' Risk Management Policy

**Current as at** 6 November 2013

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Policy statement

WellSpring is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all those involved with its ministry, including staff and volunteers and those who participate in its programs. Specifically, this policy addresses those undertaking Spiritual Direction, both Directors (including those in formation to become Directors) and those coming for direction.

The aim of the policy is to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, particularly arising out of sexual misconduct, and to ensure that an appropriate response follows any alleged occurrence of abuse.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all Spiritual Directors who are trained by the WellSpring Centre and who maintain appropriate on-going supervision and professional development once acting as a Spiritual Director. It also applies to those Spiritual Directors trained by other organisations to whom the WellSpring Centre may refer those seeking direction.

The policy applies to Spiritual Direction whether undertaken at the WellSpring Centre or in other appropriate settings.

### 1.3 Authority

This policy was adopted for use by the WellSpring Board of Directors on 14 December 2005 and reviewed on 5 December 2012.

The WellSpring Centre is committed to implementing those procedures that follow from this policy, including the training of its Spiritual Directors.

## 2. Obligations

### 2.1 Spiritual

The ministry of WellSpring, including Spiritual Direction, is underpinned by values of respect for human dignity and human rights, values we understand to reflect the nature of God. Therefore each person must be treated with dignity and respect and cannot be used for the pleasure, satisfaction or benefit of others.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2 Legal

WellSpring Spiritual Directors are subject to Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction's *Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors*.

### **3. Training**

Spiritual Directors undertake a thorough course of formation and preparation for their ministry. As part of that course they are made familiar with and are trained in understanding the Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors as developed by the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction, and they are given a copy of that Code.<sup>2</sup>

### **4. A safe environment: Code of Ethics**

It is the responsibility of WellSpring Spiritual Directors to provide a safe and appropriate environment when they are giving spiritual direction, recognising the risks associated with deep personal interaction with another. Accordingly, Spiritual Directors are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors, which sets out Spiritual Directors' responsibilities towards:

- themselves
- their directees (that is, those who come for spiritual direction)
- faith communities
- their colleagues,
- those whom they supervise
- students of Spiritual Direction formation programs
- society

This Code specifies the ways in which Directors are to respect the individuality, dignity and privacy of their directees, especially in order to prevent any kind of abuse.

### **5. Reporting procedures**

A person who believes that he or she has been subject to abuse should in the first instance communicate with the Director of WellSpring or the Chair of the WellSpring Board. (Contact details are given below.) Normally the person will be expected to put their concern in writing.

The Director or Chair of the Board of Directors is required to make a report to the Board of Directors, which shall determine an appropriate response.

### **6. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the WellSpring Board of Directors. Those affected will be informed of any changes that follow from that review.

#### **Contact details:**

##### **Director of WellSpring:**

Name: Ann Lock  
Phone: (03) 9885 0277  
Mail: WellSpring Centre, PO Box 300, Ashburton, 3147  
Email: ann.lock@wellspringcentre.org.au

**OR**

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<sup>2</sup> This Code of Ethics was adopted by the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction. Since 2004 it has been the basis of training in the WellSpring Centre's formation course for Spiritual Directors. Prior to that date, those in training were given and made familiar with the international code of ethics that preceded the current national Code of Ethics. All Directors now have a copy of the current Code.

**Chair of the Board of Directors:**

Name: Merrill Kitchen

Phone: (03) 9885 0277

Mail: WellSpring Centre, PO Box 300, Ashburton, 3147

Email: merrill.kitchen@wellspringcentre.org.au

**Privacy Statement**

WellSpring acknowledges the aims and principles of the Privacy Act and endeavours to ensure that its staff and volunteers exercise appropriate care when information about individuals and other sensitive information is collected, stored and distributed.

**Reference**

Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction: [www.spiritualdirection.org.au](http://www.spiritualdirection.org.au)