

Associated Chaplains in California State Service (ACCSS) Code of Ethics



A. Preamble

1. Chaplains* of the professional organization known as Associated Chaplains in California State Service (ACCSS) shall conduct their chaplaincy with integrity according to the ethical and professional principles set forth in this Code of Ethics. Chaplains are to assure that their conduct is acceptable to God/Creator, to their faith community, and to the department under which they serve.
2. Chaplains shall maintain a responsible relationship with the faith group by which they have been endorsed or received their ordination.
3. Chaplains have the responsibility to be well versed in moral law and departmental policies and regulations. They shall uphold these statutes in their chaplaincy.
4. Chaplains' conduct shall be exemplary, paying strict attention to the discharging of the duties of a chaplain. Chaplains shall exemplify justice and morality.

B. Interpersonal Relationships

1. Chaplains shall strive to maintain a healthy relationship with their colleagues. It shall be their endeavor to function as partners in accomplishing their mission.
2. Chaplains shall cooperate with all staff and officials in discharging the duties of a chaplain regardless of religious affiliation.
3. Chaplains shall maintain a working relationship with other counselors, therapists, and medical staff, informing and conferring with them about mutual concerns.
4. Chaplains shall never malign nor speak falsely of their colleagues or other professionals; rather they shall protect the welfare and respect the integrity of their colleagues.
5. Chaplains shall report any serious misconduct of those in the chaplaincy to the proper authorities.

C. Professionalism

1. Chaplains shall maintain strict confidentiality in counseling except in cases in which disclosure is necessary to prevent harm to persons or is required by law.
2. Chaplains receiving certain information from clients through individualized counseling or observation are to consider that information as *privileged communication*. Privileged communication is that which is intended only for the chaplain confided in. It may only be released with the consent of the revealer.
3. Chaplains shall guard the identification of their clients in consultations, presentations, or publications unless written consent is given by clients or an authorized family member of a client.
4. Chaplains shall affirm the religious and spiritual freedom of all persons. They shall refrain from imposing doctrinal beliefs or spiritual practices on their clients.
5. Chaplains shall not engage in proselytizing. They shall not berate other religious groups or faiths. They shall seek to maintain a respectful relationship with persons of other faith groups.
6. Chaplains shall discharge all of their duties indiscriminately. They shall avoid being placed in a position where they may be justifiably accused of giving special consideration to a particular client or group of clients.
7. Chaplains shall be spiritual in attitude and action toward all clients, never displaying any discrimination due to race, social class, religious belief, sexual preference, or political preference.

D. Responsibilities

1. Chaplains are called to be servant-leaders. They shall serve in wisdom, love, faith and integrity.
2. Chaplains shall be above reproach in manner and appearance in all activity.
3. Chaplains shall responsibly maintain their physical and emotional health through regular exercise, good eating habits, and care for their body.
4. Chaplains shall be spiritually nurtured whether through reading, prayer and/or meditation.
5. Chaplains shall be responsible for their continued growth intellectually through personal study, comprehensive reading and attending conferences and training.
6. Chaplains shall be honest in all their financial dealings.
7. Chaplains shall not seek or accept gratuities in their capacity as State Chaplains.

8. Chaplains shall faithfully discharge their duties through proper work habits and scheduling.

9. Chaplains shall not knowingly use or permit others to use their service to secure improper personal or professional advantage.

10. Chaplains shall never exploit, manipulate or take advantage of the vulnerabilities of their clients.

11. Chaplains shall never become sexually or romantically involved with their clients; nor shall they engage in any erotic or romantic contact with them.

12. Chaplains shall manage their personal lives well, seeking appropriate assistance for their personal problems, struggles, or difficulties.

13. Chaplains shall always be aware of their personal needs and vulnerabilities and shall never seek to meet their personal needs through their counselees.

14. Chaplains shall refer their clients to other appropriate professionals if unable to meet their clients' needs.

E. Scope and Impact of the ACCSS Code of Ethics

1. The word *Chaplains* is commonly used, as in this document, to refer to those persons charged with the responsibility to oversee, guide, direct, provide, serve, advise, administer or otherwise facilitate religious service or spiritual care for any and all individuals and groups of people desiring it. While chaplains in California state service are personally affiliated with and endorsed by a particular religious or spiritual entity, chaplains provide for the religious and spiritual needs of a broad range of individuals.

2. Chaplains shall not construe this Code of Ethics to be an exhaustive, all-encompassing statement concerning personal and professional conduct. It addresses many of the concerns that have surfaced by observing past practice within the profession of the institutional chaplain. It is considered to be a reasonable statement by which the success or failure of chaplains in state service may be evaluated.

*Chaplains may or may not bear the additional title, designation or description of **rabbi, priest, father, mother, sister, brother, deacon, minister, lay minister, spiritual director, spiritual advisor, native spiritual advisor, guide, imam, monk, practitioner, shaman, apostle, evangelist, prophet, pastor, teacher, elder, bishop, overseer, reverend** or other associated term.