

# The Restoration of Clergy in the Church of the Nazarene

## **An Implementation Guide for District Leaders:**

### **The Recovery Phase**



GLOBAL CLERGY DEVELOPMENT

Church of the Nazarene

2017-2021

## **Read this.**

The 2017 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene approved and adopted significant revisions to the clergy restoration process. This guide provides information and suggested procedures for district leaders responsible for applying the new provisions. In light of the many cultures, customs, and languages that comprise our Nazarene family, Global Clergy Development fully expects and hopes there will be thoughtful adaptations of this guide so that the intent of the new provisions may be fully realized in every setting.

Reading the Manual provisions related to the restoration of clergy in advance of exploring the following pages will prove an invaluable aid in making the most of this document. See paragraphs 538-540 of the 2017-2021 Manual. The Manual is available as an [online searchable document](#) and as a downloadable and searchable [PDF](#). In this document, linked Manual references will take you to the online Manual. Please note that the use of this guide is purely voluntary, and the information and suggestions are not intended as legal advice.

Global Clergy Development stands ready to assist you in any way as you implement these new Manual provisions and also welcomes your suggestions for improving this document.

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### **You might want to know this.**

Many scenarios can develop in situations of clergy misconduct and recovery. The best outcome of the restoration effort is the recovery of healing and wholeness. Please note that, this document refers to the “the minister and spouse” as participating together in the journey to recovery although we fully realize some ministers are not married or, if they are married, their spouse may not be working through recovery with them.

### **Some people to thank.**

The action of the 2017 General Assembly to revise the clergy restoration process would not have happened apart from the efforts of the Board of General Superintendents who made it a priority matter, thanks in large measure to then General Superintendent J.K. Warrick. We are grateful for the genuine compassion that spurred the desire to create a clearer and more redemptive approach to clergy restoration. Dr. Daniel Copp, Global Clergy Development Director, also added his much-appreciated support from start to finish as did Dr. David Wilson, General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene.

We appreciate, too, the following persons who contributed to the development of this *Implementation Guide* the rich combination of their professional training, experience, and love for ministers and their families and for the Church of the Nazarene: Dr. Chris Adams, Mrs. Kathy Heck, Dr. Orlando Serrano, and Dr. Rick Underwood.

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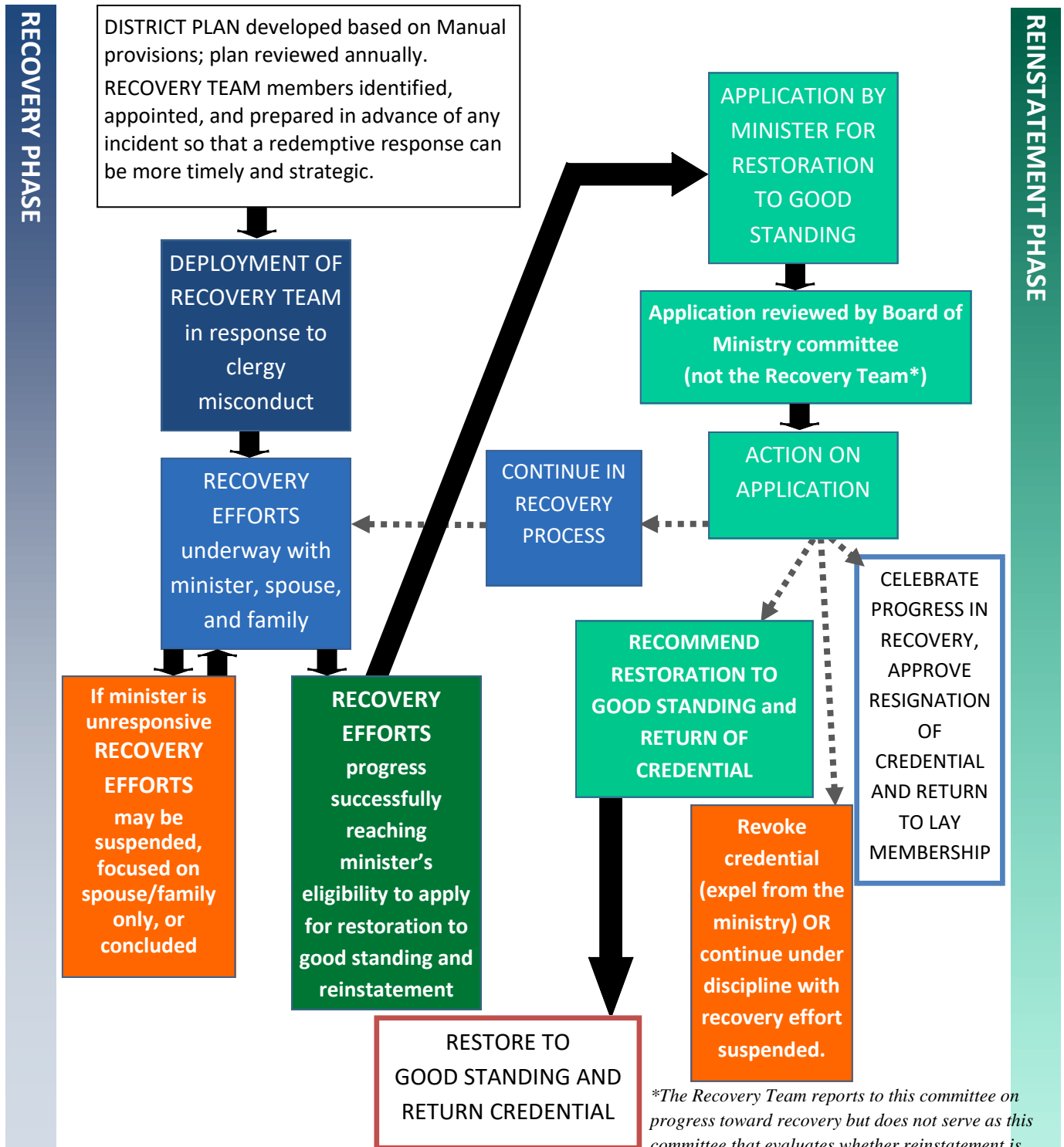
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# THE CLERGY RESTORATION PROCESS

## CORE CONCEPT:

In cases involving the surrender of credential, the revised Clergy Restoration process occurs in two closely related but separately conducted movements or stages:

- ◆ Recovery
- ◆ Reinstatement



# PART I

## Orientation to the Restoration Process

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Manual paragraphs 540-540.12 describe the process that is to begin when a member of the clergy has surrendered his or her credential.

The Church of the Nazarene holds its ministers to a high standard of conduct. For this reason, any minister found guilty of misconduct is placed under discipline. This means the minister is relieved of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a minister. As a church, however, we believe our response should be as extravagantly redemptive as the gospel we proclaim. For this reason, the 2017 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene substantially revised the restoration process for Nazarene ministers in order to create a clearer and more redemptive process by which the minister might regain the confidence of the church and return to ministerial service.

### 1. FOUR KEY COMPONENTS OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

**A. The Recovery Phase is separate from the Reinstatement Phase.** The revised process separates restoration into two distinct but closely related steps: *recovery* and *reinstatement*. This change is of fundamental importance because it establishes the recovery of the minister and his or her family, spiritually and otherwise, as the first priority *without regard for the likelihood of the reinstatement of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a minister*.

The revised process separates restoration into two distinct but closely related steps: *recovery* and *reinstatement*.

**B. The Recovery Phase includes the recovery of the minister's spouse and family.** In fact, the revised process calls for the district to pursue the recovery of the minister's spouse and family even if the minister is unwilling to participate in recovery.

**C. The district is to adopt a plan that assures a redemptive, timely, and sustained recovery effort.** The revised process requires the district to be intentional in formulating a response to clergy misconduct that is *redemptive, timely, and sustained* throughout the process. For this reason, each district is to develop and review annually a plan that will guide their response in the event of a situation of misconduct. See [Appendix A](#), Elements of a District Plan for Response to Clergy Misconduct.

**D. The minister must apply for reinstatement.** Upon approval of the Recovery Team, a minister under discipline may apply for reinstatement of the rights and privileges of being a minister after a period of at least two years. Otherwise, no application may be made for reinstatement until the minister has actively participated in the recovery process for at least four years.

Surrender of credential involves *immediate and complete cessation of all ministry activity*, whether the minister was assigned or unassigned at the time of surrender, or had previously filed his or her credential.

## 2. CLERGY RESTORATION AND CONTESTED DISCIPLINE

The clergy restoration process outlined in Manual [540-540.12](#) describes the process that is to begin as soon as possible after a member of the clergy has surrendered his or her credential. A voluntary surrender is normally accompanied by the minister's willingly returning his or her credential certificate to the district superintendent. In other instances, the acknowledgement is less forthcoming and the credential is surrendered involuntarily.

The involuntary surrender of a credential sometimes involves a process known as **contested discipline**. Contested discipline often begins with an exploratory investigation possibly followed by signed accusations, a formal investigative process, the filing of charges, and a hearing before a Board of Discipline (see Manual 606-616.7). This Board is authorized to determine appropriate disciplinary measures. Such measures may include requiring the surrender of the minister's credential. At that point, the process outlined in Manual [540-540.12](#) becomes applicable.

## 3. SURRENDER VS. SUSPENSION

The **surrender of credential** involves the loss of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy for a period of at least two years [[538](#), [540.7](#)]. In cases of sexual misconduct, surrender of credential is the proper response and involves immediate and complete cessation of all ministry activity,<sup>1</sup> whether the minister was assigned or unassigned at the time of surrender, or had previously filed his or her credential. In situations of the surrender of credential, there may be a point in the process when a minister under discipline may be allowed to re-engage in ministry while he or she remains actively engaged with the Recovery Team [[540.4](#)].

**Suspension of credential** may be the more appropriate response to some kinds of misconduct. This is certainly true in cases of non-compliance with specific Manual provisions relating to

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<sup>1</sup> "Ministry activity" means engagement in ministry of any and every kind. In the case of unassigned ministers or of ministers who have previously filed their credential, examples of ministry activity would include teaching Sunday School, leading a small group, serving in worship ministries, and the like [[539](#), [540.4](#)].



certain administrative regulations [538, 539.4]. Suspension may also be more appropriate than surrender of credential in other situations as well. For example, suspension may be the most productive response to a minister exhibiting unhealthy emotional behaviors or struggling with a destructive habit. In such cases, the terms of suspension may allow the person to remain in an assignment under certain conditions. In such instances, professional counseling may be required or time away from an assigned ministry mandated so that the minister may give focused attention on an issue debilitating to the his or her well-being, family, or ministry.

When prudently applied, the option of suspension can create an important level of stability for the congregation and for the minister and his or her family while the matter is addressed.

**Note:** Suspension places a minister under discipline, constituting the minister's loss of good standing as a member of the clergy. Contact the General Secretary's office for guidance on this point with respect to the preparation of the district journal.

#### 4. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Under the provisions adopted in 2017, some terms have been redefined and several new terms added. Among the terms found in the glossary appearing in Manual 538, the following are new terms or have been some redefined in some way.

*Restoration*     The new Manual provisions use this term in two ways:

1. to refer to the whole process: recovery and reinstatement of a minister under discipline; and,
2. to refer specifically to the restoration to good standing of a minister who has been under discipline for any reason. Good standing describes a minister's fitness for ministry in terms of his or her character and spiritual well-being, and is a condition of any action to reinstate to him or her the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a minister.

*Reinstatement*     This is the action by which the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy are granted once again to a minister whose credential was filed, suspended, surrendered, resigned, or revoked, on condition of good standing and all required approvals.

*Return of Credential*     Upon reinstatement, a minister's credential is returned thus confirming the minister has regained good standing.

*Revoked Credential*     When a minister is expelled from the ministry and membership of the Church of the Nazarene, his or her credential is revoked and all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy are immediately forfeited.

*Recovery* The process of assisting a minister relieved, voluntarily or otherwise, of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy, *and his or her spouse and family* in the recovery of health and wholeness. Efforts toward recovery are to be undertaken *independently* of the process to determine whether a return of credential to the minister is appropriate and advisable.

*Removed* The action taken by a district assembly to exclude from the Roster of Ministers the names of those members of the clergy who have filed, resigned, or surrendered their credential or have had their credential suspended or revoked.

A minister's credential is not "removed" or "dropped"—as seemed to be indicated in some Manual provisions prior to 2017. Instead, *removal from the Roster of Ministers is a purely administrative action of the district assembly* that reflects other actions or decisions related to the status of a minister's credential.

*Suspension* A range of disciplinary actions short of surrender of credential. Continued activity in ministry must be a stated provision of the suspension, and the conditions for such continuation must be clearly and specifically articulated along with time-frames and conditions related to reinstatement.

*Expelled* The status of a member of the clergy whose credential has been revoked and who has been removed from membership in the Church of the Nazarene.

Some Manual provisions prior to 2017 indicated that a minister's credential may be "cancelled"—however, this term has been eliminated and a minister who is no longer a minister for any reason other than death or resignation of credential is now considered expelled from the ministry and membership of the Church of the Nazarene.

# PART II

## Recovery Team Selection, Training, Resourcing, and Deployment

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**540.1. Appointment of a Recovery Team.** When clergy misconduct becomes evident, a timely response of appropriate and compassionate intervention is critical for the sake of the minister and his or her spouse and family, the congregation, and the community. Since such developments are rarely anticipated, advance selection and preparation of qualified persons, both clergy and laity, to facilitate recovery is an important element of the district response plan. These persons are to be appointed by the district superintendent in consultation with the District Advisory Board. When situations of clergy misconduct arise, these persons, acting as a recovery team, are to be deployed by the district superintendent as immediately as possible and in accordance with the district plan. A recovery team so deployed should be comprised of no less than three persons. (211.20, 225.5, 540)

The appointment of a well-prepared and thoughtfully-selected Recovery Team is critical to the success of any clergy restoration effort. A Recovery Team's primary responsibility is to journey with the minister and the minister's spouse and family toward recovery. However, its responsibilities extend in some measure to the congregation involved and quite possibly to the community at large as it may relate to facilitating the minister's recovery.

### 1. SELECTION

#### a) **The Priority of Advance Selection**

Advance selection is critical to the clergy restoration process in the Church of the Nazarene. It is helpful to distinguish selection and appointment. See [Appendix B](#), Recovery Team and Resource Pools.

Advance selection

- Allows time to prepare the Recovery Team so that it can respond more effectively when a situation of misconduct arises.
- Avoids complications created by acting under the pressure of the urgency of the unfolding situation.
- Enables a more timely response when a situation of clergy misconduct becomes known.
- Increases the likelihood that the response will be sustained, well-coordinated, and redemptive.

## b) Factors in Recovery Team Selection

When selecting persons for service on a Recovery Team, consider the following:

- *Clergy as well as laypersons may be appointed to serve on a Recovery Team.* Qualified laity may provide valuable skillsets to the work of recovery.
- *The demographic of your district* (ethnicity, culture, gender, and education).
- *The likelihood of the person's availability to serve on a Recovery Team and willingness to participate faithfully.*
- *The individual's spiritual maturity and overall healthfulness.*
- *Evidence of a capacity to be objective as well as compassionate, and to think independently as well as to be adaptable and able to work well with a team.*
- *The individual's training and experience.* **Note:** Anyone serving as a counselor to the minister or any member of his or her family should *not* also serve as a member of the Recovery Team.
- *The potential of conflicting roles.* It is essential to maintain a clear separation between recovery and reinstatement [540]. If someone selected to a Recovery Team is also a member of the District Board of Ministry, there are certain points in the process where it would be essential for that individual to recuse herself or himself from voting on matters related to the minister's progress toward eventual reinstatement. This separation of roles enables those serving on the Recovery Team to maintain a focus on the recovery of the minister and his or her spouse and family. It is also vital for the minister and spouse to know that the matter of recovery is a protected priority.

The Manual allows for the appointment of clergy and laypersons to serve on a Recovery Team.

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## 2. TRAINING

The role of a Recovery Team is to come alongside ministers under discipline, their spouses and families, and, to some degree, any Nazarene congregation affected by the minister's misconduct.

The work of a Recovery Team is largely a ministry of *presence* – being and bringing “grace and truth” over the uneven journey toward recovery.

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It is not expected, however, that team members will themselves possess the full range of skills and training needed in recovery. Instead, the Recovery Team works to discern what is needed for recovery in the specific situation and to provide guidance, accountability, and access to resources.

### a) Initial and Ongoing Training

To fulfill its responsibilities effectively, those serving on a Recovery Team need training in order to serve well. Training is most effective when Recovery Team members experience it together. The challenge is to commit to training those selected to the Recovery Team pool.

- **Initial Training.** Bring together those selected to the Recovery Team Pool (See [Appendix B](#)) and
  1. Orient them to their unique role in the clergy restoration process [[540-540.2](#)];
  2. Familiarize them with the district plan (See [Appendix A](#)) and any documents and processes related to that plan;
  3. Acquaint them with applicable portions of this *Implementation Guide*.

Consider using a facilitator with professional training or extensive experience in such matters to lead this training. An approach that actively involves participants is also strongly encouraged.

- **Ongoing Training.** Inevitably, there will be new additions to the Recovery Team Pool and changes in the district's specific recovery plan. Additionally, the experience gained by Recovery Team members themselves will highlight points where additional training is needed.

### b) The Priority and Limits of Confidentiality

Trust is essential in the constellation of relationships associated with every recovery effort, especially in view of the fact that the misconduct has disrupted the foundation of trust in marital, family, local church, and community relationships. In terms of the work of the Recovery Team, confidentiality plays a critical role in creating an environment where everything can be brought into the light and, when addressed with grace and truth, can release renewal and healing into the situation. The minister and spouse must feel they are safe in disclosing to the team pertinent facts and feelings, histories and current developments.

At the same time, it is important to understand the degree of confidentiality that can be promised in the helping relationship. Examples of the limits of confidentiality include the following:

- *Limitations imposed by the Church of the Nazarene and local law.* Recovery Team members should understand local laws governing the reporting of child abuse and elder abuse. However, it is important to understand that **the Church of the Nazarene makes everyone who serves in any role, volunteer or employee, a mandatory reporter for reasonable suspicion of child abuse.** This makes every member of a Recovery Team a mandatory reporter, regardless of his or her individual status under local law.
- *Limitations of pastor/penitent privilege or counselor/client privilege.* In the case of a recovery team, such privileges may no longer apply and should not be assumed. In the event of any pending criminal or civil legal actions involving the minister, members of the Recovery Team could be compelled to testify to anything the minister said to them. For these reasons, the team should carefully consider all potential scenarios as it proceeds, and seek professional advice as it partners with the pastor and spouse in the work of recovery.
- *Limitations imposed by the responsibilities of the Recovery Team.* The Recovery Team is charged with partnering with a minister and spouse and family in efforts leading to recovery of health and wholeness. There could be disclosures that may indicate a person is a threat to himself or herself or to others. In such situations, the team may need to break confidentiality by seeking guidance from a trained professional in discerning the next best steps, or, depending on the urgency of the situation, may simply need to intervene immediately.

The Recovery Team is also obligated to certain reporting and other interactions with the district superintendent and district boards. The effort to maintain confidentiality must not be allowed to compromise the capacity of the Recovery Team to fulfill responsibilities mandated by Manual provisions.

For the reasons stated above, it is important that the minister and spouse have a basic sense of the full-range of responsibilities of the Recovery Team.

### 3. RESOURCING

Every Recovery Team needs to be resourced by the district beyond the orientation and training they have received. Resourcing includes:

#### **a) Financial Support**

Recovery efforts not only require a significant investment of time but also involve some expense to all those involved. It is appropriate for the district to consider the following when determining its financial support of the recovery effort:

- Expenses incurred personally by team members.
- Expenses incurred as the team carries out its work with the minister and spouse. For example, a Recovery Team (upon approval by the district superintendent) may need to access legal advice in order to properly respond to developments impacting the recovery effort.
- Expenses incurred by the minister and spouse as they participate in the recovery process. For example, the district may help offset the expense for the minister and spouse to attend a marriage retreat or the cost of ongoing counseling.

### **b) Resources for Recovery**

Recovery Team members are not expected to serve as experts in all the various areas of expertise needed over the course of the recovery effort. However, one of the most important contributions of the Recovery Team to the recovery effort is to know what outside resources to engage and when to engage them. Examples of “outside resources” include

- Professional personal, marriage, and family counselors.
- Legal advisors.
- Financial advisors.
- Other professional services.<sup>2</sup>

For more information, see [Appendix B](#), Recovery Team and Resource Pools.

## **4. DEPLOYMENT**

Recovery Teams are deployed when a situation of misconduct has resulted in some form of discipline.

### **a) In Situations Involving Suspension**

Discipline that falls under the category of suspension [538] may or may not involve the deployment of a Recovery Team. This decision rests with the district superintendent who must consider the reason for suspension. The basic rule is that the discipline should fit the nature of what precipitated disciplinary

Unconditional deployment mirrors the grace of God through the sustained initiative to create a pathway leading to the recovery of wholeness.

<sup>2</sup> Occasionally, other professional services can provide a strategic advantage to the recovery effort. For example, a trusted real estate agent may be very helpful in a situation involving the transition of the minister and spouse. Also, there have been situations when a district has found it necessary to employ professional investigative services to establish the facts of a situation.

action.<sup>3</sup> The goal of disciplinary action is never to destroy or humiliate, but always to engender the renewal of personal wholeness and return to effective service.

## **b) In Situations Involving Surrender of Credential**

In cases involving the surrender of credential, a Recovery Team must be deployed. Surrender of credential is always required in situations of sexual misconduct by the minister. However, for the sake of the minister, his or her family, and any congregation involved, surrender of credential may also be the most appropriate response to other kinds of misconduct.

### **UNCONDITIONAL DEPLOYMENT**

In each situation involving the surrender of credential, a Recovery Team is deployed whether surrender is voluntary or involuntary and whether or not the minister is receptive to engaging in the recovery process. The underlying premise of unconditional deployment is to mirror the grace of God through a sustained initiative to create a pathway leading to the recovery of wholeness.

In cases where the minister guilty of misconduct is unresponsive, efforts should be made to come alongside his or her spouse and family. In situations where the spouse is also unreceptive or unavailable (perhaps due to relocating or self-isolating), the Recovery Team should remain deployed and accessible to the spouse to the fullest extent possible. In this period of time, the role of the Recovery Team may be solely that of intercessory prayer.

### **APPOINTMENT**

Situations involving surrender of credential can come to light suddenly and unexpectedly, or as the result of an extended process involving formal charges, investigation, and action by a district or regional Board of Discipline. The timely appointment of the Recovery Team by the district superintendent is of utmost importance. When appointing a Recovery Team, giving special attention to the following will improve the entire restoration process:

- Selecting as leader of the Recovery Team an individual who is self-assured, experienced, confident, and able to lead a team of qualified individuals.
- Arranging a time for an orientation meeting with the Recovery Team (see below).
- Recording the appointment of the Recovery Team (names, date appointed) as part of the documentation to be maintained throughout the district's work with the minister under discipline and his or her spouse [[538.20](#)].

### **ORIENTATION OF THE RECOVERY TEAM**

*Prior* to any contact by the Recovery Team of the minister and his or her spouse, it is imperative that the district superintendent meet with the Recovery Team to orient team members to their assignment. Giving immediate attention to orienting the appointed team

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<sup>3</sup> See the section on Reinstatement for a brief discussion concerning procedures related to reinstatement of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy in situations of suspension.



not only improves the possibility for a strong start to the recovery effort, but also demonstrates due diligence on the part of the district to attend to Manual provisions related to recovery and reinstatement. Failure to do so is likely to contribute to misunderstanding and confusion, and create unnecessary delays in the recovery effort. See [APPENDIX C](#) for a suggested list of topics to be addressed during the Recovery Team's orientation meeting with the district superintendent.

#### NOTIFICATION OF THE MINISTER AND SPOUSE

Once a Recovery Team is appointed, the district superintendent should inform the minister *and* his or her spouse as soon as possible. A phone call or face-to-face visit is preferable. In addition, it is wise to provide notification in writing.

Notification should include

- Confirmation of the appointment of a Recovery Team.
- The Recovery Team leader's name and contact information.
- The District Superintendent's contact information.
- Confirmation that the Recovery Team has received the contact information for the minister and his or her spouse, and will attempt to contact them soon.

# PART III

## Strategies for Recovery Teams

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The timely, sustained effort of a Recovery Team to effectively engage the minister and spouse in genuine recovery is of utmost importance. The basic duties of the Recovery Team are outlined in Manual paragraph [540.2](#) and should be carefully reviewed.

An initial meeting with the minister and spouse should be held as soon as possible after the orientation meeting. The goal is that the Recovery Team will make every effort to hold its first face-to-face meeting with the minister and his or her spouse within two weeks of being appointed to serve as a Recovery Team. Although Manual provisions assume an initial contact by the Recovery Team within 60 days of appointment by the district superintendent, **this should not be viewed as an acceptable span of time between appointment and first meeting with the minister and spouse.** The 60-day time-frame is specified only for the protection of the minister in the event a district fails to respond in a timely fashion [[540.7](#)].

### 1. BEGINNING THE RECOVERY RELATIONSHIP

The first few weeks are filled with extremely high levels of instability and uncertainty for the minister and spouse at many levels. The disruption very often affects existing networks of relational support (marriage, family, friends, and congregants), finances, emotional and physical well-being, living arrangements, and more. For this reason, the early and continuing engagement of the Recovery Team is critical to the recovery of the minister and spouse. In addition, as described below, early engagement assures the affected congregation that its concerns will be addressed as part of a comprehensive response by the district.

#### a) **Recovery Team Pre-Meeting**

It is strongly advised that the appointed Recovery Team meet together immediately or very soon *after* its orientation meeting with the district superintendent and *prior* to its first meeting with the minister and spouse. The purpose of this meeting is to prepare the Recovery Team for its first meeting with the minister and spouse, as well as to organize itself to provide sustained engagement in the process. Suggested topics for this “pre-meeting” are listed in [APPENDIX D](#).

#### b) **Initial Meeting with the Minister and Spouse**

A well-strategized initial meeting of the Recovery Team with the minister and spouse is crucial to the success of the recovery effort. The goals of this meeting are

- To establish a climate of trust and honest engagement.
- To express compassion and care.
- To assure the minister and spouse of the redemptive interest of each Recovery Team member.

- To clarify key components and purpose of the recovery process.
- To discern the status of the well-being and stability of the minister and spouse (spiritually, emotionally, relationally, financially, and so on).
- To establish clear and timely “next steps” in the process.

Content and flow of the initial meeting are detailed in [APPENDIX E](#).

The situation surrounding the initial meeting can vary widely depending on the nature of the misconduct and the receptivity of the minister and spouse to participating in the process. It may be necessary to meet with the minister and spouse separately. It may be that one or the other will refuse to meet or may not be able to meet in person due to having relocated out of the area.

Insofar as possible, it is important that the initial meeting is held face-to-face. Being able to “listen” to the non-verbal communication of the minister and spouse (and for them to be able to “listen” to that of the Recovery Team) is a critical component of the first meeting. Use of other technology should be sparing unless the situation dictates otherwise.

**Special attention should be given to the location for each meeting of the Recovery Team with the minister and spouse.** The proper location is especially important for the initial meeting. Consideration should be given to the following:

- The location must be **safe space** for *both* the minister and spouse. “Safe space” means:
  - Space suitable for private conversation.
  - Space that is non-threatening, physically and emotionally. In cases where the misconduct has involved some form of spousal abuse, the setting of the meeting must be such that the spouse is assured of his or her personal safety. *Every effort should be made to eliminate situations that make it even more difficult for the minister and spouse to work through the feelings of shame that already may be overwhelming at this point in the process.*
- The location must be **undistracted space**. It is important that the minister and spouse have arranged childcare so that they are able to give their full attention to the conversation. If the meeting is held at another church, attention should be given to assure the meeting is not interrupted by phone calls or any other preventable intrusion.

## 2. [ENGAGING RECOVERY RESOURCES](#)

The potential of a successful recovery effort will be significantly improved if a Recovery Team is able to draw upon qualified services at just right time. For example, professional counseling is almost always a critical component of the recovery of the minister and spouse. If the district has established and maintained a resource pool (see [APPENDIX B](#)), the Recovery Team should already be aware of these resources and understand the protocols for accessing and using them. It is very important that no financial obligation is created for the district that has not first been

authorized by the district superintendent or his or her designated representative. Furthermore, the Recovery Team should require that the minister and spouse give permission in writing for the counselor to provide to the Recover Team confirmation of the minister's (and spouse's) attendance to scheduled appointments, a description of the level of engagement by the minister and spouse, and a general description of progress toward recovery.

Any engagement of recovery resources authorized by the district, whether part of the recovery pool or separately from the pool, should be reported to the district superintendent and noted in the official documentation related to the minister and spouse participating in recovery.

### 3. CONNECTING WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

The district superintendent has primary responsibility for working with any Nazarene congregation on his or her district impacted by clergy misconduct. The role of the Recovery Team is to assist the work of the district superintendent with the local church by engaging the local church in discerning appropriate ways to collaborate in the recovery of the minister and spouse. In every case and at all times, the Recovery Team works under the direction and supervision of the district superintendent in this effort.

When clergy misconduct becomes known, a district superintendent's engagement with the local church will vary according to the situation.

- **In situations involving misconduct by the lead pastor**, the district superintendent takes the lead. Although direct involvement of the Recovery Team with the church board may be limited, it is advisable to include a representative of the Recovery Team especially in those church board decisions relating to 1) the well-being of the local church, and 2) the support of the minister and spouse during recovery (transitional financial support, benefit continuation—such as health insurance in some countries, the availability of church-owned housing, and more).

One advantage of engaging the Recovery Team directly at some point is that it poignantly exposes church leadership to the fact that an intentional and strategized recovery effort is underway. This experience itself can help mitigate the sometimes destructive effects of the raw emotions and extreme reactions evident as people come to terms with the fact of the minister's betrayal of their trust. Another advantage is that the Recovery Team gains a much deeper understanding of the state of the local church, its capacity for response, and the nature and implications of the misconduct itself.

The role of the Recovery Team is to assist the work of the district superintendent with the local church by engaging the church in discerning appropriate ways to collaborate in the recovery of the minister and spouse.

- **In situations involving a minister who was *not* a lead pastor**, the level of the local church’s collaboration in recovery may actually be more extensive since the minister guilty of misconduct may remain a member of the congregation and his or her family active participants to the degree appropriate. In these situations, the Recovery Team may work more closely with the congregation’s lead pastor in shaping the way the local church collaborates in the recovery of the minister and spouse. In other situations, the church board may be less involved, such as when the misconduct involves an unassigned minister (depending on the minister’s level of engagement in local church ministry).<sup>4</sup>

In whatever ways the Recovery Team may engage with the local church, it is important that any and all official actions are clearly stated and properly recorded; specifically, beginning and ending dates, amounts, type and duration of any support extended, and persons responsible must be defined and any conditions noted. In the end, the objective of the Recovery Team’s involvement is twofold:

- *To advance the health and stability of the local church* by inviting it to an appropriate and redemptive participation in the recovery of the minister and spouse and their family, while also compassionately responding to those in the congregation and community affected by the misconduct.
- *To improve the potential for the recovery of the minister and spouse* by bringing an increased sense of stability to them. When the response of the church includes tangible expressions of support, the potential for recovery is even greater.

The efforts of the Recovery Team are not centered on the question of whether the minister should be reinstated, but on the health and well-being of the minister and his or her spouse.

#### 4. PARTNERING WITH DISTRICT BOARDS

The Recovery Team has specific responsibilities to certain district boards variously involved in decisions related to the possible reinstatement of the minister. However, the efforts of the Recovery Team are not centered on the question of whether the minister should be reinstated, but on the concern for the health and well-being of the minister and his or her spouse *even if* reinstatement is not desired by the minister [540.5, second paragraph] or is not permissible [540.9].

Recovery Team responsibilities involving district boards include the following:

- *Maintaining a log of dates, times, places, and participants of all meetings of the Recovery Team.* This information is part of the required documentation that informs the work of the district superintendent, the District Board of Ministry, and District Advisory Board

<sup>4</sup> The distinction between assigned and unassigned is described in Manual 538. This paragraph also specifies that a minister who has filed his or her credential is also subject to discipline in the event of his or her misconduct subsequent to filing.

[538.20, 540.10, 540.12]. In addition, the Recovery Team should also note key points of discussions, recovery initiatives, and observations on the progress of the minister and spouse toward recovery.

- *Recommending, when appropriate, that a minister under discipline be granted permission to “hold a position of trust or authority in the church or in its worship” [540.4].* When significant progress toward recovery is evident, some level of ministry activity may be permitted.
- *Expressing support for the Application for Restoration to Good Standing submitted by a minister who has participated faithfully in a recovery process for at least 2 years [540.7].* The application of a minister who has not yet completed 4 years in a recovery process cannot be considered by any district board apart from the affirmation of the Recovery Team [540.7].
- *Submitting a recommendation regarding the readiness of the minister for reinstatement.* A recommendation is required whether it be favorable or unfavorable [540.2(6), 540.8(3)].

## 5. RESPONDING TO THE VICTIM AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

The dynamics created in the community by the minister’s misconduct vary from setting to setting and from culture to culture. The Recovery Team must be aware of these realities as well as of any pending legal action, criminal or civil, stemming from the misconduct. The Recovery Team should work closely with the minister (in cooperation with a professional counselor) in assuring that recovery efforts appropriately address the matter of the minister’s response and responsibility to any victims.

In cases involving negative coverage by public news agencies, it will be important for the Recovery Team to allow the district superintendent to work with the local church and other leaders in coordinating an appropriate response.

# PART IV

## Suspension and Resumption of the Recovery Phase

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**540.3.** In the event the minister under discipline is or becomes unresponsive to the recovery process, diligent effort should be given to furthering the recovery of the minister's spouse and family while actively seeking to engage or re-engage the minister in recovery. Upon review of the recovery efforts and with due regard for the well-being of the minister's spouse and family, the district superintendent may suspend, conclude, or otherwise redirect its recovery efforts.

### 1. SUSPENDING THE RECOVERY PHASE

Only the district superintendent has authority to suspend the recovery effort. The goal of suspense is to provide time and opportunity for the ministry to re-engage with the process. However resistant the minister may appear, suspension gives opportunity for the district to respect the wishes of the minister while also maintaining a posture of grace in forbearing with the minister (Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 4:2, 5:1-2). Action to suspend the recovery phase releases the Recovery Team from its obligation to be active in pursuing the recovery of the minister and spouse. However, suspense does not dissolve the Recovery Team from serving together. Instead, the team remains "on hold" in hopes that there may be opportunity to restart the recovery effort.

Suspension is an option for the district superintendent when

- A sustained pattern of unresponsiveness on the part of the minister is reported to the district superintendent by the Recovery Team, **or**
- The Recovery Team has reached a point in its recovery effort with the minister's spouse and family that further work with them is unlikely to be productive.

**NOTE:** In cases where the minister is unresponsive, the work of the Recovery Team is to continue with special attention to the spouse and family of the minister. If the spouse is unresponsive and if the minister continues to be unresponsive for a season, the recovery effort may be formally suspended.

Upon deciding to suspend the recovery phase, the district superintendent is advised to

- *Provide written notification of the action to the minister and spouse.* Suspension begins upon the district superintendent's attempted notification of the minister of the suspension. Notification should include the following:
  - The primary reason(s) for suspending the recovery phase.
  - A short description of what suspension means and of the fact that formal suspension of the recovery phase will affect the calculation of the minimum time-frames relating to the reinstatement process [[540.7](#)]

- An explanation that when the minister communicates to the district superintendent his or her desire to resume the recovery phase, the suspension may be lifted.
- *Provide written notification of the action to each member of the Recovery Team.*
- *Include the action as part of the official record kept by the district [538.20] and report the same to the Ministerial Credentials Board or Board of Ministry.*

**A report of unresponsiveness on the part of the minister must be evaluated carefully and fairly.** If there is clear evidence of the minister’s evading relationship with the Recovery Team or ignoring its efforts in communication, a conclusion of sustained unresponsiveness may be justified. However, suspension would not normally be appropriate if a period of unresponsiveness is due, for example, to the disruption of changes in employment, hospitalization, relocation to a new community, or a decline of psychological well-being. It may also be the case that unresponsiveness to the Recovery Team is due to the fact that the Recovery Team has functioned poorly or irresponsibly. For this reason, if the recovery effort seems to stall, it is advisable that the district superintendent make every effort to connect personally with the minister and spouse before suspending the recovery effort.

## 2. RESUMING THE RECOVERY PHASE

It is hoped that any formal suspension of the recovery phase will be followed by the formal resumption of the recovery effort upon the renewed responsiveness of the minister. Upon a response by the minister affirming his or her desire to resume the process, the district superintendent is to immediately notify the Recovery Team, and to note in the official record [538.20] the date and mode of the minister’s request and the date on which notification of the Recovery Team was notified.

The Recovery Team, upon notification by the district superintendent to resume the recovery phase, should make every attempt to meet with the minister and spouse as soon as possible. The first meeting with the minister and spouse marks the date the recovery phase is officially resumed, assuming the meeting concludes with a concrete plan for continued efforts toward the recovery of the minister and spouse. If such is the case, the date of this first meeting should be reported to the district superintendent and recorded in the official record [538.20].

The first meeting after the recover phases is resumed should include the following:

- A review of the circumstances leading to suspension.
- A review of the ground rules and commitments governing the recovery effort.
- A thorough update on the current status of the minister and spouse.
- A date, time, and place set for the next meeting of the Recovery Team with the minister and spouse.

The Recovery Team may need to convene by itself immediately after the meeting to establish direction for the recovery effort moving forward.



# PART V

## Concluding the Recovery Phase

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A Recovery Team remains on assignment until the recovery phase is officially concluded by action of the district superintendent, by action of a district board, or by action of the district assembly. The distinction between suspending and concluding the recovery phase is important. During *suspension* of the recovery phase, a posture of readiness to reinvest in a recovery effort is maintained and the Recovery Team remains assigned though inactive. *Concluding* the recovery phase means the Recovery Team is fully and finally released from its responsibilities.

The various scenarios under which the recovery phase may be concluded fall into two categories: conclusion with recovery; and, conclusion without recovery.

### 1. CONCLUSION WITHOUT RECOVERY

#### **a) Continuation of “Under Discipline” Status**

In situations where the minister under discipline has been unresponsive and recovery efforts have proven unproductive over a long period, the district superintendent may determine to conclude the recovery phase.

Concluding the recovery phase without recovery [[540.3](#)] results in the minister’s continuing in relationship with the district and with the Church of the Nazarene as a minister under discipline [[540.5](#)]. In this case—and apart from action by the appropriate district board or boards, and other approvals as may be required—the minister has no option available other than that of remaining a member of the clergy under discipline.

It is inadvisable to permit a minister who has not progressed sufficiently toward recovery to resign his or her credential [[538](#), [539.6](#)]. This could become legally complicating for the district and the local church should the minister unite with another denomination or ministry and continue a pattern of misconduct. Continuation of “under discipline” status also keeps the door open for the recovery phase to be reactivated. This option may also serve as a prelude to action to expel the minister when there are circumstances (perhaps a medical condition of the minister, a family situation, or the stability of a local congregation) that warrant postponing expulsion.

## b) Action to Expel

Concluding the recovery phase is *not* to be confused with action to expel. **As with other matters related to ministerial credentials, action to expel is action by the district assembly**<sup>5</sup> upon the required recommendation of the District Board of Ministerial Credentials or Board of Ministry.<sup>6</sup>

Action to expel results in the revocation of the minister's credential. This constitutes his or her removal as a minister in the Church of the Nazarene and as a member of the Church of the Nazarene. Expulsion is specific to the minister and does not extend to any clergy or non-clergy member of his or her family. However, the minister's earlier termination from a ministry assignment may change the role, though not the standing, of a spouse who was serving in a co-pastor role with the minister [[121.1](#)].

**A Special Note on 540.9 and the Recovery Phase.** One of the major changes to the revision of the clergy restoration process adopted by the 2017 General Assembly is the priority of the district's commitment to seek the recovery of the minister and spouse *even if the minister has not declared an interest in regaining his or her credential or is ineligible to do so by reason of the nature of the misconduct*. For this reason, the restrictions of [540.9](#), where applicable, affect only the option of reinstatement and should not dilute or abbreviate the district's endeavor to minister the healing grace of God to the minister and spouse and family. A heartening level of recovery is possible even in situations in which applying for reinstatement is not permissible. Furthermore, the district should take care not to assume expulsion from the ministry is the most appropriate option in such situations unless it is evident that the minister is resistant to efforts of recovery. With some recovery experienced and continuing, resignation from the ministry could be granted thus allowing the minister and spouse and family the advantage of participating as members in the life of the local church to the fullest extent permitted. This is a triumph of the grace of God!

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<sup>5</sup> By way of example, the granting and renewal of district licenses, and approval of ordinations are examples of how the Church of the Nazarene is structured so that the district assembly ultimately possesses responsibility for all aspects related to the credentialing of ministers [[205.4](#), [205.5](#), [205.6](#)]. In some instances, the district assembly's alternatives are limited by other required approvals. For example, the jurisdictional general superintendent (JGS) must first approve any candidate for ordination before the district assembly can vote to ordain the individual. Similarly, the entire Board of General Superintendents must approve the recommendation to reinstate a minister before the district assembly can vote on the matter [[540.12](#)].

<sup>6</sup> This process is consistent with the fact that the District Ministerial Credentials Board or Board of Ministry may choose to recommend action by the district assembly to expel from the ministry and membership of the Church of the Nazarene a minister who has applied for reinstatement [[540.10](#)]. Normally, this recommendation would be included in the report of the board to the assembly.

## 2. CONCLUSION WITH RECOVERY

When a minister under discipline and his or her spouse experience a level of recovery indicating renewed health and well-being, spiritually and otherwise, the recovery phase moves toward its conclusion in one of two ways:

- The minister requests approval to resign his or her credential, or
- The minister applies for reinstatement of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy.

The Recovery Team has a central role in each of these actions leading toward conclusion of the recovery phase. In the first instance, the District Advisory Board will rely heavily on the recommendation of the Recovery Team in determining the readiness of the minister to be a lay member of the church. In the second instance, the recommendation of the Recovery Team will be a critical part of the sequence of approvals required for reinstatement.

### **a) Approval of Resignation**

Manual [539.6](#) states the following:

“A member of the clergy not in good standing may resign his or her credential only upon approval of the District Advisory Board.”

A minister may request permission to resign his or her credential for two reasons primarily:

- *The minister has progressed substantially toward recovery and has chosen to not apply for reinstatement* of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a member of the clergy. This choice may arise from a decision on the part of the minister and spouse that he or she should not remain a member of the clergy, or may arise from the fact that Manual provisions will not allow reinstatement ([540.9](#)).
- *The minister's application for reinstatement is not approved and the minister is permitted and accepts the option of resigning* rather than continuing as a minister under discipline [[540.10](#)].

Upon approval by the District Advisory Board, and the vote of the district assembly, the resigning individual is no longer a member of the clergy and becomes again a lay member of the church. The recovery phase is considered concluded upon action of the District Advisory Board to approve the request for resignation.

### **b) Approval for Reinstatement**

When there is strong evidence that the level of recovery experienced by the minister and spouse is genuine and sustained, the process leading toward reinstatement of the minister may begin (assuming at least the minimum required amount of time has transpired [[540.7](#)]). This process requires the initiative of the minister to apply for reinstatement in accordance with the application process outlined in the district plan [[225.5](#)]. In situations where application is made

after less than four years in the recovery phase, the Recovery Team must also have determined that its work is completed. After a period of at least four years of the minister's active participation in the recovery phase, the Recovery Team's affirmation of the minister's application is not required though it is certainly preferred [[540.7](#)].

In the best case scenario, the minister's decision to apply for reinstatement is the result of a decision reached with the Recovery Team and minister together, confident that the time is right for such action. When the minister makes application for reinstatement [[540.6](#), [540.7](#)], the responsibility of the Recovery Team is to prepare its recommendation for the District Ministerial Credentials Board or Board of Ministry (or committee appointed by the same) regarding the minister's readiness for reinstatement [[540.2\(6\)](#), [540.8](#)]. See [APPENDIX H](#) for suggested guidelines in determining readiness for reinstatement.

However, there may be situations where the recovery of the minister and spouse has not reached the level the Recovery Team feels is sufficient for reinstatement, but where enough time has elapsed for the minister to initiate the application process even without the full support of the Recovery Team. Manual provisions allowing for application for reinstatement without the support of the Recovery Team protect the minister and spouse from being unfairly blocked from seeking reinstatement.

Although the work of the Recovery Team shifts its focus during this time of application, the Recovery Team should understand that it remains in its assigned role and should maintain contact with the minister and spouse. Upon review of the application and recommendation for the minister's restoration to good standing and reinstatement, and upon securing all other approvals including the favorable vote of the district assembly, the work of the Recovery Team is officially concluded.

# APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX A

## Elements of a District Plan for Response to Clergy Misconduct

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**225.5. [The duties of the District Advisory Board are . . .]** To develop and annually review a written, comprehensive plan that is in harmony with *Manual* directives to guide its efforts in providing a timely, compassionate, and informed response to [members of the clergy](#) involved in conduct unbecoming a minister, to their families, and to any congregation involved. ([538.20](#), [539–539.13](#)).

In addition to abiding by Manual provisions and incorporating applicable elements of this implementation guide, District Advisory Boards are encouraged to include the following in any plan adopted to guide the district in responding to occurrences of clergy misconduct:

- A. A specific process for conducting the annual review of the District Plan by the District Advisory Board.** This process may include consideration of any changes to the plan that may be proposed based on the experience of members of active recovery teams, affected ministers and spouses, congregations impacted by misconduct, or the district superintendent.
- B. Provision for funding the District Plan.** In most instances, some funding is required for the initial and ongoing training of Recovery Teams as well as for the expense of counselors and other advisors whose services may be vital to the success of the recovery effort. Reimbursement of recovery-related expenses incurred by Recovery Team members should also be taken into consideration.
- C. Prioritizing training of Recovery Teams and others involved in the clergy restoration process.** Including this in the plan helps the District Advisory Board and district superintendent remember to schedule training opportunities each year.
- D. Defining a plan for responding to the congregations, communities, and individuals (victims) impacted by clergy misconduct.** Appointing a spokesperson to represent the district is an important first step. This is especially important if the misconduct calls for some response to judicial authorities, local news agencies, or community groups. In addition to forthcoming resources from Global Clergy Development concerning responding well to congregations and communities, district leaders may find portions of [Responding to Clergy Misconduct](#) to be useful (*Note: Although this resource is written from an interfaith perspective, it is helpful in identifying the dynamics of misconduct and steps toward congregational repair that are common to many religious groups*).

# APPENDIX B

## Resource and Recovery Team Pools

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### Resource Pool

A **resource pool** is comprised of those “outside resources” (professional counselors, financial advisors, legal advisors, and others) that have been pre-qualified by the district as resources that may be accessed by the Recovery Team in its work with the minister and spouse. The district should pre-qualify these resources by assuring that they meet recognized standards of competency, exhibit reliability and responsiveness, respect the mission and priorities of the district, and offer reasonable access.

Creating a resource pool is one of the most important preparations a district makes in its support of the recovery process.

When developing a resource pool:

- *Establish an agreement with the district on the cost of the resource.* For example, an agreement with a professional counselor might specify a per-session rate for counseling services provided and a method for billing that properly maintains the confidentiality of the persons receiving counseling. The district may also enter into an agreement with a professional marriage counselor. Such agreements should be time-bound, subject to review at least annually, and allow immediate cancellation<sup>7</sup> by the district without penalty.
- *Establish key protocols related to use of the resource.* For example, a protocol for access of legal advice by a Recovery Team may require that the advisor first provides an estimate for cost of services to the district prior to providing those services. Or, a professional counselor will know that he or she is expected to provide to the Recovery Team a permission form to be signed by the person receiving counseling so that the counselor is allowed to report whether a person has attended scheduled session and to give a general sense of the progress of counseling. The extent of permissions will vary from setting to setting, and are amenable to the applicable laws or professional standards.

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<sup>7</sup> Cancellation of the agreement does not necessarily require termination of any current participation of the minister and spouse who may be using the services provided.

## Recovery Team Pool

A Recovery Team Pool is a group of persons (more than the minimum number required for a single Recovery Team) selected and prepared in advance of being deployed to respond to a situation of misconduct. Having a Recovery Team Pool provides a significant advantage to the district as well as to the minister and family needing the care of a Recovery Team.

### Developing and maintaining a Recovery Team Pool

- *Allows for greater flexibility and a more timely response in appointing a Recovery Team.* In addition, the Recovery Team can more easily be composed of the persons that seem to be the best fit for the situation. The situation that arises may be such that someone who was selected and prepared to serve is disqualified from serving. For example, they might be related to the minister under discipline, or may be an especially close friend. Or, if they are a lay person, they may be a member of that minister's congregation.
- *Provides an instant resource in the event a member of an active (i.e. deployed) Recovery Team no longer has the capacity to serve on the team.* Such a situation can occur due to health, relocation, or other changes that hinder the ability to remain sufficiently engaged with the work of the team.
- *Makes it feasible to orient and prepare team members in a way that is much more time and cost efficient.* Although the pool will have to be replenished from time to time, by selecting a sufficient number of persons to create a Recovery Team Pool, there is a greater possibility that the entire team can be brought together for training and development. When additional training is planned, the entire Pool can take advantage of the opportunity.

Ideally, a Recovery Team Pool consists of ten to twelve persons. With the recovery process being a multi-year endeavor, it is entirely possible that the entire pool could be deployed at any given time.

Having a Recovery Team Pool allows for flexibility in appointing a Recovery Team composed of the persons that seem to be the best fit for the situation.



# APPENDIX C

## Orientation of a Recovery Team

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When a Recovery Team has been appointed and is to be deployed in response to a specific situation, it is vitally important to prepare the team well. The following are suggested topics to guide the orientation meeting convened by the district superintendent.

1. *Provide the team with the most recently approved version of the District Restoration Plan.*<sup>8</sup>
2. *Inform the team of the nature and scope of the misconduct, including any and all available facts related to the situation. In situations where divulging some details is not advisable from a legal point of view, the team should be made aware of this.*
3. Alert the team to the spouse's current level of awareness of the nature and depth of the misconduct.
4. *Provide the team with essential information on any known victims, age of victims, and known whereabouts of victims (for example, if the victim remains active in the affected congregation or community).*
5. Inform the team of any legal action pending or in-progress.
6. Provide the team with the contact information of the minister and spouse.
7. *Describe any observations concerning the emotional and relational status of family members (absent, present; receptive, resistant; detached, engaged; etc.) and the level of their awareness of the nature of the process that begins with the work of the Recovery Team.*
8. Update the team on support and resourcing presently available to the minister and spouse (finances, housing, access to support structures of family and friends, and so on).
9. *Inform the team of any commitments made to the minister or to the minister's spouse and family by the church board or by the district superintendent.*
10. *Discuss with the team its likely role in any "next steps" that involve negotiating with the church board with respect to transitional support (income and housing, continuation of insurance coverage, access to the church building, etc.) for the minister and spouse.*

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<sup>8</sup> A District Plan is to be created and reviewed annually by the District Advisory Board [[538.20](#), [225.5](#)]

11. *Inform the team as to the status of any affected congregation* and any “next steps” planned with regard to the congregation, and anticipated follow-up on the next steps arranged by the district superintendent.
12. *Inform the team of any plan regarding the minister’s termination of service* in his or her current assignment or other engagement in local church ministry, whether the plan is still under discussion or already confirmed by the district superintendent.
13. *Update the team on district or district-approved resources available throughout the recovery effort.* Include information on how the Recovery Team will be reimbursed for expenses it incurs for travel, etc.
14. *Provide the team with access to any forms necessary.* In many contexts, a professional counselor cannot provide even the most basic information to the Recovery Team regarding his or her counseling without first obtaining the consent of the person being counseled. See [APPENDIX F](#).
15. *Provide the team with a printed overview of the clergy restoration process* that can be shared with the minister and spouse to help them better understand the recovery phase of the process.

# APPENDIX D

## Topics for the Recovery Team Pre-Meeting

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The topics below are those the Recovery Team may find helpful to discuss when it meets *following* its orientation meeting with the district superintendent and *prior* to its first meeting with the minister guilty of misconduct and his or her spouse.

1. *Share contact information with each other* and covenant to be as immediately responsive as possible with respect to all aspects of the recovery effort.
2. Assign a member of the team to serve as the primary contact for the minister and spouse. Normally, it is best for the leader of the Recovery Team to serve in this role.
3. *Assign a member of the team the responsibility of documenting the work of the team.* Documentation should include notes of the meetings of the Recovery Team including dates, times, locations, persons in attendance, and items discussed. Meetings of the team include those of the team alone as well as with those with the minister and spouse (together or separately), with the district superintendent, with the local church, with any district resource accessed by the team, and any other meeting of the team.
4. *Discuss and determine the best option for the location of the initial meeting with the minister and spouse.* Location selection will depend on the details of the situation and whether or not there will be a meeting with the minister and spouse together, or whether a separate meeting needs to be arranged with each of them.
5. Based on the orientation provided by the district superintendent, discuss anticipated scenarios and desired outcomes of the initial meeting with the minister and spouse. Review [APPENDIX C](#) for a suggested approach to the first meeting.
6. *Confirm which Recovery Team member will take the lead in facilitating the initial meeting with the minister and spouse.* This will assure the minister and spouse that the Recovery Team is organized and is approaching its work with clarity and diligence. It is helpful if this task is assigned to the same person who will be facilitating meetings with the minister and spouse. This is an opportunity for the lead facilitator to build relationship and to provide clarity for the minister and spouse as to who is leading the process. Before determining a location for the initial meeting with the minister and spouse, review the suggestions regarding selection of the location discussed in this Guide.
7. Coordinate calendars among team members in an effort to clear space over the next three months for several meetings with the minister and spouse. In the beginning stages of recovery when the need for stability and direction is especially urgent, it will be necessary to meet more frequently with the minister and spouse. The key factor is to **maintain the priority of a timely and sustained response** for the sake of the minister and spouse.

8. Discuss the available district-approved resourcing that seems best suited to serve the recovery effort at this point in the process. It may be wise to initiate contact with this individual in advance of the first meeting with the minister and spouse so that the services, terms, and availability of the resource can be confirmed. It is also wise to review any forms, fees, or other agreements involved in order to assure the accuracy of what is represented to the minister and spouse.

# APPENDIX E

## Guidelines for Recovery Team Interaction with the Minister under Discipline

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1. The immediate goal of the clergy restoration process is the recovery of the minister and his or her family to a vital and healing relationship with Christ, with each other, and with others in the church and community.
2. Trust is essential for meaningful and honest dialogue between the minister and spouse and the Recovery Team. The minister and spouse must be assured that the conversations are confidential within the boundaries allowed by law and with due regard for the obligations of the Recovery Team as outlined in the Manual. See page 13 of this Guide.
3. Recovery Team members must communicate and demonstrate that it is present and fully engaged because they genuinely care and are committed to recovery of the minister and spouse without regard for the likelihood of the minister's reinstatement.
4. The interaction of the team should convey the love and presence of Christ. The sense of shame and loneliness is real and the minister and family must know they will not be left to journey alone on the long and arduous road to healing and restoration. Some ministers may appreciate this process, be grateful for it, and embrace it. Others may find it difficult and may struggle at the beginning of the process. Patience, empathy and compassion will be required especially in the latter case. There often are setbacks and disappointments during the recovery process, and the Recovery Team must be undaunted and persistent in its efforts.
5. Although there is a 2-year minimum to the recovery phase of clergy restoration, the progress of the minister toward recovery is not a matter of completing a certain amount of time in a process. Instead, it is about genuine engagement and evidence of actual recovery personally as well as in relationship with his or her spouse and family.
6. As ambassadors of Christ, the Recovery Team must interact with grace and truth. The tone of this process is to be restorative, not punitive. At the same time, it is important that the instance of misconduct not be taken lightly or minimized in any way. Recovery Team members must help each other maintain a proper objectivity, being careful not to allow the history of their own relationship with the minister as a colleague in ministry to cloud their judgment.
7. The Recovery Team must compassionately walk alongside the minister without rescuing the minister from consequences he or she needs to experience in the journey of recovery. The team must help the minister understand that, by the grace of God, brokenness becomes the conduit of God's healing.

# APPENDIX F

## Initial Meeting with the Minister and Spouse

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The following is a suggested outline of the topics and progression of the initial meeting of the Recovery Team with the minister and spouse.

1. Introductions are certainly the place to begin, with special attention to creating a climate of genuine interest and care for the minister and spouse.
2. Briefly describe the process, clarifying key aspects of the role of the Recovery Team, and assuring the minister and spouse of the commitment of the Team to walk alongside them throughout the process. It is wise to leave a printed document about the clergy restoration process and to include the names and contact information of the Recovery Team members, as well as of the district superintendent. Both the minister and spouse should receive a copy.
3. Introduce ground rules and commitments as a way of encouraging honest and productive interactions between the Recovery Team and the minister and spouse.

### SUGGESTED GROUND RULES & COMMITMENTS

- The minister and spouse agree to be present for calendared meetings with the Recovery Team, unless prevented by circumstances beyond their control. In such cases, the minister and spouse agree to notify the Recovery Team in advance and to work diligently to reschedule the meeting. Recovery Team members, too, agree to prioritize any meetings arranged with the minister and spouse.
- The Recovery Team agrees to make every effort to meet with the minister and spouse at calendared times and to be responsive to any request of the minister and/or his or her spouse for additional meetings.
- The minister and spouse agree to respect any and all restrictions specified by Manual provisions, by the district, and/or by the law. Examples of restrictions include restraining orders, victim no-contact rules, electronic communications with members of the congregation, social media, entering church-owned property, etc.

- The Recovery Team agrees to hold in confidence sensitive information within applicable legal boundaries and with due regard for the obligations of the Recovery Team with respect to the clergy restoration process. The minister and spouse understand there are no automatic legal protections extended to the Recovery Team, and the Recovery Team could be legally compelled to divulge such sensitive information.
  - The minister and spouse commit to engage with the process, including accountability measures agreed to and the granting of consent in writing for any counselors to report attendance to counseling sessions and to provide to the Recovery Team a general assessment of progress.
  - The minister and spouse understand they have recourse to the district superintendent at any time with respect to the work of the Recovery Team.
4. Gauge the present state of the minister and spouse – spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally. Explore their economic stability including any pressing financial obligations, status of housing, and other financial and family concerns.
  5. Focus on asking thoughtful questions that help both the Recovery Team and the minister and spouse understand the unfolding situation. For Recovery Team members, this meeting involves much listening and very little advising.
  6. Discover in what ways the minister and spouse are already receiving quality care and support. For example: are they already seeing a qualified counselor? Do they yet have a safe place to worship and/or fellowship with other believers?
  7. Discern if some level of intervention may be needed for the minister, spouse, or any children (medical, emotional, or other basic needs).
  8. Ask each of them to describe their understanding of the actions (of misconduct) necessitating this recovery process. *This is not a time to “cross examine” but to get an early reading on their understanding of the situation, on the level at which either or both own responsibility for their actions and decisions, and on other dynamics impacting their well-being and readiness to engage in recovery (such as minimizing, blaming, withholding information, new disclosures, etc.).*

In addition, some factors may also be mentioned that were not discussed in the orientation meeting with the district superintendent or that introduce factors not previously known or considered. For situations when previously unconfessed or new misconduct comes to light, see [APPENDIX I](#).

9. Explore what the minister and spouse understand with respect to the status of their relationship with the congregation(s). It is important to give special attention to the following:

- *Their understanding that the restriction on ministry activity is comprehensive [540.4].* The roles specified in 540.4 serve only as examples. The restriction is this: any and all ministry activity must cease unless and until such activity receives all of the approvals required to resume them [540.4<sup>9</sup>]. For situations when the minister serves in a ministerial role outside the Church of the Nazarene, see [APPENDIX I](#).
- *Their understanding of what, if any, continuing interaction with the congregation is permissible.* It is important to not assume that the minister and spouse are clear in their understanding of what the district has communicated to them on this matter. This is a difficult area for anyone to navigate, and the minister and spouse are likely to have a variety of questions and concerns. See [APPENDIX I](#), “Key Considerations and Special Situations.”
- *The spouse’s intentions with respect to continuing his or her own activity in local church ministry.* This matter is very closely related to the previous point and is filled with complexities impacting the minister, the well-being of the spouse and children, and, of course, the congregation and possibly even the local community. In most cases, a period during which the spouse also takes a full break for a period of time from participation in local church ministry is advisable. This is a matter to be processed not only by the minister and spouse themselves, but also with the Recovery Team in cooperation with the district superintendent and local church leadership.
- *Their understanding of the financial support made available to them by the local church or district.* It is very important that any financial commitments (and any conditions related to those commitments) by the local church or district are clearly stated, preferably in writing. Financial commitments include transitional funding (in some settings this funding may be in the form of salary continuation for a specified period of time), benefit continuation (health insurance, for example), and possibly church-owned housing. Any points of confusion should be noted and clarified as soon as possible.

**10.** Discuss what “next steps” the minister and spouse are contemplating, have committed to, or have already taken. “Next steps” may include relocating within the community, moving out of the area, pursuing new employment, marital separation, counseling (individual, marriage, family), and so on. The discovery of misconduct brings with it many large-scale changes and, in most cases, a high level of uncertainty and instability at almost every level in the lives of the minister and spouse. Decisions in these areas impact the course of the recovery effort and may challenge its success.

A key role of the Recovery Team is to ascertain any pressing needs and come alongside the minister and spouse in formulating a way forward that provides maximum potential for the recovery of wholeness. It is important that the minister and spouse face their own reality and not develop an expectation that the Recovery Team will make the tough decisions or resolve every challenge, financial or otherwise. At the same time, it is important that the minister and spouse are not left to walk alone through this difficult time.

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<sup>9</sup> See also [539.9](#).



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## Managing Commitments, Extending Grace, Speaking Truth

Those serving on a Recovery Team must work together to interact compassionately while maintaining a high level of objectivity throughout the process. An overly empathetic team can be as much a hindrance to recovery as a team that is unfeeling and harsh.

Recovery Team members must understand the commitments they are authorized to make on behalf of the district or local church involved. Before concluding the session it is wise to summarize commitments made and to note any questions or concerns needing follow-up.

It is also important that Recovery Team members, together or individually, only make commitments that can be fulfilled. It is a serious setback to recovery for the Recovery Team to fail to do what it has committed to do. In addition, it is especially important that no individual member of the Recovery Team make commitments without first consulting with other members of the team. There are phases in recovery when the minister or the minister's spouse can become manipulative of the process if allowed to do so.

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11. Calendar with the minister and spouse the next two dates and places to meet. Remember that in the early stages of the recovery process, it is very likely that connecting with the minister and spouse will need to happen more frequently.
  12. Clarify that communication with the Recovery Team should begin with the Recovery Team leader but that other team members may be contacted as may be necessary. *Communications from the minister and spouse to any member of the Recovery Team should be shared as immediately as possible with other members of the team.*
  13. Take time to pray with the minister and spouse. Allow time for more than a quick closing prayer to the meeting. Center attention on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as integral to recovery.

### RECOVERY TEAM POST-MEETING

14. Summarize key points of the meeting, confirm the next date, time and place of the next meeting, and conclude the meeting. If circumstances allow, it is advisable for the Recovery Team to continue in session without the minister and spouse present.

The purpose of this post-session meeting is to

- *Compare what each Recovery Team member heard during the meeting (facts confirmed or contested, acknowledgements, concerns of minister or spouse, sense of their individual levels of engagement with the meeting, sense of their spiritual, psychological, physical well-being, and so on).*

- *Determine resourcing needed and assign any responsibilities* as may be necessary. For example, the minister and/or spouse may have had questions or concerns or a scenario that had not been anticipated and that may require some follow up with the district superintendent or the local church.
- *Confirm who will complete the notes from the meeting, and agree to a time-frame for those notes to be made available to everyone.* Thorough documentation is very important and must be considered a high priority of the Recovery Team.

**15.** Report to the district superintendent the fact that the meeting was held (date, time, place, persons present) so this can be added to the documentation required of the district [[538.20](#)]. It is also imperative to report anything else that may be pertinent to the work of the district superintendent with the local church or that may impact the legal standing of the congregation or district, negatively impact the reputation of the congregation or any member of the congregation, or potentially hinder the recovery or well-being of anyone impacted by the minister's misconduct or any subsequent action.

# APPENDIX G

## Some Best Practices for Resource Engagement

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One of the most important roles of a Recovery Team is to facilitate the engagement of the minister and spouse with appropriate and qualified resources that can further the recovery effort. Very often, this involves helping the minister and spouse make connection with a qualified counselor. There may be other kinds of resources needed as well, and the previous work of the district to create a resource pool can prove invaluable at various times throughout the recovery phase.

### Best Practices for Resource Engagement

1. Determine what resources are needed based on comprehensive, initial needs assessment (e.g. continuing education, training, specialists, social support, financial assistance, etc.).
2. Determine what resources will be provided by or supported by the Recovery Team.
3. Construct a web of care around the minister and each member of the family.
4. Determine what specialists should be engaged (e.g. physician, psychologist, marriage and family therapist, psychiatrist, spiritual director, etc.).
5. Obtain appropriate informed consents to share information with and receive appropriate information from specialists and other professionals, naming only and as few Recovery Team members as are absolutely necessary.
6. Appropriately hold the minister and/or family members accountable to accessing resources and following recommendations of professionals.
7. Establish a fair and reasonable way to track compliance with recommendations and progress.

# APPENDIX H

## Evaluating Readiness for Reinstatement

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When a minister has applied for reinstatement [540.6, 540.7], the Recovery Team is to prepare a recommendation to the District Board of Ministerial Credentials or Board of Ministry (or its appointed subcommittee) regarding its judgement on the minister's readiness for reinstatement [540.2(6), 540.8]. The Board or committee considering whether to approve the minister's application for reinstatement also must consider how it will evaluate the application of the minister, the recommendation of the Recovery Team, and its interview with the minister and spouse, and any other persons it deems wise to interview.

The following is offered as a guide to Recovery Teams as they evaluate the progress of the minister and spouse toward recovery, and particularly consider the minister's readiness for reinstatement.

### A. Guiding Principles

1. If a minister attempts to shortcut the process and be reinstated prematurely, the motivation for recovery and capacity to submit to the restoration process should be explored further.
2. A minister should not be reinstated until the Recovery Team, any specialists involved, and, preferably, members of the minister's immediate family are comfortable with reinstatement. An exception would be if it becomes evident that the Recovery Team did not undertake its work with appropriate diligence and objectivity.
3. Reinstatement is contraindicated in situations involving serious criminal action, severe psychopathology (active addiction within the last three years, history of domestic violence, perpetration of child abuse, personality disorders, multiple divorces, etc.).

### B. Key Questions

1. What are the indications of recovery of the health and spiritual well-being of the minister?  
What are the indications the minister is *personally* ready to be reinstated?
  - Is there evidence he or she is ready emotionally? Has he or she attended to and resolved key issues?
  - Has the minister submitted to the restoration process and been compliant with specialist recommendations at all stages of the process? Has a full psychological evaluation been completed, if appropriate?
  - Has the minister demonstrated at least three years of sobriety if an addiction was present?
  - Is the minister demonstrating a regular rhythm of self-care?

- Does he or she have an adequate support system?
  - Are any legal or financial issues sufficiently resolved?
2. What are the indicators that the spouse and family members are ready for the minister to be reinstated?
- Have confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation happened where needed?
  - Has sufficient healing been realized in marriage/family relationships?
  - Has the minister consistently demonstrated faithfulness to appropriate boundaries and care for marriage and family relationships during the recovery phase?
3. What are the indicators that the minister is ready *professionally* for reinstatement?
- Have they submitted to an appropriate spiritual discernment process regarding their vocation?
  - Do the motivations to return to ministry leadership appear to be sanctified?
  - Are they thinking wisely about choice of context and role, and associated stress, into which they will enter upon reinstatement?
  - Have they demonstrated Christian stewardship of finances and other resources during the recovery phase?
  - Have any victims of previous clergy misconduct been appropriately informed (and, possibly, consulted) regarding the possibility of the minister's reinstatement? In situations where the minister seeking reinstatement continues in relationship with the congregation where he or she was a member at the time of the misconduct, is the congregation appropriately aware of the issues involved and prepared to receive him/her well?

# APPENDIX I

## Key Considerations and Special Situations

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The following situations are frequently encountered during the recovery phase and require thoughtful reflection and understanding on the part of the Recovery Team and district superintendent.

### **a) Restrictions to the Minister's Engagement with the Congregation**

In a situation of misconduct, any engagement of the minister with the congregation that serves to perpetuate his or her ministry role or to give the appearance of its continuation, should be not be allowed. This is clearly stipulated in the Manual [540.4]. The goal of prohibiting the minister's continued engagement with the congregation is not to punish the minister, but is to create an immediate, complete, and sustained pause to allow the minister and spouse, the congregation, and the district to absorb the reality of what has transpired. This pause also sets the stage for collaborating on a way forward that will promote recovery and stability for the long-term. When the minister's activity in ministry comes to a stop due to misconduct, feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, and bewilderment are inevitable. This is true not only on the part of the minister and spouse but also that of the congregation. In this difficult phase, the compassionate, timely, and sustained efforts of the Recovery Team is of utmost importance.

In reality, beyond this prohibition of continuation in ministry, there are too many scenarios and cultural nuances to prescribe a single guideline to be applied everywhere at all times when it comes to the question of the minister's interaction with the congregation during the recovery process. For example, the victim (or victims) of the minister's misconduct may be current members of the congregation. In such situations, the district superintendent will need to work closely with the Recovery Team to understand any formal and informal, legally imposed or voluntary agreements regarding the interaction of the minister with any victims, and to make every effort to assure the minister's compliance.

Situations may involve a variety of other unique factors. For example, the minister may be unassigned as a minister but the spouse may serve on the pastoral staff. Or, the spouse may serve as co-pastor with the minister guilty of misconduct. Whatever the situation, what is important is that the district superintendent thoughtfully prescribes exactly what, if any, connection with the congregation or its individual members is permissible (beyond the restrictions outlined in 540.4). What is initially prescribed may need to be modified as the district superintendent and Recovery Team work together in caring for the minister and spouse, the congregation, and the community.

When misconduct has first come to light, the minister's understanding, personal insight, and sense of ownership regarding his or her conduct is insufficient to allow the minister self-directed engagement with – or even self-directed disengagement from – the congregation. High levels of remorse and genuine sincerity notwithstanding, the minister (despite his or her own judgment to the contrary) is not yet in a position personally to direct his or her own steps on this matter. In addition, at this point in the process there is insufficient certainty that all relevant facts are known.

### **b) When Previously Unconfessed or New Misconduct Comes to Light**

There are occasions when information comes to light during the recovery process that requires further investigation and confirmation. *However, it is important to remember that the Recovery Team is not constituted as an investigative committee.* However, if this information involves a new accusation of misconduct and the minister *contests* the accusation, the recovery process may need to be adjusted in order to appropriately accommodate the work of a district-appointed investigative committee. In such cases, it is vitally important that the responsibilities of the Recovery Team remain focused on the recovery of the minister and his or her spouse and family. **In no situation should the Recovery Team also serve in the role of a district-appointed investigating committee.**

If new information comes to light that involves accusations of misconduct against the *spouse* and the spouse *contests* the accusation, the recovery process may need to be adjusted to allow for the processes required in responding to accusations against a lay member of the church (or member of the clergy, if the spouse is also a district-licensed or ordained minister).

In either case, where information comes to light indicating misconduct previously undisclosed or unknown to the Recovery Team but where such information is met with admission by the minister (or by the spouse, as the case may be), the Recovery Team should use discretion in how it proceeds. Any new disclosure should be reported immediately to the district superintendent. In cases where legal action is a possibility, the Recovery Team should work closely with the district superintendent in seeking legal advice.

### **c) When the Minister Serves in a Ministerial Role outside the Church of the Nazarene**

There may be situations where the minister volunteers or is employed in a ministerial role outside of the local, district, or general Church of the Nazarene (such as a hospice chaplain, hospital chaplain, law enforcement chaplain, private Christian school, etc.). In such cases, it is important that the minister *immediately* inform that agency of the change in his or her ministerial standing with the Church of the Nazarene (from being a minister in good standing to being a minister under discipline by reason of misconduct).

*It is strongly recommended that such notification be made by the minister in writing, and that a signed and dated copy of the written notification be filed with the district superintendent as well. This action not only reinforces the understanding of the minister and spouse the seriousness of the misconduct and the reality of the discipline imposed, but also strengthens the legal protection of the*

church. It is advisable that the Recovery Team<sup>10</sup> and the minister agree to a date by which such written notice shall be submitted to the agency or organization served by the minister. This situation presents an opportunity to the Recovery Team to give support to the minister. For example, a member of the Recovery Team might offer to accompany the minister to his or her meeting with the leadership of the organization the minister has been serving.

In the event the minister refuses to provide such notice or fails to actually provide it within the time-frame agreed upon with the Recovery Team (or district superintendent), the Recovery Team should immediately seek the aid of the district superintendent in providing such notification with due respect for any foreseeable legal consequence as may be occasioned by providing such third-party notification.

It is of vital importance to include as part of the required documentation [\[538.20\]](#) notes of any discussion of the Recovery Team with the minister regarding these ministry relationships beyond the Church of the Nazarene along with any other related documents.

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<sup>10</sup> The district superintendent may have already attended to this matter. In this case, the Recovery Team should confirm that written notice has been provided as agreed.