

Code of Conduct in Interpersonal Ministry

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. This version replaces earlier dated versions.

Living Leadership will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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Contents

1. Purpose	1
2. Definitions.....	2
3. Our approach to interpersonal ministry.....	3
4. Ethical principles	3
5. Safeguarding boundaries	4
6. Confidentiality boundaries.....	5
7. Boundaries around money, sex and power.....	6
8. Communication boundaries.....	7
9. Self-Care boundaries.....	7
10. Complaints	8
Appendix: What You Can Expect	9
Our commitment.....	9
Our principles	9
Communicating Concerns	10

1. Purpose

This document governs the way Living Leadership workers operate in interpersonal ministry. Some of the requirements are only applicable to one-to-one meetings or to employees (i.e., not applicable to volunteers, Associates or Affiliates), in which case that is specified in the relevant point.

All ministry in the name of Living Leadership, whether conducted by employees or Associates, must be conducted within the boundaries laid out in this Code. Affiliates must also abide by the standards of this Code in interpersonal ministry with persons. Living Leadership can accept no liability for actions of workers that are in breach of this Code.

Actions by employees outside this Code of Conduct may subject them to disciplinary action under Living Leadership's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures.

Actions by Associates or Affiliates outside this Code of Conduct may result in termination of their status as an Associate or Affiliate.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

- **Boundaries** – intentional limits set on our thinking, words and actions to protect persons, ourselves and the integrity of our ministry, values and reputation.
- **Meeting** – time spent by a worker with a person receiving ministry in person or through video or audio call.
- **Interpersonal ministry** – work with persons through a trusting relationship in which the person shares personal experiences, thoughts and feelings and the worker provides caring support or advice, including:
 - **Mentoring** – interpersonal ministry focused on guidance and development of people in Christian faith, character, discipleship, leadership and service.
 - **Pastoral care** – interpersonal ministry focused on supporting and helping people in need towards perseverance, growth and resilience.

These terms are not mutually exclusive and much of our work with people will entail aspects of both mentoring and pastoral care in varying degrees. Interpersonal ministry occurs primarily within our Refresh programmes, whose aim is support of leaders, but may also occur in the context of Formation programmes, which aim to develop leaders.

- **Person** – an individual receiving interpersonal ministry from a worker.
- **Worker** – a Living Leadership employee, volunteer, Associate or Affiliate who is engaged in interpersonal ministry with persons.

Workers should always be clear that they are not providing or offering:

- **Counselling** – we do not provide counselling, which is best defined as 'therapeutic interaction by a trained counsellor working within a contractual agreement, under supervision and within a clear Code of Practice'. Our interpersonal ministry will,

however, use skills associated with counselling (e.g., listening, advising, encouraging). A worker who is a trained counsellor should not engage in counselling without making it clear to the person that this work is not in the name of Living Leadership, and giving them the option to seek an alternative counsellor.

- **Therapy** – we do not claim to be therapists or healers, although we encourage faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who we believe transforms lives and heals people through the power of the Spirit.

3. Our approach to interpersonal ministry

Our interpersonal ministry is shaped by our Statement of Faith and Ethos. We are committed to developing and embodying three qualities:

- **Motivation** in compassion that flows from the heart of the **Father**;
- **Methods** that follow the servant example of the incarnate **Son**;
- **Means** that depend on the guidance and transforming work of the **Spirit**.

Our approach to interpersonal ministry depends on three things:

- **Investing** in relationship with others in need through attentive **listening**;
- **Interceding** for and with others through committed **prayer**;
- **Instruction** in gospel truth through biblically informed, Spirit-led, wise **advice**.

This approach depends on clear ethical principles (Section 4), which are the basis for boundaries within which we operate (Sections 5-9).

Employees and Associates should always make our brief '**What to expect**' document (available on our website and included for reference in the Appendix to this policy) available to all persons with whom they engage in interpersonal ministry.

4. Ethical principles

As servants of God and of others in His name, we commit to ethical standards that reflect the character of God, acting at all times with **honesty and integrity as servants** by:

- 4.1 **Honouring every person without favouritism**, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or socioeconomic status by speaking truth in compassion,

- 4.2 **Accepting people without condemning or prejudging them**, allowing them the time, freedom and security to express themselves and listening attentively.
- 4.3 **Never forcing, coercing or manipulating another person** into a decision or course of action, even when we disagree with their beliefs or behaviour.
- 4.4 **Never misusing or abusing another person's trust** by subjecting them to any form of abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, material or discriminatory), exploiting them in any way (including financially, sexually or emotionally), breaking confidentiality, or treating them as merely a means to an end rather than acting for their wellbeing in Christ
- 4.5 **Avoiding unhealthy dependency** in either direction in our relationships with persons, but rather encouraging their faithful dependence upon God
- 4.6 **Ensuring safety** for themselves and persons as far as possible, including maintaining safeguarding standards and seeking medical or other assistance when necessary.
- 4.7 **Glorifying God** rather than building a name for themselves by acknowledging him as the giver of every good gift, the only Saviour and Lord and the transformer of lives.
- 4.8 **Acknowledging our limitations**, so that interpersonal ministry flows from dependence on God's grace and does not compromise our own health or that of our families and that persons receive the help they need from those best able to provide it.

5. Safeguarding boundaries

Safeguarding refers to protection of children and vulnerable adults.

- 5.1 **Living Leadership does not engage in interpersonal ministry with children** (people under the age of 18). No worker can engage in pastoral care, mentoring or other one-to-one ministry or small group ministry with children in the name of Living Leadership. Registration in Living Leadership conferences and courses is only open to people aged 18 and over. This does not preclude a Living Leadership worker speaking to a mixed audience of adults and people under the age of 18 in a training event in partnership with a church or other organisation. Such partnerships are covered by our Partnership Policy.
- 5.2 **Adults at risk** may be encountered during Living Leadership ministry, since people may be at risk of harm when they are experiencing physical or mental health difficulties, bereavement, work-related pressures, relational difficulties or trauma arising from past abuse or experiences.

5.3 If a worker is concerned about someone's general well-being, something they see or hear that may be abusive, or something they are told has happened or is happening to a person that could be abusive, they must take immediate action within the guidance contained in our Safeguarding Policy, which is available on request from: safeguarding@livingleadership.org.

6. Confidentiality boundaries

Confidentiality protects the privacy of persons and the integrity of interpersonal ministry.

6.1 Confidentiality is foundational in trusting relationships. This means that information shared with workers should not be disclosed to anyone else without the person's prior knowledge and consent, except when required for the reasons specified in Section 6.2.

6.2 Limits to confidentiality apply in the following three circumstances:

- a) When required by legislation or a Court of Law to disclose information either to the Police or to a Court;
- b) When there is reason to believe that others, particularly children or adults at risk, are, or may be, at risk of harm or injury;
- c) When there is reason to believe a person is at risk of harming him or herself.

When confidentiality cannot be maintained for these exceptional reasons:

- i. If the worker is not at risk in doing so, he or she should encourage and support the person to disclose information to the appropriate authorities or agencies.
- ii. If self-disclosure by the person is not possible, the worker should seek the person's permission to pass information on.
- iii. If permission to pass information on is not granted, the worker must disclose information, on a need to know basis, to the appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies without the person's consent.

6.3 Advice from trusted colleagues and supervisors is important and beneficial for workers. Workers should always seek it when they feel they need it. When doing so, workers should anonymise persons and generalise details to protect confidentiality unless they have gained the person's permission to share freely.

6.4 Married workers will have different personal policies about involving their spouses in interpersonal ministry. Some will regard their spouse as a partner with whom they prefer to share openly. Workers must not, however, assume this is acceptable to persons receiving ministry and should ask for permission to share identifying details with their spouses as they would with any third party. If a worker does share with their spouse, the spouse must also be aware of the need to maintain confidentiality.

6.5 Written or electronic records must be accurate, factual, relevant, not excessive and, where possible, free from identifying information. It is best to record as few details as possible, to stick to factual details and to use initials for persons rather than full names. Such records should only be kept for the specific purpose and time needed and stored in a locked drawer or cupboard or password protected folder. They must be stored in line with Living Leadership's Data Protection Policy (available on request).

7. Boundaries around money, sex and power

The following boundaries are intended to reduce risk of temptation, wrongdoing or the appearance of wrongdoing in areas in which transgression is particularly damaging:

- 7.1 Sexual interaction** (physical, verbal or non-verbal) of any degree is never appropriate between a worker and a person receiving interpersonal ministry. If it develops, or if a worker becomes aware of romantic feelings from either the worker or the person, it is advisable to discuss with a supervisor and to transfer ongoing interpersonal ministry with the person concerned to another worker in an appropriately sensitive manner.
- 7.2 One-to-one meetings with adults at risk or persons of the opposite sex** should, wherever possible, occur in a public place or in a room with a window in the door in a building in which other persons are present. If these measures are impractical, the worker should try to involve their spouse or a co-worker in the meeting. If, in an emergency, this is not possible, their spouse or a co-worker should be informed of the location of the meeting and its duration should be as short as possible.
- 7.3 Absolute privacy should never be insisted upon** either by the worker or a person they are meeting with. Confidentiality can be maintained while ensuring there is a line of sight for other people (e.g., through a glass window in a door or leaving a door open), so long as words cannot be distinguished clearly.
- 7.4 Money** received by employees of Living Leadership as reimbursement for or a gift in gratitude for interpersonal ministry must be given to the organisation in full. Associates may receive gifts or reimbursement for interpersonal ministry but must ensure these are not excessive, are strongly encouraged to record them clearly, and must declare them, if necessary, to the proper authorities for tax purposes.
- 7.5 Non-monetary gifts** of low value (up to £20) can be received by employees without reporting, but gifts of significant value (above £20) should be declined or declared to the employee's line manager. Associates are encouraged to develop their own policy about receiving gifts and to record these transparently with accountability.

- 7.6 Legacies** (gifts in a will) from persons are to be discouraged and are best made to Living Leadership or another Charity rather than to a worker personally.
- 7.7 Power** can easily be abused in ministry due to power imbalance between the worker and the person receiving ministry. Workers must consider this risk as they decide on timing, frequency, location and content of meetings.
- 7.8 The number of one-to-one meetings** should be limited to what is necessary for the purposes of the meetings. In some mentoring relationships this may be indefinite, but for pastoral needs it is usually wise to limit the number of meetings from the outset and then review, in order to reduce risks of dependency.

8. Communication boundaries

Communication by any means (e.g., phone, email, messaging, writing) with persons receiving interpersonal ministry should be transparent, factual, courteous and focused on ministry.

- 8.1 Internet safety settings** should be set to a level that blocks obscene images and content on all devices belonging to Living Leadership. Workers are encouraged to consider using safe settings and, if helpful, accountability software, on personal devices used for ministry purposes.
- 8.2 Communication tending towards flattery or sexualisation should never be trivialised.** Workers should discuss anything suspicious (e.g., flattery, sexualised or flirtatious language or provocative images) immediately with their spouse or an accountability partner, before it escalates. Employees must discuss any such occurrences with their line manager. Workers should have a low threshold for blocking further communication from persons from whom such communication is received.

9. Self-Care boundaries

As we care for others, we must pay attention to our own well-being, including:

- 9.1 Integrated health** including adequate rest, sleep and exercise, a healthy diet, trusting and supportive family relationships, and abiding richly in Christ.
- 9.2 Recognising our limits** and work within our abilities and competencies, being ready to refer or signpost a person to others when needed.
- 9.3 Committing to ongoing learning** through reading, participation in Living Leadership Team Days, Formation seminars and courses, and reflection on experience.

- 9.4 Working within accountability and support** from others. For employees, this should include the employee's line manager.
- 9.5 Saying no** to requests for help when we are concerned about our safety or are aware that our ability to function is impaired for any reason.

10. Complaints

Complaints about Living Leadership workers should be addressed to the Head of Ministry Operations (hmo@livingleadership.org). If that individual is not available, or is a subject of the complaint, the complaint should be addressed to the chair or deputy chair of trustees (via info@livingleadership.org).

Disclosures about safeguarding concerns should be addressed to the Safeguarding Officer using the email address: safeguarding@livingleadership.org.

Appendix: What to Expect



Our commitment

Living Leadership provides pastoral care and mentoring to leaders and leaders' spouses through Associates and ministry employees. We are committed to ensuring that this work embodies our organisational values and is worthy of the name of Christ. This paper tells you what you can expect from our employees and Associates.

Our principles

*The following principles are set centrally by Living Leadership and are not negotiable or subject to variation within ministry in our name. We want to be up-front and transparent about them to avoid confusion or disappointment. They are abbreviated from our fuller **Code of Conduct for Interpersonal Ministry**, to which all our ministry employees and Associates ascribe and which is available on our website or on request from info@livingleadership.org.*

- **Living Leadership does not offer counselling or therapy.** Our ministry in support of people is best understood as pastoral care and mentoring.
- **Our approach to ministry** is grounded in relationship, prayer and the Word. Meetings are likely to include some combination of three elements: a good deal of listening by our employee or Associate; prayer from and with them; and advice, seeking to share from Scripture, godly wisdom and spiritual insight.
- **Confidentiality** will be maintained, meaning we won't share what you tell us with others in a way that can identify you without your permission, unless:
 1. We are required by legislation or a Court of Law to disclose information either to the Police or to a Court;
 2. We have reason to believe that others, particularly children or vulnerable persons, are, or may be, at risk of harm or injury;
 3. We have reason to believe a person is at risk of harming him or herself.

Our employees and Associates often seek advice from colleagues and supervisors to help them serve you more effectively. Some married workers may prefer to pray with and seek wisdom from their spouses in relation to interpersonal ministry. Employees and Associates may, therefore, share things you have told them in general terms without identifying you and may ask your permission to share your name with these others or to bring them into a future meeting with you. If there are any details you do not want the employee or Associate to include in such conversations, please make these clear.

- **One-to-one meetings with adults at risk and people of the opposite sex** should, ideally, be in a public place or in a room with a window in the door. They should not happen in a building in which no one else is present, except in emergency situations and only then for the shortest time possible.
- **Gifts and payments** are not required unless agreed with our employee or Associate. Suggested levels of remuneration are available from Living Leadership and will normally be shared with you as part of any discussion. Donations and payments in relation to ministry from an employee must always be made to Living Leadership. Associates may make separate arrangements to receive gifts from you in relation to their time. Any money and gifts will be handled responsibly. On occasions, a gift you offer may be declined to stay within our policies. Please don't be offended if this happens.
- **Abusive behaviour** (whether verbal, physical, psychological or sexual) by or towards our employees and Associates should never be tolerated.

Communicating Concerns

If a Living Leadership employee or Associate has failed to abide by these principles and you cannot, or believe it is inappropriate to, resolve the matter directly with the person concerned, please contact the Head of Ministry Operations, Paul Coulter: hmo@livingleadership.org.

If the concern is about the Head of Ministry Operations, or you are not satisfied with his response, please address your comments or concerns to the Executive Director, Marcus Honeysett: marcus@livingleadership.org.

Concerns about safeguarding matters, including disclosures of abuse, are dealt with through our Safeguarding Policy, available on request from: safeguarding@livingleadership.org.

www.livingleadership.org

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