

Charter of the Pastoral Care Associates

Mission: In the spirit of our first UU principle, "to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person", we strive to convey in manners dependable, inclusive and discreet a ministry of hope and caring so that no member of our congregation need be alone.

Goals: Our goals for the first years of the program are to fulfill our mission and covenant, to make sure the congregation is aware of our services, and to continue to learn together about the nature of shared pastoral ministry/

Covenant (Responsibilities and Guidelines are incorporated)

We covenant with the congregation of The Unitarian Church in Westport to work with our ministers, religious education director, the social justice director, our community network, and the facilitators of our neighborhood circles in a continuing process to cherish and care for all members of our church community.

In this role as a Pastoral Care Associate... we will:

- Visit the ill at home or in the hospital.
- Support those going through major life changes or crisis such as major health issues, loss of a job, divorce or retirement etc.
- Maintain contact with those unable to attend church due to illness or disability.
- Support friends and family involved in care giving.
- Comfort the bereaved.
- We will make ourselves available to talk by phone and meet with church members in their homes or in the hospital.
- We will be on call and available for the next two years.
- Handle all personal information we are exposed to with the highest level of confidentiality and care.
- We will support the choice and development of the next wave of Pastoral Care Associates to ensure a continuity of pastoral care in our congregation.

As Pastoral Care Associates we covenant to each other:

- To give mutual support, fellowship, and advice to each other;
- To grow in our openness & transparency with each other;
- To meet on a monthly basis for support and continuing education;

- To invest time and effort to assist each other towards our personal & spiritual growth.

Roles: The leadership team will consist of one of the ministers, a coach, a continuing education coordinator, a meeting facilitator, and a care coordinator.

The Minister meets regularly with the PCA's providing guidance and feedback about care encounters, continuing education and training, and logistical support.

The Coach is available to review individual cases PCA's and offer guidance and direction; to debrief critical incidents with PCA's as appropriate; to meet with individual PCA's to discuss areas of growth and suggest steps to strengthen their confidence; and to back up the senior minister in giving pastoral care as appropriate.

The Continuing Education Coordinator will propose topics that support the educational needs of the pastoral care team. S/he will coordinate the scheduling of these sessions, liaising with guest educators from within and outside our pastoral care team. The goal of the educational sessions is to build or deepen pastoral care skills, and encourage greater awareness about one's style, strengths and limits as a pastoral care-giver. The Coordinator will work in concert with the leadership team to brainstorm and discern complementary sessions for a given calendar year.

The Meeting Facilitator is responsible for scheduling monthly meetings, including making room reservations and sending out reminders to the group. The Facilitator creates the agenda for the monthly meetings in collaboration with the rest of the leadership team and the PCA group.

The Care Coordinator is responsible for assigning caregivers to members in need of pastoral care. The Coordinator may get referrals from individuals, or from one of the ministers, or from one of the PCA's. Records of care assignments are kept up to date by the Care Coordinator and shared with the group in the Dropbox.

Accountability: The Pastoral Care Associates program is a shared ministry. The group is accountable to the Senior Minister or their designee.