

09 / 09 / 2025

Medical and Community Chaplaincy (MCC)

Code of Conduct



Preamble

Medical and Community Chaplaincy (MCC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing spiritual support and care services to the communities of South Africa. We equip and train medical and community chaplains with essential skills to serve as volunteers in hospitals, prisons, and other community settings, including palliative care, victim empowerment, counseling, and crisis response. Our chaplains operate under MCC's oversight, embodying compassion, integrity, and respect to bring spiritual care within reach of every community member.

This Code of Conduct outlines the ethical standards and professional expectations for all MCC-affiliated chaplains, trainees, staff, and volunteers. It aligns with our vision to use expertise, resources, and structures to offer comfort, support, and relief during times of distress, while adhering to guidelines from professional bodies such as the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACRP) and the Association for Supportive Counselling and Holistic Practices (ASCHP).

All individuals affiliated with MCC must uphold this Code to maintain the organization's integrity, promote discipline, and ensure the highest quality of spiritual care. Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including revocation of affiliation or designation.

By affiliating with MCC, you commit to these principles and agree to model them in all interactions.

Core Values

MCC chaplains are guided by the following values, which reflect our commitment to holistic spiritual care:

- **Compassion and Empathy:** Provide non-judgmental support to individuals facing physical, emotional, social, or spiritual challenges, including those in palliative care, trauma, or community crises.
- **Integrity and Honesty:** Act with transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making in all professional duties.
- **Respect for Diversity:** Honour the beliefs, cultures, faiths, and backgrounds of all individuals, without proselytizing or imposing personal views.
- **Confidentiality:** Safeguard private information shared in confidence, except where required by law (e.g., imminent harm or mandatory reporting).
- **Professionalism:** Maintain boundaries, pursue continuous development, and represent MCC positively through conduct and appearance.
- **Service-Oriented Humility:** Prioritize the needs of others, collaborating with healthcare teams, faith-based organizations, and community leaders for integrated care.

Professional Conduct and Responsibilities

1 – Ethical Standards in Service Delivery

- Provide spiritual care that is inclusive, voluntary, and tailored to the individual's needs, such as bedside visits, prayer services, counseling, or support groups in hospitals, prisons, or community settings.
- Avoid any form of discrimination based on race, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
- Do not engage in dual relationships that could exploit or harm those served (e.g., personal, financial, or romantic involvements).
- Refrain from offering medical, legal, or psychological advice beyond your scope; refer to qualified professionals as needed.
- In palliative care contexts, integrate spiritual support to alleviate suffering, respecting the interdisciplinary team (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers).

2 – Confidentiality and Privacy

- Treat all communications as confidential, disclosing information only with explicit consent or when legally mandated (e.g., child abuse, threats of harm).
- Secure records and discussions in compliance with South African data protection laws (e.g., POPIA).
- In group settings or community outreach, ensure anonymity and sensitivity to shared experiences.

Professional Conduct and Responsibilities

3 – Professional Boundaries and Conflicts of Interest

- Maintain clear boundaries to prevent exploitation or dependency; avoid accepting gifts or favours that could compromise impartiality.
- Disclose and resolve any conflicts of interest promptly, such as personal relationships with service recipients or affiliations with competing organisations.
- Do not use MCC affiliation for personal gain, political advocacy, or commercial activities unrelated to spiritual care.

4 – Training, Development, and Affiliation

- Commit to ongoing professional development, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with ACRP or ASCHP, and participation in MCC training programs.
- Adhere to MCC's designation categories (e.g., Affiliate, Religious Practitioner) based on qualifications and experience.
- Existing chaplains must submit RPL certificates by deadlines (if applicable) and maintain active affiliation to access MCC resources, chat groups, and databases.
- Report unaffiliated individuals performing MCC duties in uniform to area commanders.

Professional Conduct and Responsibilities

5 – Uniform, Image, and Discipline

- Wear MCC uniforms (as detailed in the Uniform Catalogue) only during official duties, ensuring they are clean, appropriate, and aligned with the organization's image.
- As custodians of MCC's coat of arms and emblem, promote discipline and professionalism at all levels, under the guidance of the Patron Chaplain General.
- Use MCC branding (e.g., car stickers, badges) responsibly to enhance visibility without misrepresentation.

6 – Collaboration and Community Engagement

- Foster partnerships with healthcare facilities, faith-based organizations, NGOs, and government entities (e.g., in palliative care programs at hospitals like Chris Hani Baragwanath).
- Participate in crisis response, community events, workshops, and educational initiatives on topics like social ills prevention, infectious diseases, and gender-based violence.
- Support MCC's Programme of Action, including training rollouts, system integration, and monitoring/evaluation efforts.

Professional Conduct and Responsibilities

7 – Health, Safety, and Self-Care

- Prioritise personal well-being to sustain effective service; seek support for burnout or secondary trauma.
- Comply with health and safety protocols in medical settings, including infection control and emergency procedures.
- Report any incidents of misconduct, harassment, or unsafe conditions to MCC leadership immediately.
- Engage in continuous education and training to remain informed about best practices in health and safety, ensuring both personal and patient welfare.
- Foster a supportive environment by encouraging open communication and collaboration among colleagues, promoting a culture of mutual respect and understanding.
- Advocate for policies and practices that enhance the well-being of all individuals within the medical community, contributing to a holistic approach to healthcare.

Accountability and Enforcement

- Reporting Mechanisms: Concerns about violations should be reported confidentially to the Chief Executive Officer, Patron Chaplain General, or designated board member. MCC will investigate promptly and fairly.
- Disciplinary Process: Breaches may lead to warnings, suspension, mandatory training, or termination of affiliation. Serious violations (e.g., ethical breaches, misuse of uniform) will be referred to professional bodies like ACRP/ASCHP.
- Review and Updates: This Code will be reviewed annually or as needed to reflect evolving standards. All affiliates must acknowledge receipt and compliance upon affiliation and renewal.
- Legal Compliance: Adhere to South African laws, including the Constitution, health regulations, and non-profit governance.

Acknowledgement

I, _____, affirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. I commit to upholding MCC's mission and values in my role as a chaplain/trainee/volunteer.

Signature: _____

Date: _____