



# Parish Nurse Ministry Program

## Steps to Develop an Effective Faith Community Nurse Ministry

### **Gather information:**

Read textbooks, research studies and articles on faith community nursing. Visit with faith community nurses, clergy and lay leaders who are already involved in health & healing ministries.

### **Gain support of the clergy and leadership of the faith community:**

Clergy are vital in the development and ongoing support of the program. Encourage clergy to provide homilies on the role of the church in caring for each other and the relationship of body/mind/spirit. Maintain an ongoing relationship with leadership.

### **Inform and involve the congregation/parish:**

Survey the congregation to identify individuals interested in health and healing ministries. Connect with group leaders involved in outreach, mission, and service.

### **Select one or more faith community nurses:**

This individual would need to be a currently licensed RN, who may be from within, or outside of, the faith community setting. Types of nursing experience are less important than personal faith, ability to engage with others and demonstrate a warm and caring presence.

### **Education:**

Offer financial support for the RN to attend a foundational faith community nursing education through a nationally recognized program.

### **Introduce the new faith community nurse to the congregation/parish:**

Provide a commissioning service and opportunities for on-going visibility as a part of the ministry team.

### **Clarify expectations of the faith community nurse:**

Paid or unpaid staff member, reimbursement for travel and expenses, and a budget line are helpful. Discuss amount of time, space, and equipment needed to develop and maintain the program.

### **Encourage spiritual growth, self-care, and continuing education:**

Networking with other faith community nurses is helpful through attending conferences and workshops.

### **Develop a health/wellness council:**

Engage 6-8 people from a variety of ages, backgrounds, work areas and demographics. Select a chair who works closely with the faith community nurse.

### **Establish a link with a local healthcare agency: (optional)**

They may serve as a formal or informal partner to provide support (financial or access to educational materials).

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