

PREPARING FOR SUPERVISION

Usually, it is appropriate to present one or two specific “cases” in supervision, but on occasion it can also be appropriate to present a pattern or theme that you have noticed which runs across sessions with a number of your directees or retreatants. It may also be appropriate to present some issue that is going on in you that seems to arise from your SD work in general or from your interaction with a particular directee.

If you are intending to present a specific “case” the following approach may be a helpful guide:

- 1. Give a quick summary of the directee about whom you wish to present material.** (e.g. She is a lay woman in her 50s who is married with two adult children who are no longer at home. Both the directee and her husband work full-time) Try and present enough information so that the supervisor gets a feel for the directee, but not so much that you threaten her anonymity.
- 2. Give a summary of the spiritual direction work to date.** (e.g. I have seen this person for a total of five sessions so far and we seem to have a good relationship. She appears to be open and comfortable talking to me and I enjoy our sessions. She identifies her prayer life to be rather erratic and she repeatedly says she is finding it difficult to make time for prayer)
- 3. Identify the current issues or your brief assessment of the current situation.** (e.g. I am concerned about my attitude towards this directee. I find myself being over-protective towards her and very willing to make light of her concerns about not praying enough. I seem to want to offer her a lot of reassurance and encouragement, but I am wondering if there is something else going on and I am concerned that I am reinforcing her apparent “stuckness” rather than helping her to move on in her relationship with God)
- 4. Say something about your own feelings and internal dynamics.** (e.g. I feel uneasy about the way our relationship is developing. I like this directee, but I seem not to be very balanced in my approach to her. I sometimes dismiss her concerns about not praying with a joke or light-hearted comment. We both laugh at these, but often after the sessions with her I feel dissatisfied about what I said and with my lack of contribution to her spiritual growth. Indeed, I am not sure if there really has been any growth in her since she started coming to see me.)
- 5. Say something about what you are looking for from supervision on this matter.** (e.g. What I think I need help with is to understand more clearly what is going on for me in my relationship with this directee and particularly why I seem to be so over-protective of her. I would also appreciate some help in knowing what to propose to her so that she can establish a more regular prayer life)

It is important to learn how to present your reflections for in supervision clearly and succinctly and this takes practice. Your ‘report’ or case presentation should ordinarily take no more than five minutes. It is good to come to each supervision session with a general overview of how you are doing (e.g. “things seem to be going quite well for me at the moment. I have three directees and two of them seem to be doing fine. The third one I would like to talk about if possible, I am not sure how to proceed”) and also with one or two “cases” prepared and ready to present.

Be aware that there may not be time for you to present everything on every occasion so be sure to make it clear if you have a particularly urgent or important matter to explore in supervision.