

PA901DE - Addictions

Synopsis

So many people who are afflicted with addictions turn to their Church first. Far too often they fail to find help there. This course is designed to enable deacons and other pastoral ministers to exhibit the heart and welcome of Jesus to those facing addictions among us.

This course provides deacons and other pastoral caregivers help in dealing with addicts, their families and the whole congregation.

The course will look at, in down to earth, practical terms:

1. The current thinking, theology and wisdom on addictions
2. Resources the Church can offer to those troubled by addictions
3. Preaching, Biblical Wisdom and sacraments for the addicted

Some of the forms of addiction looked at are:

- Alcohol
- Pornography
- Narcotics
- Prescription drugs
- Gambling
- Sexual addictions
- Gaming addiction

The course will especially look at typical symptoms, action steps, prayer starters and further resources.

Substance Abuse and well as behavioral addictions are very widespread in our culture, and those addictions are not limited to the young. On any given weekend there will be people in the pew who are addicted, some of them trying mightily to hide their addictions.

The Church's call is to reach out to them with welcoming nonjudgmental arms and provide an oasis of healing. Spiritual programs like twelve step programs have success, perhaps the best success in bringing sobriety and healing. There is a spiritual hunger in everyone facing addictions. As a deacon or pastoral minister you are called to help meet those needs with empathy and knowledge. This is the reason for this course. It is meant to help you become enablers of recovery.

This said, perhaps your first understanding is that you need to know your limits. Addictions are complex; an addicted person may have a simultaneous (co-morbid) mental health issue such as depression. That person will need a trained counselor or doctor to help with the addictions and the underlying depressive illness. The person may need anti-depressants as well as counseling. That is a call for professionals to make.

This course is not designed to turn you into a clinician, rather its aim is to train you to recognize addictions, give informative seminars in your parish on addictions and help you be an informative voice for families of addicts and addicts, who are in treatment and/or in twelve step groups.

One of the most important things you can do for your parish is to familiarize with treatment options in your area. Become familiar with twelve step groups that meet in your area, therapists and doctors trained in addictions as well as inpatient and outpatient options in your area.

Another way you can help is to develop spiritual programming not only for the addicted, but for all who struggle or want to grow in closeness to God.

For an addict in treatment, you can help them further develop their spirituality. Yours is a very important role.

This course is designed to help increase your knowledge on the matters concerning addictions.

You will learn, for instance about repression and denial and to better understand the spiritual and psychological aspects of addiction and recovery.

You will learn the criteria clinicians use in diagnosing addiction and the underlying biological

You will learn about the many forms of substance abuse such as alcohol, opioids, stimulants as well as other chemicals.

Addictions involve not only chemicals, but also involve compulsive behavior. Many of the same biological changes that occur with substance addiction are also present with behavioral addictions. You will learn the similarities as well as differences in behavioral addictions as well as substance addictions.

Gambling, hoarding, social networking are among the behavioral addictions you will learn about.

Two modules are devoted to pornography and other sexual addictions.

You will learn the different theories of addiction as well as the different treatments. You will learn in detail about twelve step programs.

A special section shows how prayer and spirituality helps in recovery.

Requirements for Course:

Read the designated readings and webpages that are a part of each module's assignment. If webpages are listed along with the required readings be sure to read them. If they come at the end of the module they are optional

Each module will require a forum assignment, a journal or paper assignment.

You are required to make an original post and comment on some of the other posts your fellow students make on the forum.

When the second assignment of the module is a journal entry, use the guide to journal entry (lift this from course on spirituality.) Be sure and quote from readings or refer to readings in your journals.

Generally every other week you will be required to write short papers. Be sure to document these along the lines of your Turabian Citation Guide. Be sure to include a bibliography.

Twice during the course you are required to visit a twelve step program and write up your experience when you get home. The first visit must be made before Module 3 and the second visit before module 8.

There will be three conference calls during the course.

There will be an open book essay questions exam at the end of the course.

Required Texts for the addiction course

1. Let the Oppressed Go Free by Cardinal Justin Rigali
2. Addiction: Pastoral Responses by Bucky Dan
3. Addiction: A Pastoral Approach by Bucky Dann.
4. The Quick Reference Guide to Addictions and Recovery by Tim Clinton and Eric Scalise
5. Addiction and Grace by Gerald G May.
6. False Intimacy by Harry W. Schaumburg