

Spiritual Life Supports

Facilitating Client Participation in the Partner Congregation or Church of the Client's Choice

September 12, 2007

The following is a Corporate Policy Statement:

1. The denominational choice of the client as indicated by the client, the family and/or the guardian will be respected by the staff and efforts will be made to connect the client with a church of that denomination. The Religious Life Assessment tool will be used to gather information concerning client/family/guardian choices. If no church of that denomination is available, the client will be offered other options, with attendance at a local Lutheran congregation being the first choice.
2. If no preference is indicated Lutheran congregation will be offered as the first option.
3. Within 30 days of a client's entrance into a BLHS support setting, a PMC, Chaplain or Chaplaincy Representative will complete a Religious Life Assessment form.
4. The PMC, Chaplain, or Chaplaincy Representative with responsibility for the spiritual life supports of the person, in consultation with the client and staff, will facilitate the decisions necessary to support the spiritual life of the client. Changes in choices by the client that may be made are to be communicated between client, direct support staff and Religious Life staff to ensure that supports are appropriate and effective. If direct support staff or managers become aware of issues in spiritual life supports, either on the part of the client or the local ministry site, those issues should be communicated to Religious Life staff as expeditiously as possible, so that resolution is quick and effective. Direct care staff preferences or personal worship choices will not determine the choice of worship site or be offered as an alternative to the normal worship site at any time.
5. Religious Life staff are encouraged to recruit and train volunteers to assist in client participation and inclusion in the local congregation. Staff supports in worship attendance should be made available, as appropriate.
6. Religious Life and direct support staff will work together with congregations to facilitate inclusion in the life of the congregation, seek to resolve concerns, and support relationships between the congregations and direct care staff.
7. Religious Life staff will assist direct support staff and managers in having a personal relationship with the pastor and lay leaders of the local congregations.
8. The client, family, or guardian retains the right to decline spiritual life supports, including declining to complete a spiritual life assessment.