



## **Code of Ethics**

### **National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains**

#### **Preamble**

The National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC) is an organization of individuals with an interest in providing spiritual care for our Veterans, their families and staff through various Department of Veterans Affairs facilities and programs. As such, members of NAVAC will hold true to the tenets of the organization which provides for their ecclesiastical endorsement in a VA setting.

The mission of NAVAC is to provide highly qualified chaplains with various levels of certification. The end goal is that persons providing spiritual care in VA settings will be professional and well qualified through education, training and experience.

NAVAC understands that we live in a pluralistic society with varying understandings of religion and spirituality. Under no circumstances will NAVAC nor its members discriminate against others on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin or sexual orientation.

The maintenance of high standards of professional competence and moral and ethical conduct is a responsibility shared by all NAVAC members. Members are accountable to one another to maintain the ethical and professional criteria established by NAVAC.

Each person of the National Association of VA Chaplains is individually responsible to uphold these tenets in coordination with their endorsing agency.

The following Code of Ethics is set forth to inform our membership and those with whom we work of the values, principles and expectations of the organization.

#### **Code of Ethics**

1. I will hold in trust the tenets of my endorsing agency, carefully adhering to its guidance in order to maintain endorsement by that body consistent with functioning in a pluralistic setting.
2. I will provide spiritual care to all persons in a religiously and spiritually diverse environment.
3. I will not engage in discussion or behavior that intentionally disparages another person's faith system or lack thereof.
4. When I am not able to provide spiritual care because of differences in belief, I will seek to find another provider who can meet those needs.
5. I will provide for the free exercise of religion and spirituality for all whom I serve.
6. When conducting interfaith worship or speaking at public ceremonies, I will seek to find

common beliefs and expound upon those commonalities.

7. I will respect the faith traditions of those persons I supervise. I will exercise due diligence to ensure I am not requiring tasks that violate the beliefs or morals of the person or their religious body.
8. I will maintain a disciplined personal ministry which includes spiritual practices that help me to remain focused on my specific calling.
9. I will only accept additional responsibilities if they do not diminish my primary obligations or cause conflicts of interest.
10. I will defend my peers and those I serve against discrimination based on factors including but not limited to race, religion, color, age, national origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
11. I will follow the policies of my employing institution regarding patient confidentiality, sharing private information about those whom I serve only according to those policies, my endorser, or as required by law.
12. I will not attempt to proselytize persons who hold beliefs other than my own. I will show grace and kindness to all.
13. I will strive to preserve the dignity and honor due every human being regardless of physical, mental, emotional or spiritual condition.
14. I recognize that the office of “chaplain” often comes with certain authority or power whether assigned or perceived. I will hold that authority to be sacred and will not abuse it for personal gratification, nor use it in such a way as to denigrate the life of another human being religiously, emotionally, physically, sexually or in any other manner.
15. I will promote professionalism and honor among my peers in order to preserve the integrity of the vocation to which I am called.
16. If I encounter an ethical dilemma not addressed in this code of ethics, I will contact the NAVAC Board of Directors. The NAVAC Board of Directors will put me in contact with the appropriate subject matter expert for me to obtain guidance.

Approved by NAVAC membership December 2016