

## How to do effective Feedback: Principles, Process and Documentation for SPRCs

Counseling with clergy when needed is one of the duties of the SPRC pursuant to ¶258.2(g)(3) of The 2016 Book of Discipline, which directs the SPRC “to confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; the pastor’s health and self-care; conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.” Subparagraph (4) includes counseling around gifts, skills, time and priorities for effectiveness.

### **Guiding principles**

We value direct conversation when there is a problem (see Matt. 18:15-20)

Principle: When there is a problem with the pastor’s performance, the SPRC Chair and one other member (such as lay leader) will meet with the pastor. The SPRC Chair will have specific information about the conduct or aspect of performance at issue or situation: who, what, where, when. The goal is renewed relationship and effective ministry, so this is not a punitive process.

How we speak and what we say matters. (Eph. 4:29)

Principle: We speak to the pastor in a spirit of “bearing with one another in love,” and for the purpose of building up, not tearing down, to give grace. We use “I” messages. We do not use anonymous information.

Preparation is key to the effectiveness of the conversation

Principle: The SPRC will prepare by understanding the feedback process, outlining the conversation ahead of time, researching resources that can be offered to the pastor, reviewing previous SPRC conversations about this matter, and by praying.

As Wesleyans, we “watch over one another in love.”

Principle: Accountability and support go hand in hand and our intention is to offer the gift of both. One without the other fails the pastor and the congregation. Together, they offer the opportunity for redemption of relationships, revitalized ministry, and victory for the sake of the kingdom.

“Support without accountability promotes moral weakness; accountability without support is a form of cruelty” (¶102, p. 55, The 2016 Book of Discipline).

Also be mindful that you are likely to discover that the performance or behavior or circumstance is actually attributable at least in part to the behavior of the congregation or circumstances external to both the pastor and congregation. For example, declining worship attendance may be in part due to where the congregation is in the life cycle, or due to changes in the surrounding community. *These contextual factors should be considered in the evaluation and in the course of action and envisioned outcomes of the process.*