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PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR CHAPLAINS

This course is for those already established in the role of Pagan Chaplain and those looking for a career in chaplaincy, whether it be in an institution or within the community, as well as those looking for career development within their chosen field.

We work in conjunction with institutions where Pagan chaplains are employed as part of the Chaplaincy Team, and others where the future addition of a Pagan Chaplain is already being discussed.

Our chaplains can also look for a career in one of the many community projects. e.g. homelessness, and mental health, or may wish to work representing their faith paths with interfaith communities across the world

To apply to attend the Pagan Seminary Chaplaincy course you must have the following:

1. Interviewing skills, empathy and listening skills.
2. Diplomacy and the ability to cope with emotion often in awkward and complex situations,
3. An ability to relate to assembled people and speak with them in a confident but not patronising manner.
4. A background of work with clients or experience in one of the caring professions (whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors) would be a real advantage, but life experience will be taken into consideration.

Practical information regarding the course.

1. This course comprises workshops, lectures and practical work at intervals over ten weekends, with additional written work.
2. A mentor will be assigned to each trainee, who will be available for advice and clarification throughout the course
3. Assessment will be by external assessment plus the recommendation of their mentor, in addition to observed practical skills and marked written work.
4. The course is mainly practical work, interspersed with three written modules, and an agreed task. The final assessment will be completed on the last day of the course.
5. Food where supplied is basic and nutritional. However, those with special dietary requirements will be expected either to bring or to source suitable food themselves.
6. The aim of the course is to prepare Chaplains to work within a number of different Chaplaincy Departments, and to advise and assist individuals in the community where the need for a Chaplain may be seen to be evident.
7. We will work with our students to enable them to understand and write bespoke ceremonies for all Life Celebrations and become professional and confident when officiating at Rituals & Seasonal Celebrations, Naming Ceremonies, Wedding Blessings, Handfastings, and any other Rites of Life.
8. We also cover Death Rites and will advise our Chaplains on how to deal with individuals and their families prior to death. We cover the duties of the Chaplain at all stages of the dying process, where they are asked to officiate at a Funeral, and to help families who may be experiencing grief at this time.
9. The trainee will gain an informed outlook on all Pagan Paths through talks, discussion, and workshops.

The assessment is by:

- 1) **Working journal.** This journal is a personal response to the course. In it the student records issues arising from the units within the course, giving examples from their personal experience. The student should record feelings, responses and issues raised from these experiences and how they inform their spiritual evolvment. These may be used as examples of the criteria where relevant.
- 2) **Practical assessment and observed role play scenarios.**
- 3) **Written work.**
 - a) Two essays of 2,000 - 3,000 words based on research and experience.
To be discussed and agreed by the student and the mentor
The student should aim to meet the criteria relevant to the particular essay.

Submission deadlines for this work will be two weeks before the next practical weekend in order that it may be marked, returned and any issues arising may be discussed at this time.
 - b) Poems or readings to be used in ceremony or ritual.
 - c) Additional short written passages on course material as required.
- 4) **Viva.** The viva will be an informal discussion with course tutors and mentor and external moderators. It provides the chance for the student to reinforce their understanding of the course content and clarify any of the criteria which may not have been fully met in the rest of the assessment.

Should the student fail to meet all of the criteria in the above, then the recommendation of their mentor will be taken into account.

Assessment criteria:

- 1) Self-awareness
- 2) Empathy
- 3) Listening and communication skills
- 4) Vocal projection
- 5) Ritual understanding and ability to write and orchestrate as required.
- 6) Client Confidentiality
- 7) Boundaries
- 8) Supportive debrief

COURSE STUDY GUIDE

1. WORKING JOURNAL

The working journal is one means of meeting the criteria required by the course. It is a student's personal response to the course – the issues, both personal and general raised in modules and during essay research, and the student's experiences during the ten weekends.

The student should endeavour to use the journal to illustrate the required course criteria both from experience within the course and by personal experience outside of it, using episodes from their life experience. THIS JOURNAL IS CONFIDENTIAL, ALTHOUGH A SAMPLE MAY BE USED BY PRIOR AGREEMENT BY THE ASSESSOR. External Assessors, will be bound by the same confidentiality. It is up to the individual student as to how open they are within their journal, but it should be noted that self-awareness and a willingness to examine their own process is invaluable in meeting the criteria.

2. WRITTEN REPORT ON TALKS, WORKSHOPS AND OTHER PRACTICAL WORK

3. ESSAYS

The subjects for the two essays are centred around:

- a. Effective Communication.
- b. Grief and Bereavement,
- c. The role of a Pagan Chaplain in the community

1. The student will choose their own essay title within these areas to reflect an area of interest to them. There will be opportunity to discuss possible titles and approaches with their mentor.
2. The essay should show evidence of personal research and experience and illustrate the course criteria. It should be noted that not every criterion may be met in an individual essay and that the student may elect to meet some of the criteria in each.
3. The content of the essay should have direct relevance to the chosen title and should contain both introduction and summary.
4. Each essay must be no more than 3,000 words and must be accompanied by a bibliography of all research material.

5. All direct quotes from research material should be indented left and right within the body of the text and annotated by author, publication and page number, and essays referenced according to the Harvard referencing system. <https://www.ukessays.com/referencing/harvard/>

It may be useful for the student to consider which areas and approaches they may wish to choose for their essays before the start of the course to give them ample time for research.

4. DEADLINES

Deadlines will be given when the essay is agreed with your course mentor, and MUST be adhered to. Extensions may be granted where there is evidence of genuine need.

The meeting of deadlines is an important part of the work of the individual and also meets the criteria surrounding boundaries.

Training Modules:

We expect Chaplains to have a working understanding of all Pagan Paths and to enable this we have put together a number of talks, workshops, gatherings, and rituals.

These are ongoing studies that embrace the ten weekends that make up the course. In addition Career Development weekend/s and a retreat are available the following year.

We trust they will not only inform and open the minds and hearts of our students, but will provide laughter, love and a connection to our Ancestors and the Gods which will sustain and direct each student throughout the entire learning process.

- a) Experts from each tradition will visit and talk to students so that they may gain knowledge of other Pagan Paths, from someone who is acknowledged as an authority by their peers, in their particular tradition.
- b) Over the ten weekends we will examine different Pagan spiritual paths to understand how they may differ and what it is that draws us together.
- c) It is important that all our students learn the tenets and fundamentals of other Pagan Paths, in order to better understand how we can help in the absence of their own Spiritual leader.
- d) We also look at other religious and spiritual beliefs to understand and learn from them in order to explore our own relationship with our faith, and to reflect on intolerance and attraction, and the ways each faith path connects to their God /s & Goddess/s.

The importance of self-care, self-development, support, supervision and debrief:

- a) Your own spiritual practice must be the foundation upon which your development is grounded. Therefore, we expect our students to commit to at least 30 minutes a day when, after creating sacred space, each student examines their own beliefs and spirituality, and by meditation, prayer or any other traditional form of worship that allows them to connect to their deity.
- b) A mentor will be assigned to each student and during the course we encourage the students to phone or meet with their mentor/spiritual counsellor often, to review the journey and to discuss any challenges that they are facing.
- c) We will also provide training on the basics of self-care, and explore individual avenues for self-development while discussing the importance of supervision and debrief, and putting agreed practices into place for the duration of the course.

Communication:

- a) This course will define communication, and the differing types of communication we may need to use in our position as Chaplains. We also emphasise how important communication is within the context of this course, and externally when using modern media based communication methods.
- b) We study the way verbal and non-verbal communication can impact a given situation and effect outcomes. We also look at how language can stimulate, provoke, suppress, or alleviate a situation. In addition, we discuss and experiment with language within ritual and its ability to encompass and establish rapport and elevate ritual actions.
- c) Each student is expected to be familiar with 'jargon' used by different paths and know how and when to use it, and to be conscious of their own presence in a situation and how it effects the way others perceive and respond to us. They need also to be able to recognize that trauma, excitement, pain, distress, and anticipation, can cloud how someone communicates.

Health and Safety:

- a) Good planning and organisation is an essential tool when running any event. If risk assessments are standard practice and the necessary Health and Safety requirements adhered to it allows all Chaplains, from the main organisers of events to any volunteer, to be kept safe and this will result in an enjoyable time for all.
- b) It is particularly important to ensure that all Chaplains are aware of lone worker criteria and abide by the policies put in place to keep them safe.
- c) As Chaplains we will often need to organise voluntary and community events, or to help setting up systems in the organisation in which we work. It is important therefore that all students are aware and understand the importance of Health & Safety, and know about the legalities and licences required for the different types of event we may run, from organising open rituals to conferences and training workshops

Professional conduct and conflict resolution:

- a) All students must agree to conduct themselves in a professional manner and adhere to standards of honesty and ethics as prescribed by The Pagan Seminary.
- b) Where conflict arises over values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. The Pagan Seminary will put into place a conflict resolution procedure, and will ensure that any complaint will be dealt with in a fair and just way.
- c) These same skills will be imparted to the student so that they have the necessary knowledge and experience should they encounter conflict in any other part of their lives.

Safeguarding:

- a) Safeguarding is the term used by Chaplains to define their duty to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of all vulnerable adults and children, and it extends to any adult or child in our care. It is a Chaplains duty to enable them to live safely, and free from abuse and/or neglect.
- b) In practice we will train our chaplains to be aware and alert to the risks and possibilities that may cause damage to any people we meet, and in particular those following the Pagan Path, including those who take advantage of the vulnerable and susceptible using the name of Paganism and/or its traditions and different paths to hide their behaviour. At its widest it may involve people and organisations coming together to share information and thereby preventing or reducing any risk that may affect the physical and mental state of anyone who comes to us for help, or whom we notice may be suffering from symptoms we can link to physical or mental abuse.

Pastoral care and counselling.

- a) Pastoral care & counselling is the provision we make within our organisation via mentors to ensure the physical and emotional welfare of our students and we also teach the fundamentals of these practices and apply them to the key human issues to enable them to go out into their communities and aid others in a practical and spiritual way.
- b) Pastoral counselling additionally enables us to help other individuals within our communities who are experiencing mental distress or anguish, or any type of dysfunction caused through their situation, lifestyle or any other factor which can be eased by working with or through their own spiritual beliefs, or other issues raised with their chosen path.

Understanding and dealing with discrimination as in the Equality Act 2010.

Learning the actions you can take to recognise and deal with discrimination and, in particular, those that may apply specifically within our own communities, or from external agencies.

Different types of discrimination are:

- a) Age
- b) LGBTI+
- c) Physical and Mental disabilities.
- d) Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- e) Religion or belief
- f) Life Style

Mental Health awareness.

Mental Health Awareness enables us to help people realize the many ways in which mental illness touches their own lives, and the lives of others. We show students how to recognise possible symptoms so that early action can be taken. It also helps students to examine the available services, and to discover when and how these services can be called upon. We also consider and discuss the many ways to advocate for increased support for those in need.

Recognising Domestic abuse and facilitating good response:

Domestic abuse is often hidden by both the abuser and the person being abused. There are many reasons for this and we will consider them and discuss how to recognise and deal with the many different types of abuse:

- a) Physical Abuse including Forced sex, & prostitution.
- b) Psychological Intimidation
- c) Financial abuse
- d) Emotional abuse
- e) Coercive control

FGM training to understand and respond appropriately:

- a) FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It's illegal in the **UK** and is defined as child abuse. It is a very painful procedure which can seriously harm the health of women and girls, often causing long-term problems with sex, childbirth and mental health.
- b) It was outlawed in the UK by the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, which made it an offence to perform FGM on children or adults.
Although not generally a problem within our communities, we need to remember that there are many who follow our beliefs and who join us from differing ethnicities. It is therefore important to be aware of the practice of FGM and where necessary be able to inform people of the facts and issues, and how and where they can get help when it is needed.

Recognising and dealing with extremism:

- a) Education and exposure combined with a culture of tolerance, welcoming and even a celebration of diversity is most important in our society.
- b) Unfortunately we have to recognise that some of the faith paths within paganism may be, or may seem to be, extremist or too nationalistic in their views. Ultimately, while accepting the oneness of humanity and our common beliefs, we need to be able to recognise and to deal with any extremism or perceived extremism within our communities.

Being non-judgemental, open minded and having an understanding of how to empower others:

- a) There is a thin line between control and guidance. As chaplains we seek to empower. We achieve this by respecting a person's autonomy, their spiritual beliefs and their view of the world and, while we may be a listening ear or may be able to disseminate information, we aspire to allow the individual to make their own decisions.
- b) We explore and discuss the ways that we can be non judgemental and open minded in our talks to others of our beliefs, and those who are not of our belief systems.

Rituals and Seasonal Celebrations

- a) We explore and discuss and take part in ceremonies that show the way different Nature Based/Earth Centered/ and Ancient Traditions/paths practice their rituals and celebrations.

Rites of Life and Rites of Death.

- a) A rite of passage deals with transitional times or changes which occur in our lives, and in the natural order of society. When we mark these events with a ceremony/ritual it enables us to return to the sense of wholeness that the change, transition has altered.
- b) We look at the historical basis for rites of passage and how they have become part of the Pagan lifestyle
- c) We study all the rites of life including writing and officiating at naming ceremonies, handfasting (marriages) and many others.

- d) We study the Rites of Death especially the ritualised washing and anointing of the deceased through to the funeral ceremony from a practical and legal view point, and also talk about a memorial ceremony where this may be appropriate.

Ritual and the Basics of Ritual:

- a) A ritual is a religious or solemn ceremony, parts of which have been practiced the same way through time. It consists of a series of symbols, actions and words and music, performed according to a prescribed order.
- b) We study the history of ritual and its formation through talks, workshops, and learn how to write, shape and stage manage each ceremony, and the parts that make up the ritual.

Additional units will be added from time to time. These may be at the request of the trustees, lecturers or by students in discussion with their mentors.