

What can Faith Community Care bring to your church?



Are your church's pastoral care needs growing?

It could be due to rising stress, mental health issues, pandemic, relationship breakdown, isolation and loneliness, early discharge from hospital, increasing chronic conditions, disabilities, or the growing needs of our ageing population.

Faith Community Care (FCC) is health focused pastoral care ministry using gifted and specifically trained volunteers and people with health professional knowledge and skills to effectively care for people in your congregation and if possible reach out to the community your church serves.

FCC workers add depth, scope and reach to pastoral care by bringing health and care knowledge and skills to more traditional pastoral care activities. They provide a whole person (body-mind-spirit, relationships) focus that seeks to proactively promote health, and prevent disease, injury and abuse. They also respond effectively to people experiencing illness aiming to empower self-care of the person's condition to optimise their wellbeing. In so doing FCC adds great value to your church's pastoral care.

A Faith Community Care worker brings:

- ♥ health knowledge/skills combined with personal qualities and Christian faith to give compassionate, knowledgeable and faith-filled support to people
- ♥ a deeper level of focused whole person support (physical, social, emotional and spiritual) that promotes holistic wellbeing
- ♥ support for people as they navigate health, aged and community care services so they can locate the right resources at the right time
- ♥ broader scope that enhances pastoral care and enables community outreach
- ♥ the gift of time, presence, attentive and careful listening, accompanying the person

Faith Community Care workers focus on these core functions:

Health promotion
Empowerment
Advocacy and referral
Listening and visiting
Transformative relationships
Hope and spiritual care

"Australian health professionals are trusted and afforded special respect by the whole community."

"The FCC worker enabled me to stay in my own home by helping me find the right support in my community!"

"She is kind and caring and willing to pray with me, so I felt supported as I made such important life decisions."

This is what pastors, priests and churchgoers say about Faith Community Care workers in their church

Note: FCC workers may be voluntary or salaried. They work under the governance of their employing faith community.

"She has excellent people skills. She is a great listener, paying attention to underlying issues. She supports, teaches and helps people with practical information that I simply don't have as a priest."

The FCC worker "has the eyes of a hawk and the courage of a lion. She has peripheral vision to assess what's going on. She is not afraid to go to the difficult and deeper places with people in pastoral conversations."

"He considers the whole person. People open up to him with ease and he is able to locate their strengths and internal motivators instead of focusing on their problems and this helps them to find new ways to move forward."

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Does it have to be a health professional?

Faith Community Care ministry uses people with lived experience, people with specific caring gifts, and people with acquired health professional knowledge and skills. Everyone can play a helpful part as we care for one another!

AFCNA surveyed people to locate the top 10 attributes health professionals such as nurses bring to FCC ministry. The survey results are provided so you can see how health professionals with Christian faith can add to your church community's care.



Unique knowledge health professionals bring to churches

1. 'Multilingual' in the languages of faith, health and community care
2. Holistic approach to health – body, mind, spirit
3. Broad health knowledge spanning many fields
4. Able to provide some care management when the person lives at home
5. Make ethical decisions based on shared Christian values
6. Understand how to navigate systems to get resources/services
7. Can successfully navigate transition between services with people
8. Understand health promotion and illness/injury/abuse prevention
9. Can effectively translate information and knowledge for people
10. Work to a professional standard and are accountable to regulatory laws

Unique skills health professionals bring to churches

1. Build relationships using refined interpersonal and communication skills
2. Coordinate care creatively - consider personal preferences and offer options
3. Able to answer personal/family questions or know where to find the answers
4. Manage care using goal setting, coaching, monitoring and evaluating skills
5. Able to locate the right resources and make timely referrals
6. Work with/for the person, advocating and mediating (at the person's request)
7. Case management skills to talk to service providers with/for the person
8. Sound teaching skills to make information accessible
9. Good problem solving skills
10. Recognise the person's social context and plan care accordingly

Unique qualities health professionals bring to churches

1. Have community respect and trust as professionals with integrity in Australia
2. Focus on quality of life for the whole person with an emphasis on spiritual care
3. Compassionate attitude – demonstrating the 'fruit of the spirit' in their care
4. Hold a shared faith and common values with the person
5. Provide a Christian perspective that can ignite hope and potentially alleviate fear
6. Share religious activities to provide spiritual care, e.g. pray, read Bible, communion
7. Demonstrate spiritual maturity to sit in difficult spaces with humility and patience
8. Rely on God and the power of the Holy Spirit to maintain stability under pressure
9. Accessible because they are part of the faith community
10. Give time and presence to listen and be with people that systems cannot provide

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