

## Appendix 7: When to Refer

Here are some suggestions to help pastoral carers know when it's time to refer to those who can provide more effective support.

1. **When you do not have the skills to support in a particular situation.** Know your limits. Operating outside of your competency can increase the risk of physical and emotional harm to survivors of abuse.
2. **When you do not have the time to support effectively.** Do not short-change the survivor by giving them haphazard support.
3. **When the support process serves your needs more than it serves the one seeking help.** In a vulnerable position, a hurting person will often follow the advice of those in positions of power, so it is extremely important not misuse the relationship to meet personal needs.
4. **When your role is compromised or lost by boundary violations.** Be careful that your support does not turn into a friendship, a romanticized relationship, or an affair. Always maintain professional distance.
5. **When your support compromises other vital responsibilities.** When you are increasingly giving extra attention to the hurting person in a way that is at the expense of your family, the church congregation or other important relationships.
6. **When intuitively you feel that something is not quite right in the relationship or when the boundaries are blurry or are being crossed.** There are spatial boundaries (such as touch or how close people sit) verbal boundaries (such as the appropriateness of words in a social or professional context), and time boundaries (phone calls or appointments at unusual hours) that need to be attended to.
7. **When the person seeking your help has begun to transfer unnecessary power, expectations, authority, responsibility upon you.** It is nice to feel valued and appreciated by the one you are helping. However, encourage the hurting person to trust others and God as a support network is developed.
8. **When you begin to over-identify with the hurting person's problem.** Everybody has a personal history of wounds, and some of that woundedness is unfinished business. Show appropriate empathy, but do not allow your issues to compromise the needs of the one who seeks help.
9. **When you have difficulty maintaining confidentiality.** Be honest with yourself and protect yourself from yourself.
10. **When you have no back up or support system or supervision to help with troubling situations.** Use peers, consultants and supervisors to help you stay honest with yourself.
11. **When there are serious threats or risks to the health, safety or welfare of the hurting person, others, or yourself.** Examples of such risk include the threat of suicide, homicide, violence or neglect. Notify the appropriate authorities (emergency, medical, social or psychiatric services.) Domestic violence requires caution and back up.