

GUIDELINES FOR CLEARNESS COMMITTEES

1. Remember that the goal is to pray with and “draw out the Inner Teacher” for the person seeking help in discernment. A clearness committee is fundamentally a worshipping group seeking guidance.
2. Confidentiality should be agreed to in the first meeting. Trust demands that what is said in the room stays in the room unless express permission is granted otherwise. There are a few exceptions: when a committee is unable to function effectively, members may need to consult with the clerk of the Meeting body that appointed the clearness committee for example, revealing as little confidential information as possible. Also, clearness committees cannot be expected to grapple alone with extremely challenging issues such as significant danger to the requester or others. In such cases, members of the committee should also consult with the clerk of the appointing committee. In cases where members feel a need to consult, it is best to do this with the requester’s knowledge and consent if possible.
3. Set the number of times the committee should meet. A clearness committee is typically expected to meet one to at most three times. If the committee feels a need to meet for a longer period or to shift its focus from discernment toward ongoing support, it should lay down its clearness role and ask to be reconstituted as a support committee.
4. Is referral needed? Some clearness committee requests might be referred to the Quarterly or Yearly Meeting if the issue involves conflicts within the monthly meeting that make it difficult for the monthly meeting to be helpful.
5. If the requester has any questions or concerns about the committee, he or she is encouraged to contact the clerk of the appointing body, or one of the clerks of Marriage and Family Life, Care and Support, or Ministry and Counsel.
6. Likewise, if members of the clearness committee have questions or concerns, they should ask the requester’s permission to contact the clerk of the appointing body, or of Marriage and Family Life, Care and Support, or Ministry and Counsel. Trust within a committee evolves from protecting confidentiality, being mindful of vulnerability, and tending the relationships within the group. Note that unlike support committees, when a clearness committee is created with the expectation of reporting to the originating committee, such as in the case of membership or marriage, the requester agrees to this beforehand.
7. For those serving on a clearness committee, please remember that the goal of the committee is prayerful accompaniment in discernment. You are asked to:
 - Remember that the primary goal is to provide spiritual presence.
 - Provide a non-judgmental presence.
 - Listen fully without thinking about what you might say while another is speaking. Consider whether something you are about to say is helpful to the requester. Is it about him or her, not you?
 - Avoid trying to fix the situation. Try to “listen the person into the divine truth” inherent

within him or her. If you are moved to offer a suggestion, it is helpful to first ask the requester whether they would like suggestions.

- Remember that the requester may well choose a different approach than you would, but that requester's authentic self is whole and precious. He or she must find how the Spirit leads him or her, which may not be how the Spirit would lead you.

8. Clearness Committee Meeting Guidelines

- Meet for no more than 2 hours.
- Start and end with worship.
- Be prompt and end promptly.
- Be sure there is a clear facilitator each time, and that dates and times for meeting are communicated clearly.
- Avoid communicating in sub-groups about the committee discussions outside the meeting times. Be vigilant to maintain confidentiality.
- Evaluate the committee's effectiveness at regular intervals.
- It may be helpful to assign a group member to summarize at the beginning of a meeting what occurred at the previous meeting and the questions or directions that emerged for possible future exploration.
- Holding the requester in the Light and praying for each other outside the meeting times are always encouraged!

9. When the clearness committee's task is finished, the convener should notify the appointing body that it has been laid down