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Past National Chaplain
2024-2025

Chaplains Zoom Training
Advanced Fundamentals #1

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Essential Skills of Chaplaincy

> *"Throughout this series, we will focus on the essential skills of chaplaincy that make the VFW Chaplain effective in the lives of veterans and their families."*

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Session 1 Goal & Key Principle

SESSION GOAL

Clarify what the VFW Chaplain's role is and how to effectively serve veterans and their families.

"Before a chaplain can serve effectively, a chaplain must understand the purpose and mission of the office."

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Advanced Fundamental #1

Understanding the Mission and Purpose of the VFW Chaplain

Before we can do the work of a chaplain well, we need to understand why the position exists and what we are called to do.

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."
— John F. Kennedy

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The Purpose of the VFW Chaplain

- Chaplain's Handbook (pp. 6, 11)

"Every effective chaplain has a clear understanding of why the position exists and who it serves."

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CHAPLAIN'S HANDBOOK • PAGE 6

The Purpose of the Chaplain

The Chaplain exists to minister to veterans and their families.

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CHAPLAIN'S HANDBOOK • PAGE 6

The Work of the VFW Chaplain

1. Nurture the Living
2. Care for the Dying
3. Honor the Dead

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A Chaplain is like a Lighthouse



A Lighthouse does not calm the storm, and it does not sail the ship. It stands steady, stays visible, and helps people find their way.

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A Lighthouse is successful because it consistently performs it fundamental mission.

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HANDBOOK READINGS • PP. 6 & 11

Key Handbook Reflections



Be the Lighthouse in somebody's storm
p.6



Relating to Everyone
p.11

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Relating to Everyone is Key



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Effective chaplain ministry is a two-way street, not a one-way road.

Relationships grow through mutual respect, trust, and genuine concern for others.

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Discussion Question

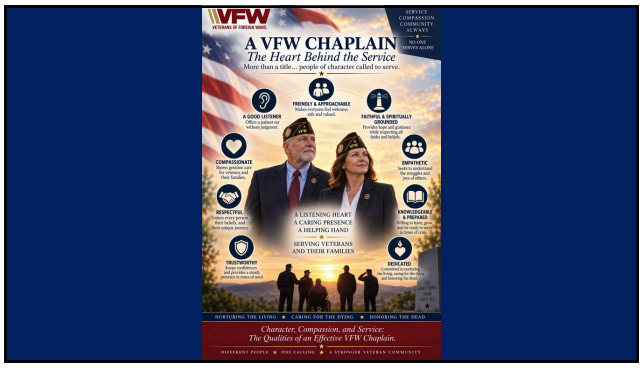
What qualities make a chaplain approachable and trustworthy and someone others feel comfortable approaching during difficult times?"

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Qualities That Foster A Balanced Two-way Relationship

- **Friendliness**
- **Mutual respect**
- **Trust and a sense of safety**
- **Judgment-Free Listening**
- **Grounded Presence:** Calm, patient, genuinely available.

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CHAPLAIN'S HANDBOOK • PAGE 6

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PRIMARY DUTIES OF A VFW CHAPLAIN

The Practices and Things we do day to day
to accomplish our purpose.

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PRIMARY DUTIES OF A VFW CHAPLAIN

1. Developing Relationships
2. Offering Prayers
3. Care in Difficult Times
4. Offering Encouragement

Relationships are the foundation that makes all the other duties possible.

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PRIMARY DUTIES OF A VFW CHAPLAIN

Primary duties: presence, ceremony, and counsel

5. Visitation
6. Conducting Ceremonies
7. Being a Trusted Advisor

Visible, approachable, and dependable: the thread through every duty.

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The Foundation of Ministry is Trust

"Establishing trust is the foundation upon which every relationship and ministry is built."

Review: Ethics and Guiding Principles for Chaplains, Chaplain's Handbook (p. 8).

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The Foundation of Ministry is Trust

People will not seek or accept support from a chaplain they do not trust.

Spending time with people helps build trust, and ethical conduct and confidentiality are what protect that trust.

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Establishing and Maintaining Trust

Keep it confidential
Keep personal matters confidential.

Know your limits
Refer to professionals: counselors, clergy, crisis resources.

Respect beliefs
Do not push personal beliefs.

Be clear on exceptions
Explain limits to confidentiality, such as risk of harm to self or others.

Review: Ethics and Guiding Principles for Chaplains, Chaplain's Handbook (p. 8).

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Three Things Every Chaplain Should Remember

1. Know the Mission
2. Build Relationships
3. Protect Trust

If you do these three things well, you will be accomplishing the most important work of a VFW Chaplain.

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One Additional Thought . . .

This week:

- Don't just think like a chaplain. Act like one.
- Make one contact, offer one prayer, encourage one veteran, and strengthen one relationship.
- Small acts of care are often where great chaplaincy begins.

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