

## Action Learning Groups

Each Clergy College will commence and conclude with an hour long Action Learning Group, which will be guided by an expert facilitator.

### **Purpose**

Action Learning Groups will be the place within Clergy Colleges in which participants can reflect together on their experience of Accompanied Ministry Development and its impact upon them and their parishes. They are facilitated sessions that aim to enhance creative ways of thinking and encourage interaction with issues that matter to group members.

### **Process**

The first Action Learning Group session in the first Clergy College will explain the role and function of the groups. As the programme progresses, it is anticipated that members will raise both broad ideas and specific work-related issues to discuss with peers.

The group will be open to different ways of working and different learning styles. Although the predominant mode of interaction will be oral discussion, it will be possible for members to bring visual or other media and to work in ways that are natural to them.

Action Learning Groups often contain a level of ‘unlearning.’ Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their assumptions and beliefs, asked to engage in critical enquiry in relation to culture and mind-set and, perhaps as a result, challenged to reframe their possible choices. This type of reflection requires members of the group to respect and value each other’s background and experience, and creates an opportunity to learn how to work better together. It is hoped that this collaborative process can also act as a model for ways of working within the parish and more widely within the community.

### **A facilitated discussion**

Although the group will have a facilitator, Action Learning Groups work on the basis of peer learning. In order for the group to operate within a level of trust and confidentiality, time will be taken to negotiate boundaries and ways of working at the initial meeting of the group to create a ‘safe enough’ working environment. It will also be possible throughout the life of the group to engage with any needs that members may identify for themselves.

The role of the facilitator within the group is not primarily to engage with the content of problems and issues, but to support group members in reflection, inquiry and learning from their experiences. At times they may contribute from their own skills or knowledge; they may also intervene to identify a learning opportunity, check perceptions or clarify statements.

### **After Accompanied Ministry Development**

It is hoped that the Action Learning Groups may decide to continue beyond the life of the programme and/or provide a model for future ways of working between clergy.