**Ministry Action Contact (MACs)**

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**What is a Ministry Action Contact (MAC)?**

A MAC, otherwise known as a *verbatim* or *critical incident analysis*, is a record of the interchange between you and another person.

You do the MAC by analyzing what happened with a supervisor so you can learn from it. The analysis process is much like unpacking a suitcase. The closed suitcase has everything in it, but you can't see it clearly. By “unpacking”, you can bring everything out and lay it out so that it's easy to see.

MACs basically ask five related questions:

1. What was the context?
2. What actually happened?
3. What were the personal dynamics involved?
4. What could I have done better?
5. What can I learn about myself?
6. Where is God in it?

Other possible questions:

1. What general spiritual themes and concepts emerge as relevant?
2. What general theological themes and concepts emerge as relevant?
3. How did your identity as a spiritual carer change?
4. Are you developing a preferred style of practice? If so:
   1. How would you describe it?
   2. How would articulate it?
   3. How would you assess its appropriateness?
   4. How would you assess its strengths and limitations?

**Why do we use MAC's?**

MAC's are a method of personal formation for ministry. They can be useful for any kind of interpersonal contact, so have a very broad application.

By understanding yourself as a person, MACs help you to prevent manifesting your own baggage while "pastorally caring" for a client. Many ministry people are blissfully unaware of their own baggage and consequently can cause more problems than they solve.

**What kinds of incident?**

MACs can be written on any sort of encounter, but they do need to be a real encounter. They may be talking to the lady next door over the fence or a heated exchange in the foyer of the church. The choice is the yours.

A word of warning.... People often try to write up a neutral innocuous encounter so that the supervisor will "be kind" to them.... It *never* works! Better to write up an encounter that moved you (one way or another) and let's draw the learning out of it.

The incident that suits a MAC is one that normally offers some kind of challenge or insight. It may be an inflamed encounter or seem to be fairly innocuous, but either way, you make every effort to record what was actually said.

The actual encounter is written so that the identity of the other person is concealed. It's not about them; it's about you!

WARNING: Well supervised MACs will be personally confronting, so be prepared for that.

**How do we use a MAC?**

MACs can be used for teaching, for formative assessment and for summative assessment.

The proforma is in three sections:

1. Introduction and setting (context)
2. The verbatim encounter, together with your own internal movements.
3. Your analysis of your learning.

Having prepared the document, you forward it to the supervisor ahead of time so that they can get some feel of what is happening and frame a few questions to help you extract the learning from the encounter.

The presentation involves you reading what you have written, and it is helpful to have the supervisor take the part of "the other." You then trace through your analysis of the learning and then the supervisor will ask you some focussing questions.

WARNING: This experience can be emotional and stressful.

**MACs and Group Supervision**

If numbers are greater than 6-8, we will break into an appropriate number of small groups with a ministry supervisor leading each group.

Each student will be rostered to present a MAC, and an example is attached for your reference. You will also be rostered to be the "helper, minister, guide."

Others in the group simply observe and do not interject. They simply listen to the encounter before them and note their own reactions and responses. ("fishbowl")

With the facilitation of the supervisor, feedback and discussion after the encounter leads to learning for everyone in the group... the helper, the presenter and the observers.

The ministry supervisor will be the helper in the first session.

**End**