COMMUNITY-BASED MINISTRY PEER REVIEW MODEL

ORIGIN AND CONTEXT
This model was developed and used by the Community Ministry Committee of the Mountain Desert District of the UUA. It was first developed for community-based ministers serving as counselors but was later adapted for those serving in a variety of community contexts.

It is a combined self-assessment and peer review process that relies on the community minister to find willing participants, schedule a time for the peer review meeting and provide relevant materials including the self-assessment.

The original model calls for forwarding the peer review report to MPL, but it is reported that this has been rarely implemented in practice. In practice, reports were presented to the District Community Ministry Committee which also served to hold community ministers accountable for completing the annual process.

BENEFITS OF THE MODEL
- The process and questions are adaptable to a variety of community ministry contexts.
- Ministers can invite peer review committee members whose feedback would be most helpful to their ministry.
- The process is relatively easy to plan and implement.
- Relatively short time commitment for participants.

CHALLENGES OF THE MODEL
- Part of its accountability structure relies on the existence of a District Community Ministry Committee.
- A process for developing actions plans based on the review is missing.
- It presents only minimal assessment of the community minister’s congregational involvement and does not immediately provide for congregational input, though the community minister can invite members of their home congregation to participate.
- It doesn’t address the community minister as part of a larger system of ministry.
- It has no immediate provision to track progress from previous years.

PROCESS
1. The community-based minister (Reviewee) initiates the process annually.

2. Participants are selected, chairperson appointed, place and date of meeting are set. Review Committee members should represent and be related to the ministry of the one being reviewed.
3. The community-based minister completes and sends review material (self-assessment) to the participants, using the self-assessment questions as a guide.

4. The Review Committee meets at the appointed place with the following agenda:
   - Introductions
   - Purpose of review
   - Review of material (self-assessment and other relevant documents provided)
   - Responses to process by participants

5. Written report from the Review Committee Chair is sent to the Chair of the District Community Ministry Committee, to the District Executive, and to the Reviewee. (See below for a description of the District Community Ministry Committee.)

6. Reviewee writes a summary statement and includes it with the report from the Review Committee Chair.

7. Written “thank you” notes are sent to participants from the Reviewee.

8. If desired, the Reviewee may request a discussion with the Review Committee Chair.

9. The District Executive sends a copy of the report to the UUA Office of Ministry and Professional Leadership for inclusion in the Reviewee’s MPL file.

Questions for Self-Assessment
These questions are for reflection and form the foundation of one’s self-assessment report.

Professional Development
1. What is your weekly client/case load or can you describe your average work week?
2. How do you provide for supervision/consultation of your work?
3. If applicable, describe your experience of supervising students.
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your work situation.
5. Identify the value of a continuing education experience in the past year.
6. Have you done any professional writing in the last year?
7. If applicable, are you familiar with your legal responsibilities as a therapist in your state?
8. What items would you include as concerns in your income/economic profile?
9. In addition to membership, how do you relate structureally to your professional group(s)?
10. What was the most significant client/case challenge this year?
11. Describe an experience in the past year that reaffirmed your professional/vocational role.
12. In what situation in your practice/ministry to you find it difficult to maintain your professional identity?
13. Have you reviewed your professional code of ethics in the past year? Which ethical issues are emerging in your practice/ministry?

**Religious Development**

1. Take a client/case situation and describe how your theology/religious commitment guided your response.
2. If applicable to your work, how would you describe the difference between the practice of counseling and pastoral counseling?
3. What aspect of your religious life do you sense will require exploration during the next year?
4. What faith questions emerging in your practice/ministry require extra energy from you?
5. Who are your mentors now? How does this differ from five years ago?
6. How do you work within Unitarian Universalism? How does it nurture you?

**Personal Development**

1. Identify a book or article that was/is significant for your personal growth.
2. Are you in therapy, spiritual direction, or ongoing reflective processes?
3. How are you taking care of your body?
4. Do you plan and keep fun time?
5. Do you take time with your family?
6. Describe your study habits.
7. Do you plan and observe periods of journaling, meditation or retreat?

The following description of the Community Ministry Committee is presented to provide a context for the reporting structure noted in the model presented above.

**Mission and Purpose of the Community Ministry Committee of the Mountain Desert District**

In addition to providing accountability structure for fellowshipped UU ministers serving in larger community ministry the District Committee serves to facilitate congregational participant and benefit from the skills, programs, and activities of professional ministers. Its purposes are:

To provide enthusiastic denominational support and local congregational support for UU clergy engaged in larger community ministries in the District. Criteria for community based ministry include expectations of:

1. Membership in a UU congregation
2. Ministerial fellowship through the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA.
3. Responsible affiliation with appropriate area of specialization.

To provide accountability structure at both local and District levels for community ministers in the MDD.

To provide a forum for understanding the nature of larger community ministries.
How Will This Mission Be Accomplished?
The Committee will conduct a yearly review and make recommendations on the activities, focus, and goals of each ministry.
Written materials describing the minister’s role, accomplishments, goals and UUA involvement will be sent to the committee prior to the review meeting. A report including recommendations will then be made to the District Board and to the District meeting.

Policy Notes:
• When there are professional review boards providing accountability (as in the case of institutional chaplains, professors, and UUA staff) annual review by the District shall be sufficient.
• It is strongly recommended that there be a called congregational relationship in the case of social concern ministries.
• Traveling ministries become the responsibility of the District committee in which they reside.

Membership of the District Committee
• Membership of the Committee shall consist of two ministers in fellowship, one lay person appointed by the District Board, and the District Executive (ex officio).
• Two lay people chosen by the minister under review will participate in the annual review process.
• Suggested tenure of term and frequency of meeting: There shall be three (3) year staggered terms for the three members.
• Committee activities shall be reported to the District Board by the Committee Chair. An annual report of Committee activities prepared by the Committee Chair will be presented to the District Board and at the District annual meeting.