

**3 types within L'Arche:**

**Role/Functional** - provides support and challenges in one's roles responsibilities in the community - another word - "supervision."

**Communal** - provides support and challenges in one's way of living/being in community.

**Spiritual** - provides support of an individual's spiritual journey (usually done by a person outside of the community).

**Role/Functional Accompaniment is about:**

- Competence
- Professionalism
- Role responsibilities
- Self-evaluation/evaluation

**Role accompaniment should be:**

- Scheduled regularly
- Take place in a private setting
- Be prepared for
- Include positives as well as needed areas of growth
- Goal oriented
- Affirming, Challenging, trust building
- Done for every staff member

**Community Accompaniment is:**

- Focused on life in the house/community
- A relationship founded in trust
- A place of nourishment
- A place to discuss nourishment needs e.g. rhythm of life, exercise, rest, play, good reading, fruitful use of time away, prayer life.
- A place to receive compassion, be affirmed, encouraged and invited to grow.
- Assistance with gaining perspective - to see the overall picture in relationship to particulars.
- **A safe place of confidentiality and trust UNLESS** a situation is deemed serious enough for outside intervention.

**What is Community Accompaniment?**

"A pianist accompanies a singer by playing the piano. A midwife supports the mother to deliver the baby, giving new life. The teacher opens the dancer to the dance. These images portray how an elder accompanies an assistant within the community of L'Arche, but they don't go far enough.

Accompaniment in L'Arche is a **gratuitous** relationship between the assistant and the accompanier. The accompanier, through experience and friendship, supports the assistant to live in community. Like the pianist or midwife, the accompanier offers his/her wisdom, skills, support and care to be at the service of the assistant desiring to live in community. The assistant, choosing community life but unable to live it unsupported, offers the accompanier the opportunity to grow in compassion, patience and caring, responsibility and love." (Com Accompaniment in L'Arche, Reflections and Guildelines, January, 1994)

**What have you experienced that gives validity to this quote?**

Accompaniment is simply "being with" in the dailyness of life. William Stringfellow calls this the sacrament of mere presence. Accompaniment is not rescuing or saving. Accompaniment is simply being with, among, and in relationship with the poor. Accompaniment is extending the sacrament of friendship

*"The accompanier is there to give support, to reassure, to confirm, and to open new doors. The accompanier is not there to judge us or to tell us what to do, but to reveal what is most beautiful and valuable in us, as well as to point towards the meaning of our inner pain. In this way, an accompanier helps us advance to greater freedom by helping us to be reconciled with our past and to accept ourselves as we are, with our gifts and our limits."*

- Jean Vanier, From Brokenness to Community.

***"In all three forms of accompaniment the essential aspects are listening caring, clarifying, affirming and challenging. All this rest on a basis of trust."*** (Community and Growth, Jean Vanier, p. 250)

**Have you ever heard the story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody?** It's called "That's not my Job," and it goes like this:

"There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done."

**Personal Qualities Every Great Accompanier (A) Needs...**

**Emotional Balance** - (A) works in situations that involve authority, leadership, meeting targets and deadlines, conflicts, etc. The (A) needs to be able to maintain emotional balance & self-control so that they face various situations confidently.

**Being proactive/adaptable** - (A) must have objectives to achieve, plan for what's coming and respond to the needs of the situation that arises suddenly. The (A) must be able to have qualities such as being committed, having a missionary zeal, taking responsibility instead of passing the blame to others.

**Creativity:** It means that the (A) must have the ability to come up with new responses to situations. - new ideas, recognize good ideas when they come from another source.

**Mental Agility:** (A) must have the ability to grasp problems quickly, to think of several things at the same time, and assess the whole situation quickly.

**Learning Habits:** (A) are independent as learners. They take responsibility for what is learned and integrate it into their being & behavior.

**Self-knowledge:** Whatever the (A) does is affected by his/her own view of his/her job and role, objectives, strengths and limitations etc. So they must be aware of these. The (A) must develop skills of looking at him/herself critically.

**Managerial Skills Every Accompanier (A) Needs...**

**Technical** - proficiency - individuals being accompanied expect their (A) to be able to help them with technical problems - solve problems.

**Human** - ability to work with, understand, motivate and communicate with individuals and groups. Also includes the ability to communicate with people, to resolve conflict and to discipline.

**Conceptual** - ability to understand abstract or general ideas and apply them to specific situations. Usually means understanding how the total community can be affected by a specific activity.

**Diagnostic** - the ability to analyze the nature of a problem with people, ideas, things, or events. A good diagnosis precedes a recommended solution to a problem. (A) are frequently called on to size up a problem in order to take appropriate corrective action.

**Political** - the ability to acquire the authority needed to achieve one's objective. Includes being able to win others over - NOT to manipulate - but to persuade.

**Go back over the Personal Qualities and Managerial Skills needed by great accompaniers. Reflect on a recent situation where you were responsible for providing role accompaniment - Which of these skills did you exhibit? Which skill do you need more work on? How will you improve your skills?**

## “7 Skills for Supervision Success”

1. **Listening** – This one is simple right? Try this: the next time you’re talking to someone, try forcing yourself not to speak for 2 full minutes. Really listen to what the person is saying.
2. **Availability** – Availability can mean a lot of things, both tangible and intangible. On the tangible side, it means being physically present at work. Of course, you’re not going to be at your desk every second of the day, but being away all day, every day by traveling too much, having too many off-site meetings, etc. isn’t productive. That also means keeping your calendar updated regularly. Personally, I’m a fan of making your calendar ‘public’ through Outlook. On the more intangible side, availability means being mentally present and available – and being clear about when you can’t be. If you are under a lot of stress for a major project, you need to let your supervisees know that you won’t be able to help them think through a project. But don’t let the ‘can’t’ times take over the ‘can’ times or you’ll create problems.
3. **Mission-focus/priority-setting** – *Figure out what is most important. Do that first.* It is that simple and that difficult. In a nonprofit environment (every environment really) it is essential. We are mission-focused organizations and everything we do, everyday, should help us achieve that mission.
4. **Transparency** – Not every decision needs a full, 360 degree explanation, but lots of secrecy is frustrating and ultimately dis-empowering to those you supervise. Being transparent also means admitting when you’re wrong or when you don’t know the answer. No one is perfect and if you constantly try to hide behind a perfect image, the downfall will be that much harder
5. **Delegation** – Delegation is arguably the hardest of these skills to learn and perfect. Delegation basically means transferring decision-making authority to another employee for a task not necessarily within one’s job description while still retaining ultimate responsibility for the task. There are three key pieces of this:
  - Responsibility – setting clear expectations, but not step-by-step instructions on how something should be done
  - Authority – the person is given the right to make decisions
  - Accountability – the person is responsible for the work, but you, as the delegator has ultimate responsibility
6. **Taking Responsibility and Giving Credit** – When you delegate authority, you are responsible for what the person does. You must take responsibility for the mistakes. BUT – you must also give credit for the successes.
7. **Realism** – Again, simple: DO NOT make commitments that you and your staff can’t keep. Promising the world does no one any good – especially if you can’t deliver. Putting that extra pressure on everyone just creates all kind of unnecessary stress. (Article written by Elisa M. Ortiz - Creating Social Change, One Career at a Time)

**Spiritual Direction** is the practice of being with people as they attempt to deepen their relationship with the divine, or to learn and grow in their own personal **spirituality**. The person seeking **direction** shares stories of his or her encounters of the divine, or how he or she is experiencing **spiritual** issues. When looking for a spiritual director here are some of the characteristics you should look for:

- \*Approachable -someone you can honestly speak to
- \*Available - has the time to meet with you on a regular basis
- \*A good Listener - to our experiences first then points us towards what is significant about that experience
- \*Spiritually experienced and mature - someone who is faithful in living their own faith, is proficient at prayer and growing in their own spiritual life.
- \*Accompanies rather than leads.

### How to find a good spiritual director?

- Look for a person with whom you have personal conversations and you find helpful.
- Ask for a recommendation from someone you trust.
- Call a retreat center and ask for recommendations.
- Contact a local religious community and ask if they can recommend someone.

Having a good spiritual director accompany us on our spiritual journey helps us to recognize God’s unexpected action in our lives.