Pastoral reflective practice for healthcare chaplains

PRP level 1:
For chaplains who are keen to enhance their pastoral and reflective skills as part of their own personal and professional development and to deepen theological dimensions of their work/ministry and (thereby) improve their provision of spiritual care.

Course modes: In order to provide maximum flexibility the course is offered in several modes

- **Intensive:** A full-time block of 10 days completed in two parts (80 hours) at the Centre.

Each mode includes facilitated learning and reflection based on material presented from participant’s practice within his/her own hospital setting.
This course will provide participants with the opportunity to develop in terms of their personal identity (becoming more of who they are/have been called to be); their pastoral/professional identity (their role and work as chaplains) and spiritual identity (their relationship with God within their particular faith tradition).

I find PRP very helpful: I am genuinely surprised at what can be learned from ‘chewing over’ even a very short encounter… I feel more prepared for working with patients in a range of contexts and it has been invaluable to learn from those with more experience and insight in different pastoral situations. (Quote from a volunteer chaplain)

PRP is a brilliant way to put into practice what you learn straight away. It is applied, relevant, stimulating, challenging and stretching and I would encourage anyone who has the time to do this to sign up straight away. (Quote from a student chaplain)

Course content:

- **Level 1:** regular PRP group (facilitated); 1:1 supervision; video work; guided reading; presentation and reflection of pastoral experience; project or essay; exploration of key theological themes

**Core themes:** The nature of hope; the question of suffering (theodicy and providence); grief and loss; mental health & illness; communicating without words; ministering in a religious and secular environment; conflict and difference; group process; institutional dynamics.

**Ongoing PRP groups:**

Presentation and reflection on pastoral experience including key theological themes: the question of suffering; the nature of hope; grief and loss; what is mental ‘health’?...

**CPD:**

This course would qualify for CPD: formal accreditation (UKBHC) is currently being sought.

**Assessment** will be flexible according to individual needs, but will include: self-evaluation, feedback based on PRP; presentation of clinical material; individual supervision; verbatims and video work.

I have found PRP really valuable: it helps me to consider what might be going on at ‘deeper levels’ with people and to discern how God is at work, however that is expressed (Quote from a Chaplain).
Verbatim accounts, journaling, and other methods of theological reflection

Verbatim

Name: Mr Gordon Brown

Setting: Addenbrooke's

Date of visit:

Preparation

1. Early prayer: From 27.2 Daily Light 'Count yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ. Focus on that thought for the day. Pray that Jesus will fill me with love and compassion for those I shall be visiting today.

2. What do I know about the patient? Almost nothing, I have chosen to write up a HISS case so to start from scratch.

3. What are your observations as you approach the patient? An elderly man lying on his back, on a drip. Well built,, eyes alert, rubbing his stomach, he doesn't look very happy. No cards, flowers or books. Little to go on.

4. What are your feelings? rather apprehensive, not an instant rapport, emotionally rather cautious. This might be a difficult one.

Conversation

Me: Hello Mr Brown. May I come and sit here? (pulls up chair near bed)

Mr B. And who may you be?

Me I'm Peter from the Chaplain's Department of the hospital. We try and visit each new patient to see if there is anything we can do for them. Some people have no relatives or even visitors.

Mr B. Yes I see. But I've got a family although my wife is not very mobile I've got two sons who will come and see me.

Me: What is your wife's name?

Mr B: Margaret.

Me Have you been here long? What was it that brought you into hospital?
Mr B. I had a bad fall. I don't remember much about it, and now I've got pains in my stomach as well.