

ascend

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION (MDC)



The Church of Scotland

MINISTRIES COUNCIL

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

A Ministerial Development Discussion is

“...a confidential conversation with a trained facilitator that supports and enables the minister to reflect on their practice of ministry in their context. This conversation will encourage and identify opportunity for learning and growth both professionally and personally.”

Ascend,
Advancing Ministerial Development
2016

This guide is designed for ministers participating in a Ministerial Development Conversation and provides you with the information and guidance you require to enable you to have a meaningful and productive Ministerial Development Conversation (MDC)

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DISCOVERY

This section addresses frequently asked questions about the Ministerial Development Conversation (MDC) and provides guidance on how to get started on your MDC journey.

SECTION 1

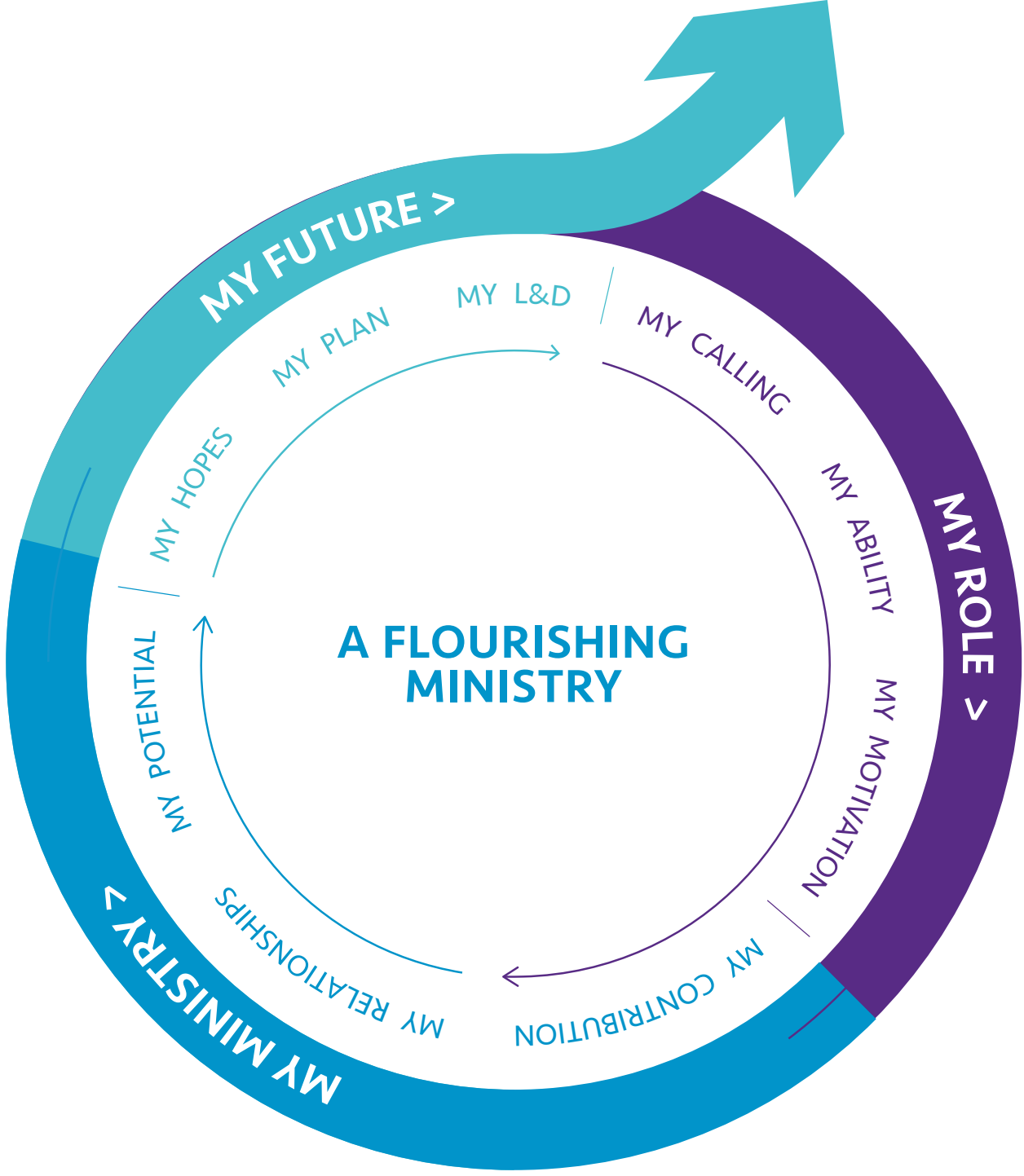
WHAT IS A MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION?

A Ministerial Development Conversation is a minister led, confidential discussion that provides you with the opportunity to:

- reflect on you as a minister - **My Role**;
- take stock of your current appointment - **My Ministry**;
- create clarity, supporting you to think through what your next steps may be - **My Future**;
- take action and be empowered to do so.

You, the minister, are at the heart of the discussion and it provides a trusted space for you to work with a trained facilitator.

The purpose of the conversation is to identify any support that you would benefit from and connect you with opportunities for learning and development (L&D).





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible for an MDC?

If you are an ordained or probationary minister you are invited to take part in an MDC.

Who will conduct my MDC?

The conversation will take place with a trained and annually accredited facilitator. You can either be allocated a facilitator based on availability or, if you prefer, you have the opportunity to select your facilitator.

Section 3 outlines the role of the facilitator and a list of the facilitators and their profiles can be found at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

Is there an agenda or set format for the discussion?

No, there is no set agenda. The MDC enables you to take the lead, to identify and discuss the areas that are relevant and of benefit to you and your ministry.

The success of the MDC is entirely dependent on the degree to which you are willing to enter into this discussion and ultimately the commitment you make to your learning future.

Will the MDC provide me with spiritual direction?

The MDC is a holistic conversation that is led by you, the minister. The intention is that it should cover matters of personal growth and development empowering you to move forward.

It is separate from spiritual direction. However, seeking spiritual direction may be an output of the MDC.

If you would like to enquire about spiritual guidance this can be done by emailing ascend@churchofscotland.org.uk

How long will the MDC last?

The MDC discussion will typically last between two to three hours. However, feedback from previous participants suggests that you may want to add in a little extra time for personal reflection after the conversation has ended.

How do I prepare for it?

Preparation is a key aspect of the MDC and **Section 2** provides guidelines on how to prepare for the discussion.

The MDC is minister led and how you prepare is up to you and will vary from individual to individual. **Section 2** outlines a flexible format that is designed to offer you choices on how to prepare; it allows you to focus on the areas that are important to you and your ministry.

It is recommended that initially you reflect on the nine areas under the three headings and identify those which are most important to you at this time. (See Section 2 for more information.)

What happens at the end of my conversation?

The end of your MDC signifies the beginning of your learning future or it can be used as “pit stop” if you have already embarked upon the journey. The emphasis is on providing you with the opportunity to have a quality conversation that results in action and not on completing voluminous paperwork.

The conversation is confidential and at the end of your MDC you and your facilitator will discuss any next steps you wish to take. It is recommended that you complete the MDC Summary Sheet as a reminder of the discussion. However, your facilitator does not need a copy and there is no requirement to send any paperwork to anyone. This process has been designed to support YOU and the discussion is confidential unless you decide you wish to share it with anyone else.

Section 4 provides guidelines on the onward journey with a template for your consideration.

Will the facilitator take notes during my MDC?

Your facilitator may wish to take a few notes during the discussion but they should seek your permission to do so at the beginning of the conversation. These notes tend to be no more than ‘memory-joggers’ — something relevant that the facilitator perhaps wants to come back to later on in the discussion.

At the end of the MDC the facilitator will ask you what you would like to do with any notes that have been taken. Often they are simply destroyed or the individual takes them away with them.

Is it really a confidential conversation?

The MDC is a confidential conversation.

Trust in the MDC is crucial to its success and the boundaries of confidentiality will be agreed with the individual and carefully observed by the facilitator.

How often should I have an MDC?

This will depend on your individual circumstances but as a guideline it is recommended that you engage in an MDC at least once every two years. However, you can request an MDC as and when required and it is suggested that you undertake an MDC discussion at points of transition.

Ministers within their first five years are encouraged to engage in an MDC annually.

Can I make a Study Leave Application without having undertaken an MDC?

The purpose of the MDC conversation is to help you shape the next stage of your ministry and identify the support from which you would benefit in order to take your ministry forward. Therefore, to access Study Leave funding you are encouraged to have an MDC to help clarify the purpose and content of Study Leave.

How do I arrange an MDC?

You select your facilitator and to access the list of accredited facilitators please visit www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

Once you have selected your facilitator, they will contact you directly to arrange an introductory conversation.

This introductory conversation will provide you with the opportunity to engage with your facilitator in advance of the MDC. This typically lasts thirty minutes and is usually conducted over the phone. It allows you to get to know each other a little; to talk generally about the MDC how it works; to answer any initial question that you may have and to plan the best way to get started (including potential logistics).



WHERE DO I START?

This section provides guidance for those who are participating in a Ministerial Development Conversation on how to prepare for their discussion.

SECTION 2

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION?

In this section you will find a series of statements to help you prepare for your conversation. The MDC model is structured around nine areas grouped under three clear headings:

MY ROLE

MY MINISTRY

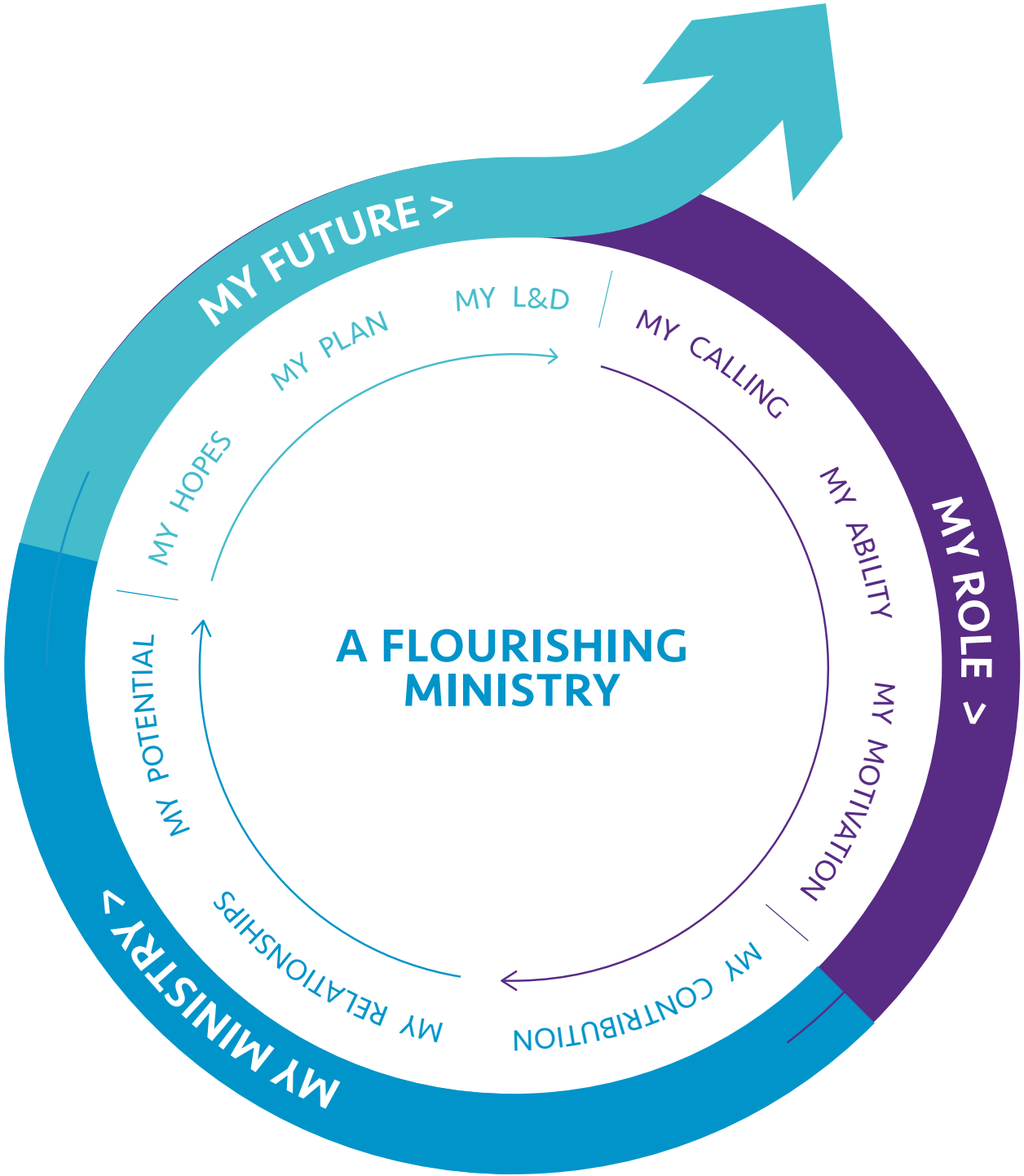
MY FUTURE

It has been designed to put you at the heart of the conversation and created to offer you a choice on how you prepare for your discussion.

To get the most out of your MDC you may wish to work through some or all of the statements in the accompanying framework, but as a minimum it is recommended that you reflect on the nine areas under the three headings.

It is suggested that you invest between **1–3 hours** preparing for your discussion.

You can prepare and communicate your thoughts to your facilitator in whatever way works best for you.



CONSIDER SOME / ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

MY ROLE		
I know what is expected of me.	I am fulfilling my calling.	I want to do this.
I balance my work and personal life – my personal and family commitments are not neglected.	I have the knowledge and skills to flourish in my role.	I have the interpersonal skills to flourish in my role.
I feel physically and emotionally resilient.	I can easily recall highlights and moments of enjoyment.	I feel confident in my own ability.

MY MINISTRY		
I make a contribution in, for example: Prayer and worship; Pastoral care and spiritual guidance; Leadership; Day to day management.	I form constructive relationships with, for example: My Congregation; Kirk Session; Presbytery etc	I know the gifts that I bring to the role.
The environment is right.	My relationship with God is strong / good.	I have the opportunity to make the most of my talents within my ministry.
I make good use of the resources and processes available to me.	I have overcome conflict in relationships.	Aspects of my ministry challenge me.

MY FUTURE		
I know what I want my future to look like.	I know where I am now and what I want to achieve.	I know how I am going to achieve it and will direct my efforts in the following areas.
I see change as an opportunity.	I have identified the resources and support I need to achieve this.	I recognise the value of the learning / development opportunities that I have identified.
I have the confidence and capability to lead others through periods of change.	I am confident that I am continuing in the right direction.	I recognise and value what I have achieved.

Notes

THE FACILITATED CONVERSATION

This section provides guidance for those who are participating in a Ministerial Development Conversation on how to prepare for their discussion.

SECTION 3

THE MDC AND THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The MDC is an important discussion with a valuable output and the role of the facilitator is crucial to its success.

Through this type of conversation your facilitator will guide you through a process of reflection and enquiry, helping you to gain increased clarity and enabling you to make progress towards the outcome that you seek.

The relationship between the facilitator and minister is very much a partnership of equals and is built on the basis of integrity and trust. The MDC is a confidential discussion. Information shared and the discussions which take place within the context of the process will not be divulged to others except with the prior agreement of the Minister. Trust is at the heart of the MDC and establishing trusted relationships is crucial to the success of the process.

The conversation should be a positive experience for both parties and with your facilitator focusing on you and your situation with the kind of attention and commitment that you will rarely experience elsewhere.

THE FACILITATOR TRAINING

Your facilitator has been especially chosen for their ability to;

- Demonstrate empathy;
- Build rapport;
- Probe and listen;
- Facilitate constructive dialogue;
- Be diplomatic ;
- Influence;
- Give and receive feedback;
- Be discrete and observe confidentiality.

They will listen and offer support as you explore the insights gathered from your reflection on your own practice.

Ministers are at the heart of the MDC and all facilitators are committed to ensuring that MDC is a positive and enriching experience for each participant.

All facilitators have been trained and accredited by the Edinburgh Coaching Academy.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

This means your facilitator has undertaken an intensive period of training with Edinburgh Coaching Academy. The programme concludes with final assessments and only those who are successful are issued a certificate of competence and are recognised as accredited MDR facilitators.

Facilitators are subject to an annual re-accreditation process to ensure their skills are up to date.

THE ONWARD JOURNEY

The end of your MDC signifies the beginning of your learning future or it can be used as “pit stop” if you have already embarked upon the journey.

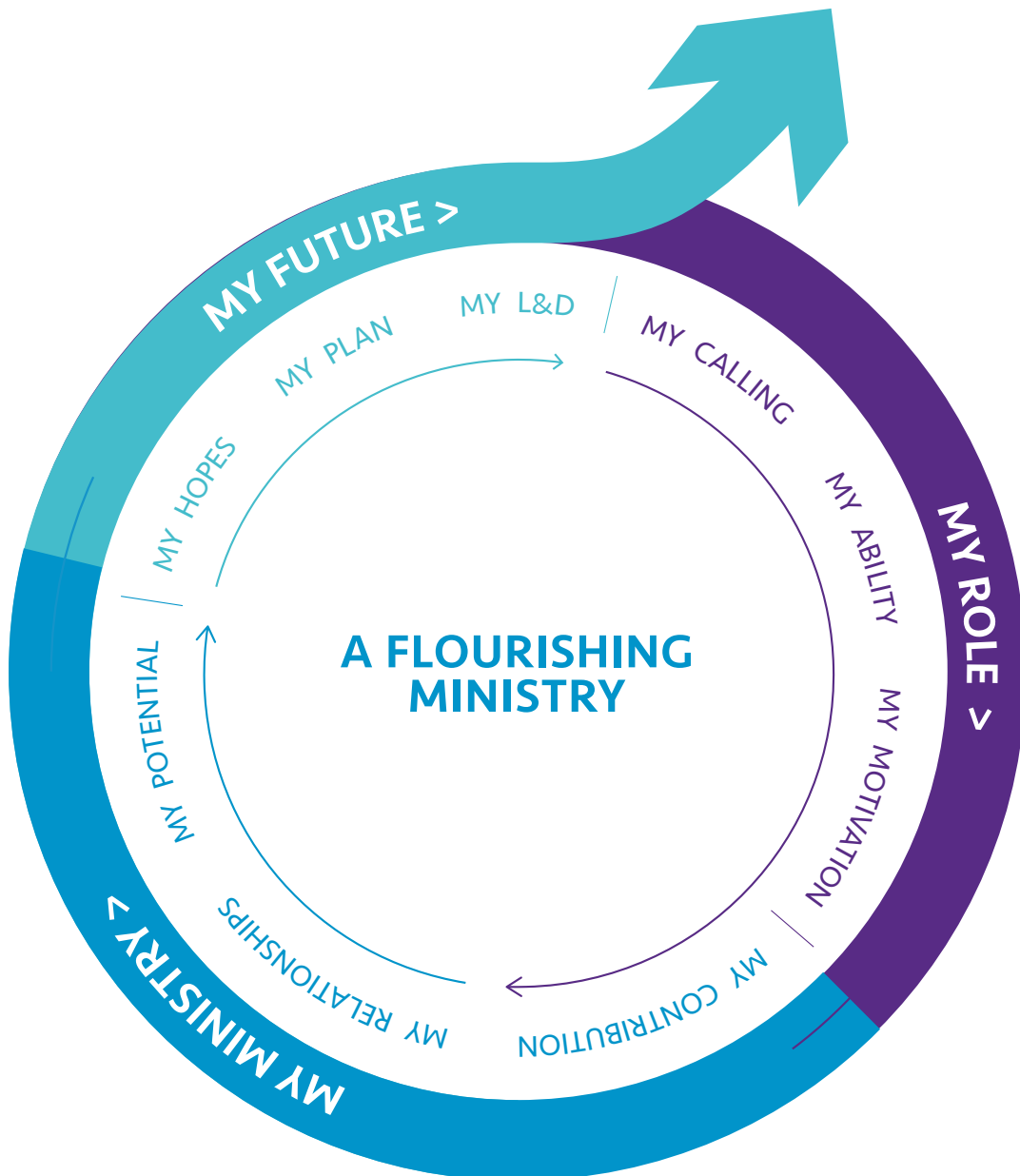
SECTION 4

NEXT STEPS

You own your learning and development and it is hoped that your MDC has energised and empowered you to take action.

At the end of the conversation you and your facilitator will agree what is to be documented. In this section you will find a template to provide you with guidance on how to record the output from your MDC.

To get the most out of your MDC it is recommended that you work through the full MDC output document — My Plan. As a minimum, it is suggested that you complete the summary sheet as an aide memoire.



MDC – OUTPUT MY PLAN

As a result of the MDC I intend to
.....

MY FUTURE

My next steps are

My prayer is

The support I need:

- The physical act of writing down your goal makes it real and tangible.
- Frame your goal positively “I will...”
- Sometimes we become excessively focused on the outcome. Take time to plan the steps that are needed to take you there.
- Remember to celebrate success along the way.



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