

COUNSELING

The following statement on *Pastor/Counselor Relationship* should be removed from these policies and placed in the PCC Manual:

PASTOR/COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP

QUESTION: If a Christian client comes into the center is the counselor obliged to contact the client's pastor so that he may deal with the spiritual problems involved?

PRINCIPLES INVOLVED:

The Christian's pastor has been called by the Holy Spirit to be that person's spiritual shepherd and the guardian of his soul

Acts 20:28 - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

2 Timothy 2:23 - The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...

Hebrews 13:17 - Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.

The right to forgive and retain sins is a ministry given to every Christian

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

1 Peter 2:9 - You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...

John 20:23 - If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Christians, in administering the keys, should recognize the unified concern they have for the fellow Christian

Galatians 6:1 - Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently...Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Colossians 2:2 - My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ...

Philippians 2:1-4 - If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The Christian is obliged to keep his word when he promises confidentiality

Exodus 20:16 - You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Colossians 3:9 - Do not lie to each other.

Proverbs 25:9 - Do not betray another man's confidence.

Proverbs 11:13 - A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

Proverbs 17:9 - He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

COUNSEL GIVEN IN A RELATED FIELD:

For the pastor to take the initiative (in establishing contact with a troubled parishioner) on the basis of informers who wish to remain anonymous may be in violation of the Eighth Commandment and could make a good counseling relationship difficult. Informers should be encouraged to direct or bring the people involved to the pastor. (*Shepherd Under Christ*, p. 195)

Improving rapport will be an ongoing process. But the counselee needs to feel sufficiently safe in the presence of the pastor to expose his problem to the pastor. To encourage this feeling of safeness the pastor will let it be known, perhaps directly say, that whatever is spoken in the meeting is confidential. This means that he will not break such a confidence. What is confessed in counseling is something he will not reveal to his wife or members of his family. He will not use what one spouse confided to him when speaking to the other. If he feels the need for this, consent is required. . . Keeping a confidence is a must. (*Shepherd Under Christ*, p. 196)

APPLICATION TO THE COUNSELOR:

The counselor should seek as much religious information as possible from the client (church affiliation, name of congregation, pastor, etc.).

Show that your concern for your client and her problems is your chief concern, and not the notification of other authorities in that person's life. Assure the repentant client that God has forgiven her sin for Christ's sake, be that sin fornication, contemplating abortion or having had an abortion; and assure her that you will never reveal her thoughts or actions to another person.

In recognition of the pastor's assigned responsibility to nurture and care for the souls of his members, a counselor should strongly encourage a client to share her situation and concerns with her pastor. The counselor may even offer to accompany the client in visiting her pastor. Scripture does not mandate a procedure for a pastor to be informed about his members' problems. Scripture does clearly establish the principles of truthfulness and confidentiality. A counselor should be sure not to make promises that she can't keep. (When promising confidentiality a counselor should know that in some states confidentiality may be limited by laws requiring disclosure of certain illegal activities. When counseling, as regards a client's relationship with her pastor, the counselor will strongly encourage the client to see her pastor or legal authorities where appropriate.)

In the event that a client's pastor holds a doctrinal view germane to the counseling situation that is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture, the counselor should first seek to indoctrinate the client in the truth. Once a counselor feels that the client has reached a solid ground in that particular area

she may then be referred to her pastor for attention to other spiritual problems she may have. There is no biblical mandate to refer a client to a false teacher or someone who would lead the client to do something contrary to Scripture.

In general, a counselor should conduct the counseling session with a clear understanding of her partnership in gospel work with a pastor. This is soul ministry in which the client's total spiritual life is the point of mutual concern. Where germane doctrinal problems are not an issue, a counselor should do all she or he can to encourage the client to visit with his or her pastor. If a client is hesitant to go to her pastor for fear that her sin might subject her to further scrutiny, then a counselor would do well to remind the client of the pastor's calling to shepherd and her calling to subject herself to his rebuke and to cherish the restoration he provides through the ministry of the keys.

The following statement on *Counselor Certification* should be removed from these policies and placed in the PCC Manual:

COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

Introduction: Counselor Certification Guidelines were drawn up for the following reasons:

1. To better equip counselors so that they may provide the best possible counseling for clients;
2. To provide assurances to the counselor that he or she has been trained in accord with standardized and regularly reviewed procedures to insure quality;
3. To meet concerns expressed by insurance companies and legal counsel seeking a monitoring of counselors and counseling practices; and
4. To meet the obligations assigned to the national organization in the original Guidelines and Directives sec. II.F. and II.G.

COUNSELOR GROWTH STAGES:

I. Trainee

A. Qualifications

1. Member in good standing of a WELS congregation or of a congregation in fellowship with WELS
2. Involved in volunteer training program
3. Officially recognized as a Trainee by the Chapter Board

B. Training Requirements

1. Faithful attendance at all aspects of the training program
2. To be involved or to have committed oneself to regular participation in a formal Bible Class
3. Cannot do any counseling in the center without another experienced counselor present at the session

II. Counselor

A. Qualifications

1. Member in good standing of a WELS congregation or of a congregation in fellowship with WELS
2. Completed training program using the *Counselors Manual*
 - a. Participated in role-playing
 - b. Has sat in on a minimum of 7 sessions of counseling by another counselor
3. Officially recognized as a Counselor by the Chapter Board
4. Officially recognized as a Counselor by the National Board

B. Maintaining Certification Status

1. Takes a min. of 5 hours of refresher training each year

"Refresher Training" is in attendance at other courses of instruction that would better equip a counselor in addition to the instruction received when trained with the *Counselors Manual* and in attendance at a Bible Class. Such events that would qualify would be convention/rally workshops, staff retreats, advanced counseling training classes, attendance at a Life Issues Awareness seminar, etc. The Chapter Board, in consultation with the national office, can approved qualified courses.
2. Continues regular participation in a formal Bible Class instruction each year
3. Must file annually for certification by the Chapter Board
4. Must be certified annually by the National Office of WELS Lutherans for Life accomplished by application made by the Chapter Board

C. Specific Responsibilities

- * Can counsel alone with one other support person at center

III. Trainer

A. Qualifications

1. Member in good standing of a WELS congregation or of a congregation in fellowship with WELS
2. Min. 2 years counseling experience(ca. 150 hours/year)
3. Trained in accord with current WELS LfL Counselors Manual
4. Student of Scripture
5. Officially recognized as a Trainer by the Chapter Board
6. Officially recognized as a Trainer by the National Board

B. Maintaining Certification Status

1. Takes a min. of 5 hours of refresher training each year
2. Continues regular participation in formal Bible Class instruction each year
3. Must file annually for certification by the Chapter Board
4. Must be certified annually by the National Office of WELS Lutherans for Life accomplished by application made by the Chapter Board
5. Make every effort to attend center staff meetings. If a meeting is missed effort should be made to find out what information was missed.

C. Specific Responsibilities

1. Able to conduct training of other counselors
2. May counsel alone in the center

NOTE: It is understood that the size of a center, varying client loads and limited volunteers may create difficulties in meeting every letter of these guidelines. Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the national office. Application for exceptions should be made in writing by the chapter board to the national director.

TRAINING SESSIONS:

1) *Introduction*

- a) History of the Chapter
- b) History of the Center
- c) The positions in the Chapter and Center
- d) Purpose of the training
 - i) Train volunteers
 - ii) Lead some into Hotlining and Counseling

2) *Hotlining*

- a) Cover material in the manual
- b) Minimum of five role playing scenarios

3) *Receptionist*

- Cover material in the manual

4) *Counseling*

- a) Cover material in the manual
- b) 2 sessions of role playing as client
- c) 2 sessions of role playing as counselor

5) *Witnessing/Christian Friendship*

- a) Cover material in manual - Conducted by clergy
- b) Participate in some role playing exercises

6) *On the Job Training*

- a) Receiving a minimum of 5 hotlining calls
- b) Spending 2 hours with experienced receptionist/office manager
- c) Minimum of 3 sessions spent witnessing Counselor counseling [Adopted 1989]