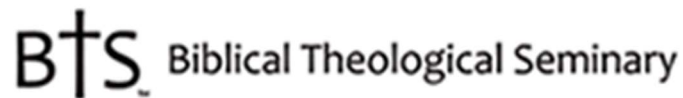


# The Counseling Center At



The Counseling Center at Biblical Theological Seminary (BTS) exists to provide low-cost, *short-term pastoral counseling* to Seminary students, staff, alumni, and their families. Our counselors are all Master's or Doctoral level graduates of seminary and/or Christian counseling programs or Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC). Each counselor strives to provide biblically sound, Christ-centered, God-glorifying counsel. Our goal is that you would leave with greater self-awareness of God's activity in your life and with a greater capacity to meet present and/or future challenges in your life and ministry. What follows is a brief description of our practices so that you may have a clear understanding of what you might encounter.

## **Confidentiality:**

Your pastoral counselor adheres to the highest standards of ethical care as indicated by the American Association of Christian Counselors and the American Counseling Association. Confidentiality, one of these standards, is essential for developing trust. We do not disclose any information to any other party (e.g., faculty, family members, future employers) without written permission from you except in cases of imminent danger to yourself, another adult or child, or when compelled by law or a court to do so as mandated reporters. Disclosures during imminent danger may include BTS officials and/or family members who can be of help during an emergency. If you have any concerns about the limits of confidentiality, be sure to discuss them with your pastoral counselor. To ensure quality pastoral counseling experiences, all staff counselors participate in individual and group supervision by an outside supervisor. During supervision, staff members will share cases but every effort is made to limit identifying information.

## **Getting Connected to a Counselor:**

To initiate a counseling relationship, contact our Intake Coordinator Jennifer Dressler at 215-368-5000 ext. 125 or [counselingcenter@biblical.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@biblical.edu). The Intake Coordinator will return your call within 48 hours and ask you a few questions about your reasons for pursuing counseling and discuss your initial counseling concerns. After this brief assessment, the Intake Coordinator will attempt to match you with an available counselor and email two forms for you to complete (Data form and Consent form). A counselor will then contact you to set up an initial appointment. Note: If the scope of counseling needed is considered beyond short-term, we will be glad to provide a list of Counseling Organizations that would better fit for your needs.

## **Contacting your Counselor & Emergencies:**

Your counselor will inform you how best to get in contact with him/her in case of emergencies. Counselors will do their best to return calls and emails as quickly as possible. Counselors reserve the right to charge for phone sessions longer than 15 minutes.

\*In the case of immediate life-threatening crises, dial 911 or contact your medical doctor or nearest emergency room as soon as possible. The BTS Counseling Center does not provide 24 hour crisis emergency answering services.

**Cancellation Policy:**

Please show courtesy to your counselor by giving ample warning (at least 24 hours) for any cancellation needed. Failing to give ample warning when possible may result in charges for missed sessions. Repeated failure to keep appointments may result in termination of the counseling relationship.

**Dual Relationships:**

BTS Counseling Educators do not serve as Counselors to students currently enrolled in the BTS Counseling Program. Both you and your Counselor should discuss a possible conflict that may arise should you choose to enroll in the BTS Counseling Program. Your Counselor will refer you to the Intake Coordinator at the Counseling Center to connect you with another Counselor, and you are always free to decide to find a Counselor outside of BTS's Counseling Center in order to prevent the formation of a dual relationship.

**Fees:**

Fees are payable to Biblical Theological Seminary. The cost per counseling hour is \$40.00 for Master's level Counselors, and \$50.00 for LPC's. These fees are far below the common market rate for counseling so that we can provide low cost yet high quality pastoral counseling for our students. Psychological testing may be available on a limited basis. Costs for testing will be determined based on tests and time needed to complete the assessment. The Center does not offer professional therapy sessions and as such does not make diagnoses needed for billing insurance companies for the cost of pastoral counseling. If you feel you cannot afford our low fees, you may request a lower fee. However, this decision is left to each Counselor to make and may or may not be possible. If non-payment occurs for multiple sessions, services may be terminated, and the Counselor will assist in helping to find comparable and affordable services.

**Records:**

Your Counselor will make a record of every counseling session, phone call, or email contact. This file will contain information regarding symptoms, observations, assessments, billing, and plan for future pastoral care. These files are the property of the Counseling Center and are kept locked and completely separate from any academic files of BTS. Access is limited to your counselor and his/her supervisor. You have a right to the information contained in this record (or a summary thereof) and should feel free to discuss the contents with your counselor as needed.

**Referrals & Termination:**

If you and your Counselor agree upon a referral to be made outside of BTS Counseling Center, or you grant permission for your Counselor to collaborate with a health care professional regarding your case (such as a mental health professional or agency, medical doctor, etc.), written permission will be obtained prior to any such contact.

You are free to terminate the counseling relationship at any time. Termination of counseling occurs when it becomes reasonably apparent that counseling is no longer needed. In the instance that your Counselor leaves the Counseling Center, or if your Counselor dies, the BTS Counseling Center Intake Coordinator will reassign you to another Counselor if you so desire.

**Grievances:**

Your Counselor will make every effort to serve you faithfully in a manner in keeping with effective pastoral care. If a conflict or a grievance arises between you, you are encouraged to work it out in keeping with the biblical example of Matthew 18. If you are unable to resolve the problem, you are welcome to contact your Counselor's supervisor.

### **Consent for Pastoral Counseling**

I understand that Biblical Theological Seminary has a Counseling Center staff of pastoral counselors who offer short-term pastoral care for a variety of problems. I understand that I may choose to opt out of this relationship at any time without penalty. I understand that all information disclosed within sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone outside the counseling center without my written permission, except where disclosure is required by law or due to imminent danger posed to self or another.

I understand that these services are only available to me because of my connection to BTS as a student, employee, alumni, or family member of the previously mentioned, and appropriateness of this service is determined by the needs that I present. If necessary, I will be given referrals for more appropriate resources. I understand that there are potential risks and benefits to pastoral counseling, and I will explore both of these with my Counselor as well as other possible interventions.

I understand that sessions cost \$40 for Master's level Counselors and \$50.00 for a Licensed Professional Counselor. I will present payments at the time of service. I agree to give 24 hours notice if I need to cancel (except in cases of real emergencies) and also that I may be charged for missed appointments or "no shows."

In light of these understandings, I consent to enter into a pastoral counseling relationship with my counselor.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_