

ALBANY BIBLICAL COUNSELING CENTER

POLICIES

CLIENT COPY

BIBLICAL COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

- The God of the Bible is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- Man was created in God's image as a responsible being.
- Sin, which is thinking or acting independently of God, results in misery both temporal and eternal.
- The Bible is the only complete and authoritative textbook which was written specifically to provide both the answers to man's behavioral problems and the means for man's behavioral changes.
- Apart from organically-caused factors, all of man's voluntary thought and behavior is moral, for which man is responsible before God and neighbor.
- Every functional behavioral problem which man experiences is a result of failure to love God or man or both as the Bible said he should.
- Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for biblical change and obedience on the part of the counselee.
- The only behavioral changes in man which are pleasing to God and are ultimately beneficial to man are those which are effected by means of the Holy Spirit applying the Word of God in sanctifying power to the will and mind of the counselee in accordance with biblical methods and directives.
- All methodology must grow out of Biblical principles and practices.
- Counselors (and counsees) should expect and see results from Biblical counseling.
- Biblical counseling requires and includes church discipline where it is Biblically necessary. Thus Biblical counseling should ultimately be done under the local church.
- God requires and equips all believers to counsel. Additionally, God holds the officers of His church responsible to counsel as a part of their life calling.

COUNSELING POLICY

APPOINTMENTS: There may be a waiting period for an appointment to see our counselors. Each session lasts approximately fifty minutes. With the demand we have, managing appointments is a serious challenge for us. We request that if you cannot keep an appointment, you notify us at least 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. Keeping your appointment or calling in advance is very important for three reasons. First, failure to keep an appointment wastes the counselor's time. The Bible holds us accountable for our management of time. Second, we usually have people on standby waiting to come in should we have a cancellation. Third, we will be most likely to reschedule those people who have been faithful in keeping their appointments.

The normal session fee of \$30.00 will be charged for missed appointments without any notification at all. You may leave a message on the answering machine to cancel or reschedule should no one be available to speak with you personally. We will make every effort to work with you in rescheduling your appointment if necessary (provided we are given sufficient notice to do so.)

Child care is your responsibility as we do not provide assistance in this area. Also, children are not allowed in counseling sessions, unless requested, as they may hinder the effectiveness of the session.

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CHARGES/PAYMENTS

- The counseling fee is \$75.00 per session. Members of affiliated churches may have a different rate than the one listed and premarital package may differ in cost because of similar reasons.
- *For those who cannot pay the fee, there is a reduced rate available if the client submits the proper document (Needs based form) completely filled out with the financial information listed.*
- Counseling charges should be paid in full after the session unless other arrangements have been made. If you are not able to pay in full, please discuss this with the administrative assistant before your session. *You are required to purchase any books or tapes the counselor has assigned for homework to help you to grow and change, because we have to pay for them also.*
- A statement of your account will be provided upon request and returned checks will be resubmitted automatically.

HOMEWORK

Homework is somewhat unique to biblical counseling and it is one of the reasons why this type of counseling is so effective. It continues the counseling process between sessions and teaches you how to find your own help for the future. When done consistently, the work you do at home will speed up the counseling process, saving you time and money. Homework can include reading material, cassette tapes, lists/logs, Bible studies, as well as practical assignments such as practicing techniques of communication or holding family conferences. Depending on your reason for counseling, your counselor will design your homework for you. *The continuation of your counseling will depend on your effort and commitment to complete the assigned tasks.*

LOCAL CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

In order to achieve lasting Biblical change over the problems of life, it is vital that you become established in a consistent Christian walk. The Lord has provided the local church to assist in this process. If you are not involved in a local church, you are encouraged to attend at least one service a week at Sherwood Baptist Church. If you are a regular member of a local Bible believing church, the assistance of your church's leadership is requested so that you may more fully receive the benefit of all the spiritual resources. The counseling center staff reserves the right to evaluate a continuing counseling relationship on the basis of one's commitment to faithfully attend church services regularly.

TELEPHONE COUNSELING

Your counselor will not normally be available for telephone counseling. If you do have an emergency, please talk with the administrative assistant and if she cannot help you, the counselor will return your call as soon as possible. *There will usually be someone to answer you call personally between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday - Thursday. Please do not be discouraged if your counselor does not call you back on the same day.*

AFFILIATION

The Albany Biblical Counseling Center is locally affiliated with Sherwood Baptist Church and nationally with the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (www.nanc.org). Occasionally there may be a counselor-in-training observing counseling and/or recordings made to facilitate training. If any of these are taking place in your session, the counselor will notify you beforehand.

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FINANCIAL/PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

- The sessions received from the Albany Biblical Counseling Center involves a fee of \$75.00/session. The first session (Intake) has an administrative fee of \$40.00 only. The session itself is free.
- The center does not file insurance but can give you an invoice of payments we have received from you so you can file with your insurance company.
- The premarital counseling package cost is _____ depending on local business or church affiliations.

We ask your assistance in carrying out your financial responsibility to this ministry. If you have financial needs please let the administrative secretary know and fill out the "Needs Based Form".

(Please list all participants on the above line)

“I have read the policy information provided to me. I understand that it is my/our responsibility to pay for the counseling and materials that I/we receive from the Albany Biblical Counseling Center. I recognize that it is my responsibility to communicate to my pastor the counselor’s desire for my church's involvement in the counseling process and if possible, to assist in covering the costs associated with counseling. I know the procedure for rescheduling appointments and the fees associated with missed or late cancelled appointments. I also comprehend the necessity to complete homework assignments and faithfully attend my home church while receiving this counseling.”

I also recognize that the Albany Biblical Counseling Center is involved in the training of biblical counselors and that sometimes individuals in training may be present in my session(s) and/or my sessions may be recorded for training purposes. All confidentiality rules apply.

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Signed _____

By signing this agreement I indicate my willingness to abide by the terms of this document.

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CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The undersigned presently are seeking counsel with the staff of The Albany Biblical Counseling Center.

We acknowledge that according to the policies and practices of The Albany Biblical Counseling Center as a ministry of Sherwood Baptist Church, confidentiality cannot be granted in all situations. ***If a threat of physical harm or report of criminal activity is made, appropriate civil authorities may have to be notified.*** Also, if there is ongoing and unrepentant grievous or aggravated sin in the life of one of its counselees, the counselors of Albany Biblical Counseling Center reserves the right to contact the church authorities of the counselee's church.

1. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Proverbs 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Proverbs 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Proverbs 20:19; Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this counseling center, all counselees are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our counselors shall carefully protect all information that they receive through counseling. When a pastor or counselor is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem, he may refer such person to (or seek the advise of) another biblical counselor.

2. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors or counselors of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- A. When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (see Proverbs 24:11-12).
- B. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matt. 18:15-20 and/or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies within the counselee's church. (See, e.g., Rom 13:1-5).
- C. When required by law to report suspected child abuse.

I (We) understand the confidentiality provisions as described above and agree to abide by their terms and admonitions.

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____