GRACE REDEEMER CHURCH

Counseling Policy

Philosophy of Ministry

GRC defines 'counseling' as "the personal application of God's healing and restorative truth – found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ – to the unique brokenness of a person in need." Who is in need? The short answer is: everyone. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This universal reality should eliminate the stigma of counseling; it is NOT merely reserved for those who are especially broken or 'messed up.'

If sin – ours and the world's – is the fundamental reason that our relationships, bodies, minds, souls, etc. are NOT the way they're supposed to be, then the only antidote is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a result, all counseling conducted through GRC is Biblical Counseling that trusts in and wields the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Counselees do NOT need to profess saving faith in Jesus Christ in order to receive counseling, but all counselees should be aware of our biblical worldview and of our biblical, Gospel-centric approach to seek healing and restoration of "the brokenness of a person in need."

Our counseling ministry is closely tied to our biblical view of the church, the body of Christ. We believe that the church is Where and How God typically works transformation in and through his people. The church is the community in which maturity into Christ-likeness can most effectively occur, and the church is the primary instrument through which God works such growth and change. Counseling, therefore, should work closely with Discipleship ministries, pastoral shepherding, Diaconal service, and fellowship opportunities.

This perspective on the centrality and vitality of the Church's role in the life of a person in need, leads to our team approach to counseling. We do not believe that it's in the best interests of a counselee to isolate him or her in a private connection to a single counselor. In contrast, we believe that, in order to provide the best care and support of a counselee, the counseling team must collaborate. As a result, we require that all counselees sign the GRC Counseling Consent Form (included within the GRC Counseling Intake Packet) which permits our counseling team to coordinate and provide the best care and biblical counseling. Our counseling team is committed to upholding the highest standards of confidentiality and protecting your rights to privacy according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Logistics of Counseling

In order to schedule a counseling visit, you may contact the counseling ministry at counseling@graceredeemer.com or by calling the GRC office at (201) 357-4216. GRC staff can assist you with additional information.

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Completion of the "GRC Counseling Intake Packet" is required before the first session. This form must be submitted at least 48 hours before the first session. If the intake form is not completed in time, the first session may need to be rescheduled.

Once a session is scheduled, our cancellation policy requires a minimum of 24 hours' notice, with exceptions noted for health or family emergencies. If an appointment is canceled with less than 24 hours' notice, a cancellation fee of up to 50% of the cost of the scheduled service may be incurred. Please understand that a counseling time slot is a significant commitment on the part of a counselor/ministry leader whose availability is very limited. If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, your notice of cancellation may enable another person to benefit from that counselor's time.

Counseling Costs

Counselees are expected to provide payment for the counseling services. Financial assistance from the Diaconate is available through an application process.

Our counseling team includes individuals who share a commitment to provide Biblical counseling from a diverse range of backgrounds, experience, and training (including licensed professional counselors, pastors, and trained, but unlicensed professionals). In our effort to establish greater consistency among the various counseling options and to increase the level of commitment by counselees to their counseling, we charge the same hourly rate, regardless of the counselor providing the ministry. The rate for all counseling sessions is $75/hour for members of the GRC community and $125/hour for all others. One significant exception applies to staff pastors who may provide up to 4 complimentary sessions of formal counseling to members of the GRC community before an hourly rate is applied. None of these fees will increase a staff member's compensation. Fees paid for pastoral services will be used to assist others who apply for financial assistance. The pastoral staff will always clarify what constitutes formal counseling vs pastoral shepherding that does not involve any fees. Payments may be made via electronic payment or ACH.

Counselees who require financial assistance may complete the Request for Counseling Assistance form which will be forwarded to select members of the Diaconate for review. Additional documentation may be required to support your application. The Diaconal representative will provide an answer to the counselor and to the counselees (may be a dollar amount or a percentage of assistance for a defined number of sessions). If necessary, additional assistance may be requested once the initial approved number of sessions is completed and should be requested prior to the scheduling of any subsequent sessions.

Miscellaneous Policies

Please do not contact pastors/counselors via their mobile numbers. We request that you use their GRC email address or call the GRC office at (201) 357-4216. In the event of an emergency, please call 911.