

Pastoral Christian Counseling
67 Gladesville Rd
Morgantown, WV 26508

Rev. Dr. Robert A. Sisler, Ph.D.
Phone – (304) 288 – 3555
www.preacherbob.net

INFORMED CONSENT

A Christian counselor is a deeply committed, Spirit-guided and Spirit filled servant of Jesus Christ who applies his or her God-given abilities, skills, training, knowledge, and insights to the task of helping others move to personal wholeness, interpersonal competence, mental stability, and spiritual maturity.

My goal in providing Christian counseling is to help you meet the challenges of life in a way that will please and honor the Lord Jesus Christ and allow you to fully enjoy his love for you and his plans for your life.

I believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, my counseling is based on scriptural principles first and foremost rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. However, some secular principles may be used. I, as a pastor, **am not licensed as a psychotherapist or mental health professional (LPC state designation)**, nor should I be expected to follow the methods of such specialists. I do have a Master of Arts Degree (M.A.) in Counseling from West Virginia University and a Ph.D. from Redding University.

If you have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions, you should seek advice from an independent professional. I will be happy to cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

Counseling is a process in which we collaborate to help you to solve the problems that impact on your quality of life or your personal goals. You and I work together to look at the behaviors that cause these problems to occur and talk about alternative ways, including Scriptural ways, that may help you have a better outcome. As we examine and work together, I will bring as many of these problem areas to your attention as I possibly can.

You will participate in the development of your counseling/treatment plan. You and I will review it from time to time. Your plan of counseling/treatment may change as the issues change. Should you have any questions or comments, feel free to discuss them with me. Your counseling/treatment may be enhanced by educating yourself and seeking information outside of your sessions.

Although the counseling experience can be tremendously beneficial for most people, there are some potential risks about which you must be aware. Counseling can be an emotionally painful experience for you and some relationships in your life can become unbalanced. There may be tough decisions which you may want to make which may upset your status quo. These experiences are legitimate outcomes of the counseling process. I am available to discuss any of your problems or possible negative side effects of our work together. As a client, you have access to my resources and my willingness to

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apply them in good faith. Because of the many factors that influence counseling/treatment, no counseling/treatment outcomes are guaranteed.

Our relationship is a unique one. You will share with me many intimate details of your life. Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and I will carefully guard the information you entrust to me. **Under West Virginia law, I am mandated to protect this relationship. That is, without your written permission or by order of the Court, I am forbidden to disclose any information about our sessions or about you except in the following instances: 1) that I suspect that you may do harm to yourself or to others; 2) that you tell me of abuse to a child or an elderly or disabled person; 3) or if I or your records are ordered by a court of law; or 4) you waive your right to confidentiality.**

From time to time, I may want to consult with another pastor (when a counselee attends another church and it is necessary to talk with his or her pastor) or provider regarding your counseling/treatment plan. You will be aware of these consultations (see above paragraph) and your confidentiality will be protected. Consultation and supervision are inherent in the standard of care and are supported by the Pastoral/Counseling profession.

On rare occasions a conflict may develop between the pastor and a counselee. In accordance with the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, we strive to resolve conflict in a manner that brings glory to God and is a positive witness and influence to those looking on. In light of the above: I agree that any dispute with Pastoral Christian Counseling, or any staff member of Pastoral Christian Counseling, arising from or related to this agreement shall be settled through Christian mediation and, if necessary, legally binding Christian arbitration. I understand that this shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement *and expressly waive my right* to file a lawsuit in any civil court against Pastoral Christian Counseling or any staff member of Pastoral Christian Counseling for such disputes, except as necessary to enforce an arbitration decision.

Records Release Policy

I understand that my client file (progress notes, tests and assessments, billing history, diagnosis, treatment plan, etc.) is confidential and will be maintained by Pastoral Christian Counseling. Client files remain the sole property of Pastoral Christian Counseling and will only be released pursuant to the client's valid, written authorization or a valid subpoena issued by a judge.

If you must cancel a session, at least 24 hours notice is expected. **If I (the client) do not cancel an appointment with at least 24 hours notice, I understand that I may be charged for the missed session.** If I (the counselor) need to cancel a session with you, I will try to reschedule your session at the earliest convenience. As a Pastor, I am subject to emergency calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I will tell you 24 hours in advance of any

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sessions I will have to cancel, unless I have been called away by an emergency. In such an event, I will give you as much notice as the emergency allows.

You may feel free to contact me between sessions at (304) 892 – 4325. Should you leave a message, I will call you back at my earliest convenience. Most calls are returned within 24 hours. Please note: this is a cell phone and therefore is not a secure line. It is at your discretion what kind and how much information you disclose. I am not responsible for any intercepted information.

Although each of us has the right to terminate counseling/treatment at any time, it is customary to have a formal termination session when you and I feel that your work is completed. You and I decide together when this is appropriate and, together, we will evaluate your progress in the Counseling experience.

Having clearly stated the principles and policies of the counseling ministry, I welcome the opportunity to minister to you in the name of Christ and to be used by him as he helps you to grow in spiritual maturity and prepares you for usefulness in his body. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please ask before signing below. If these guidelines are acceptable to you, please sign below. By signing this Informed Consent, I am agreeing to provide Counseling services to you as explained above, and you are agreeing to the above guidelines and to attend your scheduled sessions.

Signed _____ Date _____
Client

Signed _____ Date _____
Client

Signed _____ Date _____
Rev. Robert A. Sisler

Please fill in your mailing address: _____

Your phone number: _____