



Christian or Non-Christian Counselor

Christian or Non-Christian Counselor?

Four questions you need to consider before going any further!

1. Does the counselor have the necessary training to meet your mental health needs?

You will want your counselor to meet the standards of professional practice, even if the counselor is Christian. See the "Ask a Therapist" brochure in this series for more information.

2. Does the counselor respect your Christian faith and church membership?

Some non-Christian counselors may ridicule your faith or even blame your problems on religion. Some Christian counselors may actually misuse the Bible and promote false teaching. Avoid both.

3. Are you willing to seek guidance from your pastor to meet your spiritual needs?

The Lord has called your pastor to care for your

soul. His counsel and encouragement will help you guard your faith.

4. Are your pastor and the counselor willing to consult with each other?

Your pastor and the counselor each possess unique skills and tools to help you. The greatest benefits come when they can work together.

Choosing a Christian Counselor

Like any other label, the term "Christian" can be misused and misleading. How can you be sure that you are going to a truly Christian counselor? A small but growing number of Christian counselors are Bible-based, Christ-centered therapists, who are trained both in the counseling field and in the teachings of Scripture. The WELS Committee on Mental Health Needs is training and certifying such Bible-based counselors.

Ask your pastor to see if a WELS-certified, Bible-based therapist is located near you.

Look for a Christian Counselor who

- ▶ is willing to work with your pastor
- ▶ has formal training in the counseling field
- ▶ possesses the skills and experience to address your specific needs
- ▶ respects your Lutheran faith
- ▶ understands how to use the Bible correctly
- ▶ sees Jesus as your Savior from sin and as your source of hope

Beware of the "Christian" Counselor who

- ▶ seems reluctant to talk with your pastor
- ▶ lacks formal training in the counseling field
- ▶ disagrees with Lutheran (Biblical) teachings on Word and Sacrament
- ▶ attempts to "convert" you
- ▶ insists that you worship and pray with Christians of other denominations
- ▶ quotes Bible passages in a seemingly strange way or out of context
- ▶ uses Jesus only as an example of healthy living

Choosing a Non-Christian Counselor

Many non-Christian counselors are competent and helpful. However, you need to be aware of their biases and limitations. Non-Christian counselors will allow you to make the decisions you want, just so long as you do not bring harm to yourself or others. It will be your responsibility to make sure that your decisions are God-pleasing. Don't look to an unbeliever to guide you in the path of righteousness.

Look for a Non-Christian Counselor who

- ▶ is willing to work with your pastor
- ▶ has formal training in the counseling field
- ▶ possesses the skills and experience to address your specific needs
- ▶ respects your Lutheran faith



Beware of the Non-Christian Counselor who

- ▶ ridicules your faith
- ▶ suggests sinful solutions to your problems
- ▶ denies the existence of absolute truth
- ▶ rejects any moral accountability to God
- ▶ uses spirituality jargon, i.e. excessive meaningless phrases

Finally

If you have questions about a particular counselor or counseling approach, contact your pastor or call the WELS Committee on Mental Health Needs at 414-256-3241.

To learn more go to wels.net/mental-health.

Other flyers in this series are available for download at csm.welsrc.net/download-csm/mental-health-needs/.

WELS Committee on Mental Health Needs

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