



COUNSELING AGREEMENT*

After carefully reading each policy, please place your **initials** in the space provided to indicate your **understanding and agreement** with each policy. If you have questions, please call the church office. If for any reason you are unable to sign these forms, we will be unable to serve you.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A COUNSELEE

As a counselee, we want you to be comfortable discussing possible outcomes, challenges, and the potential duration of the counseling process. We also desire to make sure we mutually understand the goals, and desired outcome of counseling, as well as alternative options to that counseling. You have the right to ask about and/or refuse any techniques used. If you believe there are matters you and your counselor are not in agreement about, you are encouraged to report to an elder/pastor at Grace Christian Fellowship as defined in "The Waiver of Liability" below. You may conclude counseling at any time, but we encourage you to consult with your counselor as to the best way and time to do so.

NO PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

If you have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions, you should seek advice from an independent professional. We do not give medical or legal advice.

PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

We are confident that the Bible has all of the information necessary for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). There are no problems that the Bible fails to address either in general or specific principles. Our counselors are not infallible, nor do they pretend to know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its application to life. They are, however, well equipped and competent to help people change when willing to live according to biblical principles (see Romans 15:14). They will make a point to differentiate between God's commands and their suggestions.

Your counselor will regularly assign homework to give further practice in the principles discussed in the counseling room. This homework is an important part of the counseling process and should be completed for each session. We believe that growth happens as you pursue Christ-like living in every aspect of your life, and the homework is how we keep track of and encourage that growth. The faithful completion of homework assignments is necessary to the effectiveness of counseling.

Initial Here

* This form was borrowed in large part from Faith Bible Church (Spokane, WA).

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

In seeking counseling from GCF, you must acknowledge your understanding of the following conditions and further release GCF, its staff, counselors, employees, elders, and all ministry team leadership, from any legal liability, claim, or litigation arising from your participation in this voluntary program:

1. Counseling will be provided by a trained Biblical Counselor. The counseling staff is not a licensed counselor through the state of Washington.
2. All counseling is provided in accordance with the biblical principles adhered to by GCF and are not necessarily provided in adherence to any local or national psychological or psychiatric association;
3. No representation has been made, either expressly or implied, that the biblical counseling offered by the above mentioned counselors, is accepted as customary psychological, medical and/or psychiatric therapy according to the definitions and terms utilized by those professions;
4. It is understood by the participant/counselee(s) that all complaints and grievances will be heard by the elders of GCF.

Initial Here

CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us to the extent that the Bible and state requires. Complete and absolute confidentiality in all cases is not scriptural. Your counselor reserves the right to consult with other members of the GCF counseling ministry for the purpose of providing the highest level of care within the ministries of the church. Counseling involving the persistent refusal to renounce a particular sin may require the disciplinary involvement of the church. If you are a member of another church, we will disclose information about the counseling to your pastor or church leaders only to the extent that you agree, or that is necessary for your spiritual care according to the Bible.

There are times when counseling information **must** be shared outside the church context. Those exceptions would include, but are not limited to the following:

- Known or suspected child, elderly, or other vulnerable person abuse of any kind
- The intent to take criminal actions or violence against another person
- Active suicidal thoughts or intentions

If you are suicidal during the course of your counseling, it is crucial that you talk with your counselor about these matters. By initialing this clause, you are agreeing to share any suicidal thoughts or intentions with your counselor at any time they arise and that you would seek medical care if you become suicidal in the course of your counseling.

In the case of marriage or family counseling, there is limited confidentiality, meaning the confidentiality belongs to the relationship and not to the individual.

Initial Here

CONSENT TO COUNSEL

I, _____ have read and understood the following documents:

Philosophy of Care Waiver of Liability Confidentiality Clause

I am voluntarily entering into a counseling relationship. I also understand that Grace Christian Fellowship may terminate services for noncompliance with the plan of care and/or agreed upon administrative issues, failure to keep or cancel appointments, violent behavior, threats of violence, involvement in criminal behavior, or for other similar issues.

SIGNATURES

Please sign to indicate that you have read the policies in this document, you agree with and understand each of these policies, and, you are enrolling yourself into counseling of your own will.

Counselee Signature

Date

Counselor Signature

Date