

## **FAQ:**

### **When should I go to counseling?**

You can see a counselor or other mental health professional just like you see a physician for your physical health: for occasional check-ups, or more regularly during a less healthy season.

Counseling can be helpful when life is going well but you want help examining your heart and mind for blind spots and opportunities for growth. You can also begin counseling if you notice a cycle of deterioration or suffering that you need help navigating. Some experiences in our lives call for a higher level of care, and using specialized or trained professionals can bring helpful insight and support.

If you have thoughts of harming yourself or others, please immediately call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

### **Shouldn't I be able to deal with my problems through friends and family or by reading my Bible?**

There are multiple avenues God uses for support and healing when we suffer. Healthy relationships and knowing God through the Scriptures are necessities for care, change, and growth.

**However, when it comes to mental health, we believe that it is wise and good to seek those who are trained and skilled in this specific work.** God has gifted and called certain individuals to advance His kingdom through this effort.

### **I am having trouble in my marriage. Should we see a marriage counselor or do individual counseling first?**

Marriage counseling can be helpful to identify unhealthy or sinful patterns originating from both parties that negatively impact a marriage. A few examples could be:

- Communication issues
- Parenting differences

- Emotional disconnection or escalation
- Fear of intimacy (emotional or physical)

If the marriage is safe, a good start would be seeing a marriage and family therapist and following their recommendations on individual counseling.

*We do not recommend marriage counseling if there is any form of abuse in the marriage, including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial, or sexual. We recommend individual counseling that addresses the abuse first. Once safety has been established, repentance is evident and growth over a time-tested season has occurred, a conversation regarding possible reconciliation could begin.*

### **What are the different levels of counseling?**

*Outpatient* – In traditional outpatient counseling, you usually attend one session per week that lasts about an hour. These specifics may differ depending on the recommendation of your counselor and the severity of the situation.

*Intensive Outpatient Program* – This level of counseling involves multiple sessions per week that last 3–4 hours at a time.

*Day Program or Day Hospital* – This level of counseling has you attend Monday through Friday for the entire day, going home every night.

*Inpatient Program* – In this level of counseling, you check into a facility and can stay anywhere from one week to several months depending on what is recommended. You will sleep and eat at this facility until you are discharged. There are specific times for friends or family to visit or join a counseling session.

### **How much does counseling cost?**

Rates for a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) depend on the experience level, expertise, and practice setting of each counselor. It is usually \$90–\$150 per session.

For less expensive options, you can see a practicum student or an associate at a reduced rate. A *practicum student* is someone who is currently in a master's program for counseling and is seeing clients to complete their hours to graduate. They are supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC-S). An LPC Associate

is someone who has graduated with their master's degree in counseling, has passed their state exam, and is completing the needed hours to be fully licensed. They are supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC-S).

Depending on where you live, you may have non-profit organizations in your area that offer counseling for free, depending on the topic or demographic. We would encourage you to make sure that the counselor holds professional credentials—at least a master's degree in counseling, psychology, or social work and a professional license from the state.