SPOTSWOOD
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CENTER

A Ministry of Spotswood Baptist Church
4107 Lafayette Blvd., Suite 2 | Fredericksburg, VA 22408 | (540) 940-2940

AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

PLEASE INITIAL AT THE BOTTOM OF EACH PAGE WHERE INDICATED

Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center is a ministry of Spotswood Baptist Church. We humbly thank you for giving us the privilege to journey with you during your time of need. We recognize our responsibility to God, to you, and to the Church as we come alongside you to learn and grow together in God's grace. Please take the time to read this document carefully before signing.

What Is Biblical Counseling?

Biblical counseling is a way of caring for you as we seek to understand your struggles and see how Christ and His gospel truths apply in deeply personal and specific ways to the realities of your life so that you can live out the gospel by faith in community, made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. At Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center, we believe the gospel powerfully transforms our individual lives, our relationships, and the world.

Biblical Counseling Is NOT:

1. Merely quoting or prescribing Bible verses and asking you for more faith and effort.
2. Following a fixed paradigm of method and sequence expecting the same results for each person.
3. Teaching biblical principles in general while ignoring the specific details of each person's story.

Our Counseling Team

On staff at Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center, we have a lead Pastoral Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselors, Residents in Counseling, Biblical Counselors, and Lay Biblical Counselors. Our Licensed Professional Counselors and Residents in Counseling follow ethical guidelines per the Virginia Board of Counseling. All counseling provided through SBCC is offered as a ministry of the Church.

What to Expect:

1. In most situations, session notes are taken so that we can better care for you through the details of your life.
2. We do not conduct psychological assessments based on secular diagnostic criteria.
3. We do not provide medical care or prescribe medications.

Initial: _____

4. We do not function as a crisis center. Should a suicidal or homicidal risk emerge during counseling, the counselor will take necessary measures to ensure safety, which may include notifying family members, calling 911, or coordinating with emergency services.
5. We are not able to represent you in courts of law. If legal representation is or becomes your intent, we will refer you to other counseling options. If one of our counselors receives a subpoena or other legal process, SBCC will comply with applicable law after consulting legal counsel.
6. We do not charge a fee for counseling. We do accept donations and suggest a $30 donation per session for those who are able to support the center through their giving.

Biblical Counseling and Psychiatric Medication

God designed our body and soul to function in an integrated manner. Given the pervasive effects of living in a fallen world, we recognize there are times in which the body and brain do not function as God designed. In such cases, medical treatment and psychiatric medication may be necessary. SBCC counselors are not trained medical personnel and do not advise for or against the use of medications.

Relationship with Other Providers

We recognize that counselees may choose to seek care and counseling from providers outside of SBCC. We do not discourage or prevent those receiving care from seeking help elsewhere. Those seeking care are welcome to work with outside agencies even while receiving care from us.

Confidentiality and Its Limits

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matthew 7:12). All staff and counselors are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of those they serve.

Confidentiality is not absolute. All SBCC counselors are mandated reporters under Virginia law and are required to disclose confidential information in the following circumstances:

1. When we believe the person receiving care could be in danger of harming themselves or others (Proverbs 24:11-12).
2. When we believe that there is ongoing abuse taking place, including sexual, physical, domestic violence, child abuse, or other abuse (Romans 13:1).
3. When a minor (anyone under 18 years old) shares information that we believe it is in the best interest of the child to disclose to parents and/or authorities.
4. When SBCC or a counselor is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction to release the counselee's information.
5. When pertinent information is shared with a supervising counselor as part of an authorized supervisory relationship (you will be separately notified if your counselor is under supervision).

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Communications with licensed counselors at SBCC may be protected by the counselor-client privilege under Virginia Code Section 8.01-400.2. Communications with ordained ministers providing pastoral counseling may be protected by the clergy-penitent privilege under Virginia Code Section 8.01-400. The applicability of these privileges depends on the specific circumstances of your counseling relationship.

Please be assured that we strongly prefer to keep personal information confidential and will make every effort to resolve issues as privately as possible.

Appointments and Cancellations

Please contact Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center when canceling appointments. We ask that you give at least 24-hour notice when possible.

In the event that you have scheduled an appointment and have not notified us of your need to cancel, we reserve the right to decline to reschedule future appointments.

Wellness Policy

If you or someone in your household is experiencing symptoms of illness (fever, cold, cough, etc.) or has been exposed to COVID-19, please let us know and we will switch your appointment to telehealth or reschedule.

Telehealth

If requested, we may use the internet to provide remote counseling. We use secure, privacy-protective audio-video platforms. There may be security and privacy risks associated with internet-based communications. To maintain your privacy, please ensure that your viewing and listening area is limited to yourself and any other person who needs to participate during the appointment.

In the event of a mental health emergency during a telehealth session, your counselor may advise you to seek immediate treatment or call 911. Local authorities may be given your personal details if necessary to assist you. You and your counselor each have the ability to discontinue telehealth at any time. A separate Telehealth Consent Form is required before telehealth services begin.

Ministry Privacy Notice

SBCC maintains a Ministry Privacy Notice that describes how we collect, use, and protect your information. By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have received and reviewed the Ministry Privacy Notice.

Authorization and Consent

Your signature below confirms that you have read and understood the information in this document.

As the person receiving care, or as a parent or guardian requesting care for a minor, I understand and agree to the following:

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1. I agree to receive Biblical counseling, understanding what it is and is not.
2. I understand I may choose other forms of counseling outside of Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center.
3. Subject to the provisions of this Consent, I am free to end my counseling sessions at any time.
4. The assigned counselor is free to terminate the counseling sessions at any time and refer me to another provider.
5. To ensure my health and wellness, the assigned counselor may refer me to another ministry leader, psychologist, or psychiatrist.
6. I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the SBCC Ministry Privacy Notice.

I understand that participation in Biblical counseling at SBCC is voluntary. I am not under the care or custody of the Biblical counselor(s) or the Church by virtue of receiving or attending Biblical counseling sessions. I understand that SBCC counselors are not medical providers and that decisions about my care remain my responsibility.

Printed Name (Counselee): _____

Signature (Counselee): _____

Date: _____

Printed Name (Counselee, if additional): _____

Signature (Counselee, if additional): _____

Date: _____

Printed Name (Parent/Guardian): _____

Signature (Parent/Guardian): _____

Date: _____

Contact Phone: _____

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