

The Process of Christian Counseling and Christian Life Coaching

What It Is & Why It Is Necessary

Counseling is a deep and comprehensive exploration into the course and meaning of one's life. Clients come into therapy struggling in one or more relationships and want a clear, sure path out of their pain. "Lack of relationships" causes our mental health problems. Therefore, learning to develop and sustain gratifying interpersonal relationships is one of our deepest desires and a primary goal of your therapy. Dr. Baker hopes to be an agent of change for you in this area.

Trust & Safety

Your progress will go rapidly if you trust fully, reveal all, hold back nothing, and leave no stone unturned. The therapy setting is meant to be a safe place for you to open up with no fear of being shamed or judged. In this way, you will actually learn about being in a healthy relationship, an ongoing relationship that is built session by session and is a gradual, unfolding process where you reveal your struggles and challenges.

Roles

It is important to understand just exactly what your role is and what is Dr. Baker's. First, therapy is a two-way street. In the counseling setting, a relationship is formed during the 50-minute session. The relationship is a professional one, but also a very human one. Dr. Baker will journey with you as you build a stronger relationship with God, learn to incorporate spiritual principles, practice the Fruit of the Spirit, and lay sin at the foot of the cross. This relationship and how you and Dr. Baker journey closer to God is most often the starting point for the healing you are seeking. It is in this relationship that you begin practicing new ways to communicate and open up, new ways to approach issues that are bothering you, and begin learning about healthy boundaries and safer people. This journey becomes the agent of change that you are seeking!

You have the right to ask Dr. Baker questions, inquire about her techniques, and comment on how you believe or perceive the sessions are going. During your therapy, you and Dr. Baker will be establishing goals, measuring your progress, and discussing road blocks that hinder your growth. To maximize your progress, Dr. Baker recommends that you arrive at each session with a few questions written down that you want answered and a few pressing issues you want addressed.

Dr. Baker will be your counselor, mentor, life coach, and guide. Together, you will begin to:

- remove the obstacles that stand in the way of your happiness, peace, growth, and satisfying relationships
- explore possible faulty core beliefs you have held for years
- explore possible options for alternative behaviors
- investigate unconscious motivation
- explore past relationships
- explore how the Fruit of the Spirit is expressed by you (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - Galatians 5:22-23)
- understand your strengths through the use of a "strengths assessment"

Couples Therapy

In couples therapy and coaching, Dr. Baker will be interacting with both of you to look for the dysfunctional patterns of relating to each other and to help you establish new, more beneficial patterns of relating. She will:

- guide your communication
- help you to develop “other awareness”
- teach you how to give of yourself, make repair attempts, speak the truth in love, and remove obstacles that get in the way of intimacy and lasting love

Again, Dr. Baker will help you explore how you express the Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - Galatians 5:22-23). We are all here to learn how to give love and how to receive love.

Dr. Baker will:

1. Assess how you may be contributing to your own distress
2. Examine your role in all events (self-awareness)
3. Examine how, in your life outside the therapy setting, you can use the skills and tools Dr. Baker offers (application)

Confidentiality

Dr. Baker strictly adheres to the American Association of Christian Counselors Code of Ethics (35-page document) and the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (20-page document). Both can be downloaded from their websites. Your file is locked in a cabinet accessible by Dr. Baker only. What you say in your sessions never leaves the counseling room (the only exceptions are for homicidal or suicidal ideation, abuse, and court cases).

Questions to Ponder

- How do you believe your behavior is viewed by others?
- How do you think your behavior makes others feel?
- What is your level of connection with loved ones?
- What do you want to be remembered for?
- How much of yourself do you share with loved ones?
- How close do you let others get to you?
- How do you show interest in your family members and friends?
- How often and in what circumstances do you want to run and hide?
- What secrets are tearing you up inside?
- If you woke up tomorrow morning and everything was perfect (as you want it), what would that life look like?

Truths - A Note from Dr. Baker

We are all products of a fallen, sinful world. We struggle with loneliness, fatigue, aging, loss, isolation, meaning in life, painful choices, and death. No person is immune to the inherent tragedies of existence. Our relationship with God is the one true relationship we can always turn to. I will incorporate Biblical truths into each session, will help you examine sin and its heavy price, and will help you to lay your pain at the foot of the cross. I pray Christ will bless our time together. I pray for all my clients each morning, so be sure to express your prayer requests during our time together. - Dr. Sherry Baker.