

How Can I Find An ABC Pastoral Counselor?

- *Your Area Minister*
- *Your Regional Executive Minister*
- *ABHMS Office of Chaplaincy and Specialized Ministries*
- *Ministers Council Chapter of Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors*



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*Resource For
American Baptist
Churches USA Pastors*

Pastoral Counseling

*Counseling For
Wholeness & Health
With A Spiritual
Foundation*

*Chaplains & Pastoral
Counselors Chapter
The Ministers Council*

What Do Pastoral Counselors Do?

Professionally trained in behavioral science and theology, pastoral counselors work with individuals, groups, and communities to achieve wholeness and health. Pastoral Counselors work with people from all walks of life, respecting their individuality (including their religious/spiritual beliefs). Those who want to connect their faith to the challenges they face can do so with a pastoral counselor.

Depending on their specialty and expertise, pastoral counselors help people address difficulties in relationships (marriage, family), personal struggles (anxiety, depression, grief, mental health), and times of transition (retirement, divorce, career change). Pastoral counselors may work in private practice or within an organization.



What Is Their Training?

Like other counseling professionals, pastoral counselors have a Master's Degree in behavioral science. They have completed clinical training programs, and been licensed (LPC/LCPC). Some may also be licensed as marriage & family therapists (LMFT) or clinical social workers (CSW).

Pastoral Counselors also have a Master's Degree in theology, ordination, experience in parish ministry, and endorsement by a religious faith group.



How Are They Paid?

In some settings, a fee is assessed for each session; in others there is no fee or a negotiated fee. For those who lack insurance or the means to pay, a sliding scale (subsidized by contributions from faith communities, businesses, or individuals) may be offered.

How Can Pastoral Counselors Support Local Pastors?

Local Pastors are the "First Responders" to the counseling needs of their congregation. When those needs exceed the pastor's time or expertise, pastoral counselors can provide further support. They also offer confidential counseling and serve as "sounding boards" when pastors need a professional opinion. Pastoral Counselors can also lead workshops for specific needs within a congregation.