

These guidelines (written by Kim Chernin and myself) have been adopted by AIWP as guidelines for ministers:

Pastoral Counselor Guidelines for Spiritual Practice

Pastoral Counseling is synonymous with the term Psycho-spiritual Counseling. It is a listening art based on empathy, interpersonal collaboration, and spiritual recognition.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH PASTORAL COUNSELING FROM ANY FORM OF THERAPY, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL. WE DO SO IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- 1. Psychotherapy, according to Webster's dictionary, is a treatment of mental or emotional disorders or of related bodily ills by psychological means.**
- 2. A Pastoral Counselor does not view her/himself as an expert, but as a partner with considerable experience who joins a willing participant and shares in the responsibility for understanding, exploring and clarifying an individual's or couple's developmental life pursuits. This is a joint undertaking towards a better understanding and integration of one's whole life experience.**
- 3. People who seek this type of Pastoral Counseling do not regard themselves as having a disorder or an illness and would not be so regarded by their counselor.**
- 4. AIWP pastoral counselors do not practice and are not licensed to practice psychotherapy. This would be outside the scope of their work as AIWP ministers. However, in carrying out their work as pastoral counselors they will, like all counselors, call upon various counseling techniques and the wealth of psychological and spiritual literature.**
- 5. A Pastoral Counselor understands that the difficulties and challenges of life can be a portal for spiritual growth. Pastoral counseling recognizes the need for an environment in which people who seek to discuss their life-concerns can be offered informed listening without reference to the clinical diagnosis or treatment of an illness.**

PASTORAL COUNSELING BELONGS WITHIN THE SPIRITUAL NOT THE MEDICAL TRADITIONS.

It recognizes that spiritual authority resides in the client not in the counselor.
It listens for the other's unique spirituality.

It is interested in what the client considers the meaning of life; where this is not known, Pastoral Counseling helps to seek this meaning.

In Pastoral Counseling the goal is not to heal but to mutually create an environment within which the unspoken self can emerge.

Pastoral Counseling recognizes and accepts that an individual's spiritual perspective includes the totality of one's life. A few examples are: family history, trauma, use of substances as escape, self-defeating patterns, thoughts and behaviors, inevitable losses, separations, and interpersonal relationships.

INFORMED CONSENT

Pastoral Counselors clarify at the beginning of counseling that they are not licensed to practice psychotherapy. This information can also be provided in writing as an informed consent.

A PASTORAL COUNSELOR, ORDAINED BY AIWP, DOES NOT REQUIRE THE CLIENT TO CONFORM TO THE COUNSELOR'S OWN SPIRITUAL BELIEFS.