

## **Pastoral Counseling Guidelines**

Pastoral counseling is an integral and important part of ministry. Churches are in the business of reaching out to people who need advice and assistance, whether it's financial, relational, or spiritual. However, in today's litigious society, ministries need to be very familiar with the legal risks associated with pastoral counseling. There are ways to protect your organization and staff against allegations of misconduct.

		Yes	Needs Attention
1.	Does your ministry offer pastoral (spiritual) counseling? If so, do you put your counseling procedures in writing?	0	0
2.	Do you have counseling procedures developed by an attorney that include guidelines relating to child or elder abuse reporting and confidentiality of information, and that assure compliance with state mental health licensing laws or exemption from such laws?	0	0
3.	Do you have an attorney prepare "informed consent" forms or counseling agreements that describe important guidelines for pastoral counseling, such as confidentiality of counselee information and exemptions to confidentiality?	0	0
4.	Does your ministry have a referral network of other professionals who provide counseling that falls outside the scope of spiritual counseling?	0	0
5.	Do you discourage sessions in which opposite-sex counseling is permitted?	0	0
6.	Do you have a second adult present when counseling members of the opposite sex or minors, to protect your organization from allegations of sexual misconduct?	0	0
7.	Do you screen everyone who will provide any type of counseling within your ministry?	0	0
8.	Do you offer counseling sessions only on church premises, when	0	0

(Continued on back)



## Health/Wellness Checklist

**Needs** 

		Yes	Attention	
Э.	Do counselors refrain from using any speech or mannerisms that could be misinterpreted as sexual or romantic?	0	0	
0.	Do counselors either have a window that looks into their office, or leave the door open during counseling sessions?	0	0	
1.	Do you have rigid guidelines established for youth ministers and youth activities?	0	0	
Vot	es:			_
				_
100	npleted by:	Date:		