Pastoral counseling is an important part of ministry. Reaching out to people who need advice and assistance, whether it's financial, relational, or spiritual is central to the church's mission. 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.

1. Does your ministry offer pastoral (spiritual) counseling? If so, do you put your counseling procedures in writing?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

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?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

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?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

4. Does your ministry have a referral network of professionals who provide counseling that falls outside the scope of spiritual counseling?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

5. Do you discourage sessions in which opposite-sex counseling is permitted?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

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?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

7. Do you screen everyone who will provide any type of counseling within your ministry?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

8. If you have professional counselors, do you make sure their licenses are current and they have their own personal malpractice coverage?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

9. If you collect any fees for counseling services, have you consulted with your insurance agent about obtaining appropriate coverage for this exposure?
   - Yes: ○
   - Needs Attention: ○

10. Do you offer counseling sessions only on church premises when someone else is present in the building?
    - Yes: ○
    - Needs Attention: ○

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11. Do you educate counselors about not using any speech or mannerisms that could be misinterpreted as sexual or romantic? Yes ☐ Needs Attention ☐

12. Do counselors either have a window that looks into their office or leave the door open during counseling sessions? Yes ☐ Needs Attention ☐