

Helping One Another Through Major Transitions

ELDERS' WIVES
MIDWINTER CONFERENCE
2/7/13

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
COUNSELING AND FAMILY SERVICES
877-370-9988 -- www.accounseling.org



John
13:34-35

Theme Verse

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Does This Presentation Apply To You?

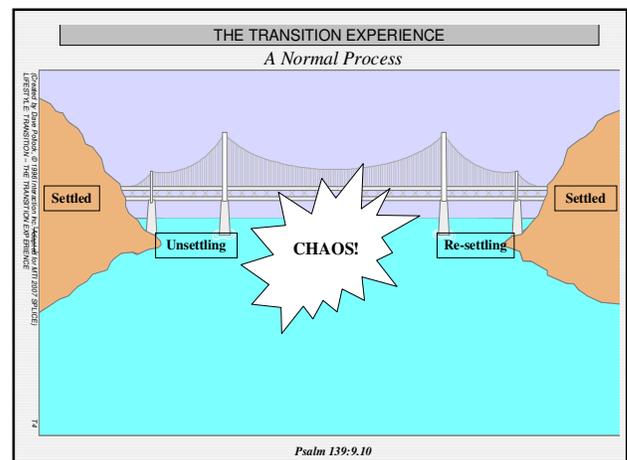
- Have you experienced any big changes in your life in the last few years?
- Have you felt uncertain about what was happening, what happened, or what was going to happen in your family, church, business, or community?
- Have you felt that circumstances that occurred led to you feeling unsteady or like the “rug got pulled out” from underneath you?
- If you have felt stress, angst, or anxiety about any of the above, then this presentation is for you!!

Why This Topic?

1. Understanding transition stress can greatly reduce conflict that promotes ongoing stress and distress.
2. Awareness of how others cope allows us to be more in-tune with each other and increases empathy.
3. Having an understanding of ourselves increases our ability to do good personal stewardship.
4. Lowering reactivity to each other is a key goal in coming together to serve Christ in a common purpose and mission.

Transition Stress

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN HOW PEOPLE
RESPOND TO STRESS



Transitions Often Create “Saturday” Periods

- Think of Good Friday through Easter Sunday.
 - **Friday** - The Disciples experienced a shocking transition on Good Friday.
 - **Saturday** - They spent Saturday in hiding and in shock; not knowing how to make sense of what was happening or what to do next.
 - **Sunday** - Resurrection Sunday brought great joy, new meaning, and purpose for the Disciples.

Adapted from Orberg Friday, Saturday, Sunday

What Does God Want From Us in Transition?

- In the “Saturday” periods of our lives, we often struggle because we feel unsettled and can’t see the bigger picture.
- The question is, “**How do I think and live like Christ, right here, right now in these circumstances?**”
 - As humans, we are heavily invested in feeling certain about our circumstances.
 - God, however, **is not** invested in us feeling certain about our circumstances.
 - He **is** invested in us walking by faith; **fully certain** of Who it is in whom we believe (**2 Timothy 1:12**).

For Reflection...

Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

Question: How can I do better at fixing my mind on God while I am working through my circumstances?

C.S. Lewis said, “God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”

Question: Where in my life am I seeking to find happiness and peace in circumstances and people instead of Christ?

Effects of Transition Stress

NOTICE THE WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS

ACROSS THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, RELATIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL

Things That Affect How People Cope

- History of previous losses
- Emotional coping skills
- Information (accurate? unknowns?)
- Social support
- Spiritual foundation
- Personality
- Ability to adapt to change
- Experience with dealing with difficult circumstances including small “t” and big “T” traumas.

Physical Effects

- Difficulty sleeping or wanting to oversleep
- Loss of appetite or over-eating
- Feeling “keyed up” or “on edge” OR feeling sluggish and slowed down
- Transient physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, muscle aches, gastrointestinal issues, lowered immune system functioning)

Emotional Effects

- Feeling like you are riding an emotional roller-coaster
- Emotional intensity or numbness
- Feelings of helplessness and/or hopelessness
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Irritability
- Anxiety and/or depression

Emotional Effects Cont'd.

- Rumination
 - Replaying things over and over in your mind focusing on the negatives and difficulty seeing blessings
- Poor concentration
- Worry and your mind is filled with “What ifs?”

Relational Effects

- Clinginess
- Detachment
- Irritability or “Short-fuse” with others
- Isolating from others
- Distrust
- Suspiciousness

Spiritual Effects

- Clinging to faith (positive)
 - “God, I need You now more than ever.”
- Connecting with others (positive)
 - “Bear ye one another’s burdens.”
- Spiritual questions
 - “Why, God?”
 - Common in Christians who are struggling.
 - God understands that we don’t understand.
- Disillusionment
 - “I give up... I quit.”

How Long Does It Take to “Get Over It?”

- Some individuals rebound very quickly while others may deal with issues on a ongoing chronic basis.
- The most intense effects of stressors tend to peak during and shortly after the event occurs.
- Some people function well during the most intense parts of the stress, but they have symptoms emerge once things start to settle down.
- Repeated transitions and stresses can have a **cumulative effect**.

“Cut each other some slack”

- Under significant stress people can become irritable, dramatic, rigid, withdrawn, clingy, and/or irrational.
- Avoid taking things too personally.
- Take comments that people say and let them “roll off” as much as possible.
- Suggested prayer, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they just said.”

Take a Step Back to Get the Big Picture

**Luke
4:18-19**

Christ's Mission

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The Implications of Christ's Mission

- In addition to sharing the Gospel with the lost, caring for others is part of Christ's mission AND our mission.
- Satan wants us to be harmed through trials, while God wants us to grow closer to Him and to bring Him glory through them.
 - We must encourage each other to look to Jesus for grace, strength, and guidance as we are going through trials.
 - Showing Christian love to another person takes time, effort, and self-sacrifice. However, that is exactly what Jesus has done for you and me.

Reactivity

13. *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*
 14. *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*
 15. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*
 16. *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*
 17. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*
 18. *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*
- James 3:13-18**

Fight or Flight or Freeze

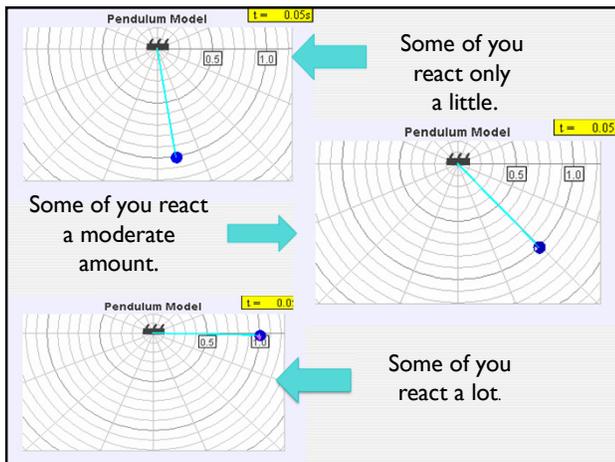
- When we feel emotionally or physically threatened, human beings have rapid emotional and physical responses that lead us to:
 1. **Fight** – we emotionally or physically defend ourselves
 2. **Flight** – we get away from the situation as quick as we can
 3. **Freeze** – we feel emotionally helpless and paralyzed.

Fight or Flight or Freeze Cont'd.

- Individuals respond to stress, trauma, and loss very differently from each other.
- When multiple individuals in a family, church, or community go through something they tend to “bounce off of each other” oftentimes, reacting to each other’s reactions.

Accidentally Creating a Downward Spiral

- As stressed individuals start reacting to each other, they accidentally start bringing out the worst in each other.
- In doing so, they start confirming their own worst fears, react, and then start the cycle over.



Remember!!

A reaction to a reaction is an over-reaction.

Reacting Versus Responding

Reacting

- Emotions drive: Fight or Flight
- Assume our perspective is correct
- Assume negative motives on others
- Win-lose or lose-lose mindset

Responding

- Gentle, easily entreated (*James 3:17*)
- Speak the truth in love (*Ephesians 4:15*)
- Listens, clarifies, and seeks to understand (*James 1:19*)
- Seeks win-win solutions – esteems others higher (*Philippians 2:3*)

How Our Tension Level Impacts Our Perception and Reactions

HOW EMOTIONAL REACTIVITY CAN AFFECT WHETHER WE RESPOND LIKE CHRIST OR OUR FLESH.

10. Outbursts or panic
 9. High distress *Red Zone = High Tension*
 8. Moderate distress
 7. Distress

6. High tension
 5. Unpleasant tension *Yellow Zone = Caution*
 4. Tense

3. Relatively calm
 2. Relaxed *Green Zone = Calm*
 1. Calm
 0. Wonderfully calm

Red, Yellow, or Green: It Matters Spiritually

- The higher our tension level, the more opportunities Satan has to get an advantage with us.
 - In what zone are you more likely to say something you regret later?
 - In what zone are you more likely to do something impulsive and not care about the consequences?
 - In what zone are your emotions more likely to “run the show” rather than you being in submission to the Holy Spirit?

Red, Yellow, or Green: It Matters, Cont'd.

- **It happens to everyone.**
 - Momentary ups and downs are normal and expected.
- **Pray for each other.**
 - Remember that Satan doesn't give a struggling person ANY breaks. He is going to try to kick you when you are down.
- **Emotions tend to come in “waves.”**
 - Sometimes a wave of emotion will knock you over. Other times you will feel like you are handling things well. That is normal.

Three Steps to Dealing with the Red Zone

- When you have identified that you are in the red zone:
 1. **Step back** – your #1 goal in the red zone needs to be to bring Christ-like perspective back by calming down.
 2. **Calm down** – since your fight or flight response is on, you need to take steps to calm your body and your mind. This takes intentional action and time.
 3. **Re-engage** – when you have regained a balance between you emotional mind and logical mind (called “wise mind”), you can determine what the best way to deal with the situation is.

Ephesians 6:11-13

Do you believe these verses?

Do you act like you believe these verses when you are dealing with others in your life?

*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Two Types of Problem Solving

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND THOSE YOU INTERACT WITH



Problem Processing Styles

Individuals tend to work through their problems in one of two main ways:

1. **Thinkers:** Cope primarily by thinking things through logically
 2. **Feelers:** Cope primarily by working through emotions
- Neither style is wrong
 - Both have strengths and weaknesses

Millon, Grossman, Meagher, Millon & Everly, 1999

Acceptance is Key

- **Romans 12:5**, “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”
- **Romans 15:7**, “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

Thinkers

- Tend to need the following to work through stress, crisis, and transitions:
 1. Emotional distance
 2. Information and facts
 3. Assistance in problem-solving from people they see as competent
 4. Assistance with re-establishing healthy control

Feelers

- Tend to need the following to work through stress and crisis:
 1. Need to share their feelings and experiences
 2. Need acceptance as they sometimes “vent” and pour out their emotions
 3. Need others to empathetically listen and allow time for their emotions to settle
 4. Want to be understood

Events and Issues

WHAT ARE WE REALLY TALKING ABOUT?



Separating Events from Issues

- There are two layers to most conversations:
 - **Events** – the topic at hand
 - **Issues** – the “under-the-surface” feelings, meanings, and goals
- For example, a couple may have an argument about whether the toilet paper roll is supposed to “go over or under.”
 - While on the surface they may both be talking about the toilet paper roll, the hidden issue may be related to something very different.
 - The unspoken issue may actually be “This is the way we did it in my family,” or “You never listen to my ideas.”

Markman, Stanky, & Blumberg, *Lighting for Your Marriage*

Separating Events from Issues Cont'd.

- Always seek to communicate on the same issue.
 - Many conflicts are never solved because the individuals are actually arguing about different hidden issues.
- It is a loving act (though often a challenge) to work at understanding why the other person is reacting to an issue the way he or she is.

Transitions and Loss

Hebrews
4:15-16

15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

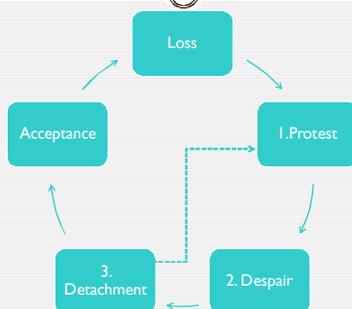
Isaiah 53:3 says of Christ, "...a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Types of Losses

- Transitions always involve losses
 - Some are welcomed losses while others catch us by surprise.
- Some losses are physical/tangible while others are symbolic
- Some losses openly acknowledged publicly, while others are unacknowledged or hidden.

Grief and Loss



3 Phases of Grief after Loss or Perceived Loss

1. Protest

- Shock, confusion, denial, anger at others, anger at self, anger at God, lowered self-esteem
- Crying, pain, weakness, nausea, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, etc.

2. Despair

- Agony, grief, anguish, depression
- Bargaining and "urge to recover" that which was lost, slowed thinking and actions, continuing physical symptoms.

3. Detachment

- Apathy, indifference, loss of interest, desire to withdraw and "give up"
- Decreased socialization, no new friendships, bland expression, absent spontaneity.

Galatians 6:2

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Stages in the Journey

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF GROUPS
TRYING TO WORK TOGETHER

Stages of Development

- Groups go through predictable stages of development as they come together, try to organize, and then come together for a shared mission and purpose.
- These stages often reoccur in long-standing groups after a time of transition.

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing

Tuckman's Group Development Model

1. Forming

Behaviors	Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming together • Making contact and bonding • Developing trust • Members depend on one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing base-level expectations • Identify similarities • Agreeing on early common goals

Tuckman's Group Development Model

2. Storming

Behaviors	Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict • Expressing differences of ideas, feelings, and opinions • Reacting to leadership • Members of the group independent or refuse to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying power and control issues • Gaining skills in communication • Identifying resources that can aid understanding

Tuckman's Group Development Model

3. Norming

Behaviors	Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions are made through respectful communication and understanding • Group members encourage one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members agree about the role and processes for problem solving • Focus on the vision • Reduce conflict through respect, open communication, and mutual esteem

Tuckman's Group Development Model

4. Performing

Behaviors

- Group members work collaboratively
- Group members care about each other
- The group establishes a unique identity
- Group members are interdependent

Tasks

- Achieve effective and satisfying results
- Group members find solutions to problems using appropriate channels

Tuckman's Group Development Model

Understanding Triangles

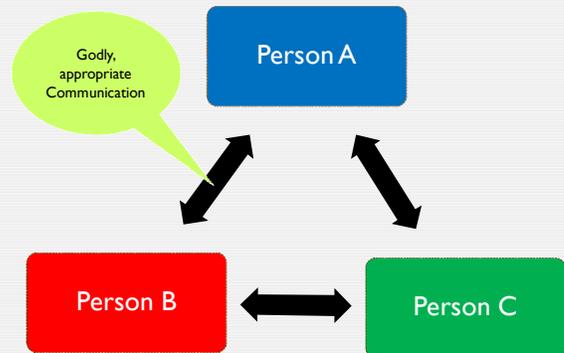
COMMON COMMUNICATION TRAPS



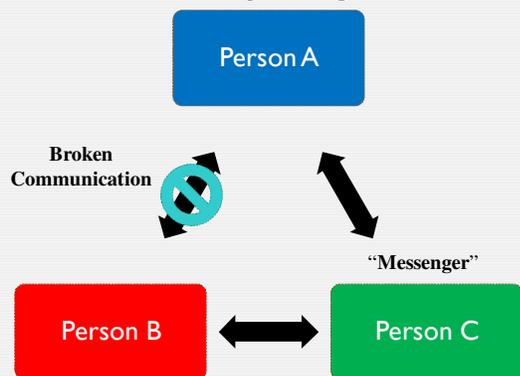
Colossians 3:12-14

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

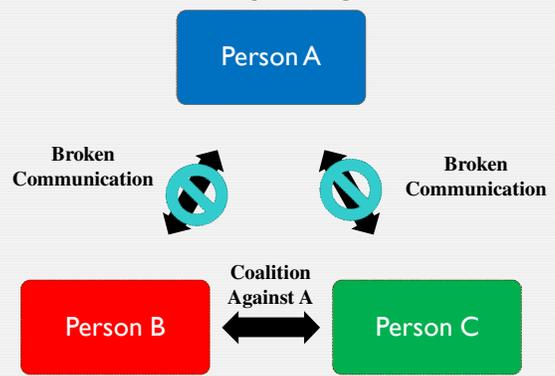
Healthy Communication Loop



Unhealthy Triangle #1



Unhealthy Triangle #2



See Handout:
**11 RULES FOR RESPECT AND OPEN
COMMUNICATION IN RELATIONSHIPS**

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BIBLICAL
RELATIONSHIPS PRINCIPLES

Final Thoughts and Conclusion

A New Version of the Serenity Prayer

God grant me the
serenity to accept the
people I cannot
change, the courage
to change the one I
can, and the wisdom
to know its ME.

Christ-like Perspective

- **1 Corinthians 12:26-27**, “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”
- **Romans 12:15**, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”
- **Luke 6:31**, “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

God's Grace

God gives us
grace as we
need it, in
the amount
that we
need.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

– **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

Please Help ACCFS Collect Recording of Past Talks to the Elders' Wives

- We are trying to collect recording of ACCFS talks given to Elders' wives at previous conferences so that:
 - New elders' wives have access to the information.
 - Any of the elders' wives can get a copy if they happen to want one.
- We do not know how many of the talks were recorded.
- We already have copies of the following:
 - 2012 Rockville – Healthy Boundaries
 - 2009 Tremont – Dealing with Stress
- Contact Ted at ted@accounseling.org or 309-263-5536 if you have a recording.
- We can get your original back to you, if you desire.

ACCFS Overview

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AND FAMILY SERVICES

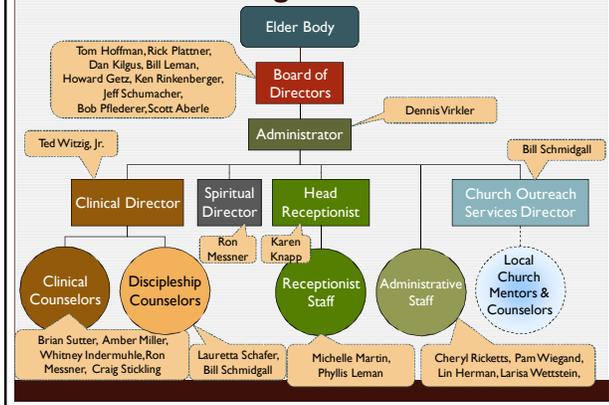
877-370-9988
www.accounseling.org



ACCFS Mission Statement

- We will nurture, through counseling and teaching, the spiritual well-being of individuals through God's Word as it relates to their emotional, relational, and mental health needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2).
- Our goal is to alleviate suffering and to promote Christian maturity so that people can grow in their likeness to Christ, experience a deeper relationship with God and enter into a more effective life of service to others.
- The Bible is our authority (1 Thessalonians 2:13) as we apply the gifts that God gives to man (Romans 12:5-8; Isaiah 50:4).
- The services provided will support and strengthen the local elder's shepherding, the brotherhood of the Apostolic Christian Church, and those not affiliated with the church, as resources allow.

ACCFS Organization Chart



Counseling Services at ACCFS

- Counseling is offered to address issues such as depression, anxiety, adjustment difficulties, marital problems, and childhood behavior problems.
- Counseling also provides biblical instruction, direction, and encouragement.
- Counseling can be in-office or remote (telephone or video-conference).
- Counseling is charged on a sliding-fee scale; no one is refused services based on their ability to pay.

Consultations with a Counselor

- ACCFS provides consultations with a counselor to people who are seeking information or help with mental health issues, spiritual issues, relationship problems, etc.
- Consultations are done via telephone and/or email.
- Callers include elders, ministers, family members, and friends of struggling individuals.
- We offer a free, 30 minute triage consult session before starting counseling, if desired.

Counseling Referral Information

- ACCFS provides referrals for those seeking counseling in their local area.
- ACCFS maintains a database of clinical counselors located around each of our churches nationally.
- The ACCFS referral database includes counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, specialty clinics, and support groups.
- Our goal in providing this service is to help individuals find mental health professionals located near their home area who have strong clinical skills and good credentials, and will be respectful of their religious beliefs and faith backgrounds.

Church Education

- **Seminars & Presentations:** ACCFS counselors can provide presentations to churches or smaller groups (ministers, young groups, etc.).
- Seminars provide a Christian perspective on mental health issues, relationship problems, and/or personal growth areas.
- **Print Materials:** ACCFS has print materials available covering a wide variety of health issues and relationship problems; these have been screened by staff and/or elders.

Mentor Training Program

- The ACCFS Mentor Training Program teaches participants the skills that make for effective mentoring.
 - Understand the purpose and role of mentoring, both as a biblical concept and as a resource tool for use within churches.
 - Learn what a mentor does and gain confidence in undertaking the role of mentoring.
- Mentors can be assigned by an elder to mentor an individual or a couple with a specific need. Examples:
 - Spiritual growth
 - Personal growth and enhancing relationships
 - Marriage, family, or parenting issues.
 - Dealing with singleness, loneliness, anger, etc.

Apostolic Christian Way of Purity and Way of Temperance

- ACWP is a 60-lesson biblically-based accountability program for individuals struggling with sexual temptation, pornography, etc.
- ACWT is a 59-lesson biblically-based accountability program for those struggling with substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, tobacco)
- Each participant is assigned to a mentor who provides support, feedback, and guidance.
- The participant completes daily Bible study lessons which he e-mails or faxes to his mentor.
- Anyone wanting to enroll in the ACWP or ACWT program needs to get the approval of their home elder.
- If you have questions about the programs, call ACCFS or send an e-mail to acwp@accounseling.org or acwt@accounseling.org.

Bible Study Programs

- ACCFS provides several Bible Studies for mental health and relationship topics, including Forgiveness, Faith, and God's Comfort.
- These Bible study materials are available through the ACCFS website (www.accounseling.org/biblestudies).
- ACCFS works with the Bible Study Development Committee to coordinate Bible Study development, review, and distribution.
- ACCFS also provides a Bible Study for Biblical Financial Stewardship from Crown Financial.

Website (www.accounseling.org)

- About Us – This gives an overview of ACCFS; charter, policies, history, etc.
- Services – Includes counseling services as well as presentations and other church outreach services.
- Resources by Topic – This includes all of the topic informational pages arranged according to topical subject.
- Resources by Role – This includes many of the topic informational pages arranged according to role or life-stage.
- Get Help – This is a quick link on how to obtain counseling assistance.
- Bookstore – The bookstore contains all of the books that are referenced throughout the site and that are available from ACCFS. These books have been screened and selected for use by our church membership.
- Support Us – This gives information on how to help support ACCFS through donations, and help clients through the Brother's Keeper Fund.

Funding

- ACCFS is a ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church of America.
- A sliding fee scale based on annual income is used.
- No one is refused services based on inability to pay.
- The remainder of funding is from individuals and churches who support the work of ACCFS.
- Our annual budget is approximately \$850,000. Donations from individuals and churches cover **75%** of this amount.



11 RULES FOR RESPECT AND OPEN COMMUNICATION IN RELATIONSHIPS

1. If you have a problem with me, come to me privately.
2. If I have a problem with you, I'll come to you privately.
3. If someone has a problem with me and comes to you, send them to me. I'll do the same for you.
4. If someone consistently talks to you about me but will not come to me, say to the person, "Let's go see him/her together. I am sure s/he will see us about this." I will do the same for you.
5. Because it is easy to misinterpret intentions, be careful how you interpret me. On matters that are unclear, do not feel pressure to guess about my thoughts, feelings, actions, or intentions. Instead, come to me and ask me to clarify. I will do the same for you.
6. If it's confidential, don't tell. If you or anyone else comes to me in confidence, I won't tell unless (a) the person is going to hurt himself/herself, (b) the person is going to physically harm someone else, (c) a child has been physically or sexually abused. I expect the same from you.
7. I do not manipulate. I will not be manipulated. Do not let others manipulate you. Do not let others try to manipulate me through you. I won't let others manipulate you through me.
8. I will never send you an *unsigned* letter as a way to "share concerns" or to criticize you or anyone else. Conversely, I do not read *unsigned*, critical letters; rather, I throw them away. Sending an unsigned critical letter and including statements such as, "I'm writing to you in love." is not loving. It is hurtful, cowardly, and a violation of healthy relationship principles.
9. When you have a question or are in doubt about something, come to me and ask to talk with me about it. If I can answer you without misrepresenting something or breaking a confidence, I will. However, even in times when I can't share information to the degree you would like me to, please give me the benefit of the doubt instead of assuming negative things about me. I'll do the same for you.
10. Let's keep the "air" between us clear. If I sense that there is distance, hurt, misunderstanding, etc. between us (regardless of who is to blame), I'll come to you to talk about it. I expect the same from you.
11. Forbearance and forgiveness are essential for our relationship.

Revised: 4/29/10

Copyright 2008 by Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services. Can be freely copied and redistributed. Not to be sold.

Adapted from Charles W. Christian, "10 Rules for Respect." Leadership Journal, Summer 1999, www.christianitytoday.com as quoted in Maxwell, J.C. (2003). There's no such thing as "business" ethics. Warner Business Books.