



ACCFS Courses

**Course Notes**

## **Basic Counseling Skills**



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

**Counseling and Family Services**

*Helping the hurting. Nurturing hope. Encouraging growth.*

Phone: (309) 263-5536 | [www.accounseling.org](http://www.accounseling.org)



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>Lesson 1: The Counselor’s Mindset</b> .....	4
<b>Lesson 2: The Counselor’s Skill Set</b> .....	6
<b>Lesson 3: How to Encourage</b> .....	9
<b>Lesson 4: How to Help</b> .....	12

These course notes were created to accompany participants enrolled in the ACCFS Basic Counseling Skills Course.

## Introduction

Watch the course intro video.

Intro video notes:

The wise King Solomon reflected on the nature of personal purposes and counsel when he gave the world the proverb below.

***“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water,  
but a man of understanding will draw it out.” Prov 20:5 (ESV)***

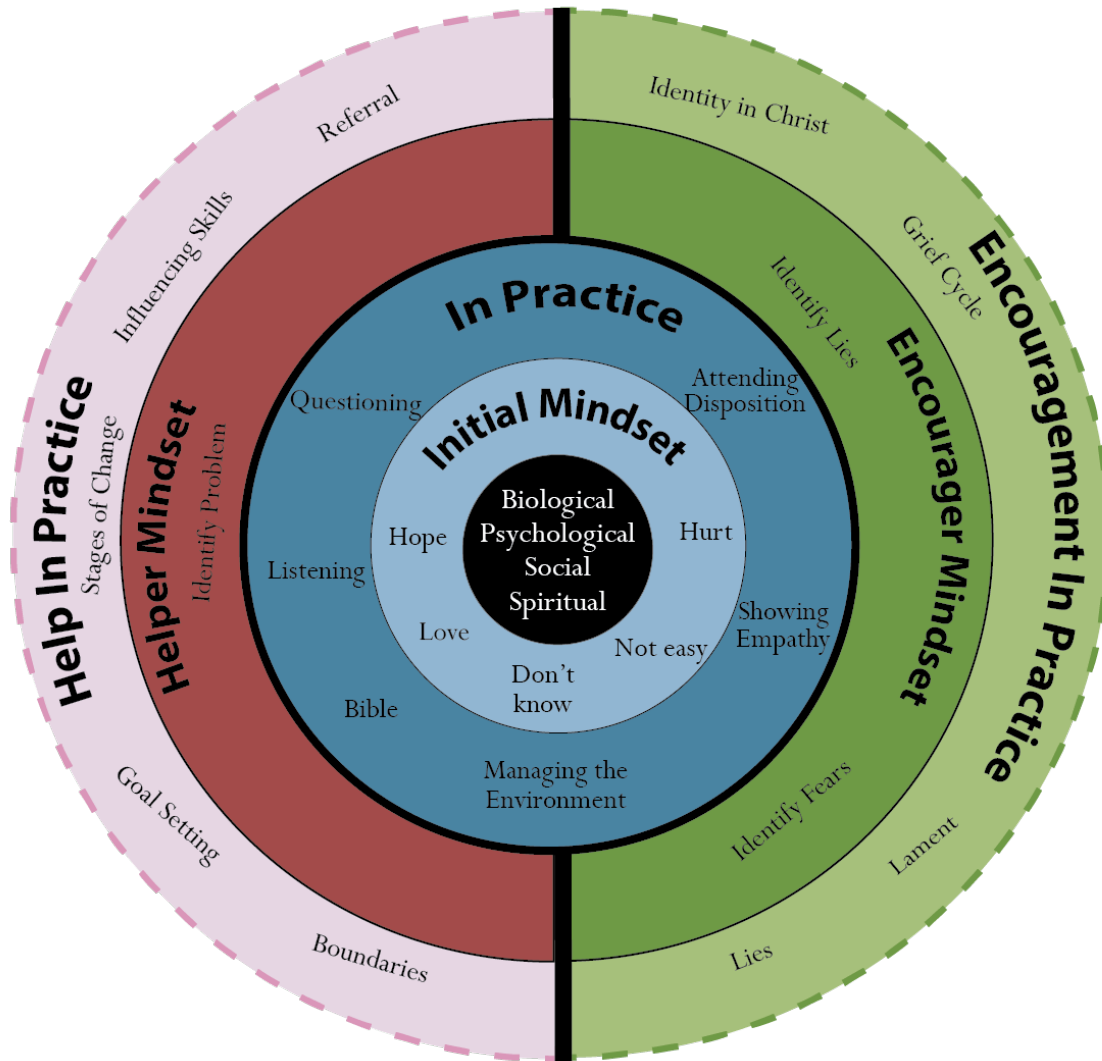
A counselor/mentor does just that. Draws out the plans and purposes of an individual so that they can be inspected in light of God’s loving will. The purpose of the class is to nurture that “understanding” on the part of the mentor.

### **This course has two goals:**

- *Participants will be given a “mindset” for counseling. Such a “mindset” will give them a healthy standpoint from which to engage a person in a counseling situation and offer encouragement and/or help.*
- *Participants will be given a “skill set” for counseling. Such a “skill set” will give them the tools with which to engage a person in a counseling situation and offer encouragement and/or help.*

## Core Counseling Mind Map

The Core Counseling Mind Map is a visual aid designed to organize the content of this class. It is an attempt to capture the concepts core to counseling. This diagram will be used to illustrate how a counselor approaches a counseling session as well as a graphic organizer for the content of this course.



Watch the video in the course. In the video, Matt Kaufmann explains how to use the “Counseling Mind Map.”

Video notes:

## Lesson 1

### The Counselor's Mindset

The initial mindset is the mind a counselor has through which they engage people. The mindset is made up of basic beliefs and understandings that form up their approach and orient their perspective. Adopting this mindset goes a long ways in getting us off on the right foot. **Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Video notes:

## The Bio - Social - Spiritual - Psychological Lens of Counseling

We start our consideration of counseling with a good look at who we are as human beings. God has made us "*fearfully and wonderfully*." As we interact with people, it is important we rightly view them in their complexity. The issues that concern us will likely have a foot in one or more of the following areas.

- **Biology:** Our physical bodies.
- **Psychology:** Our mental and emotional dimensions.
- **Social:** Our relationships.
- **Spirituality:** Our relationship with God.

Learn more about this model with the video linked in the course.

Video notes:



## The Initial Mindset of a Counselor

Now that we have a healthy perspective on the complexity of human issues, rooted in their physical, mental, social and spiritual realities, we look to ourselves as counselors. Now we put on the initial mindset of a counselor. There are five basic axioms that guide our interactions and reactions to an individual in need. When interacting with a person we understand the following:

- Something hurts.
- It is not easy to ask for help.
- I do not know the answer.
- Love is important.
- Hope is critical.



Wonderfully, the initial mindset does not come with experience or education. In fact, the initial mindset can be adopted and put into practice today - by anyone. **Watch the video linked in the course.** In the video, Brian Sutter explains the initial mindset.

Video notes:

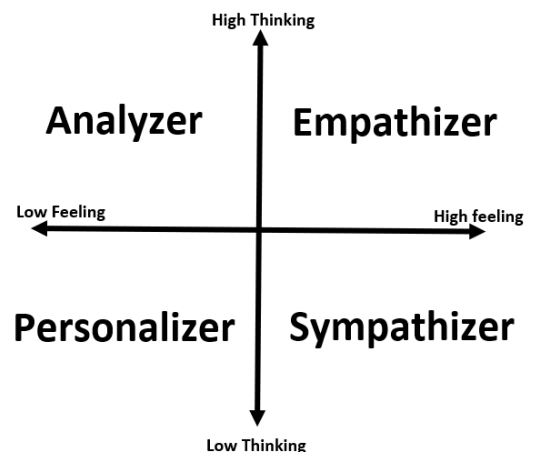
## The Counselor’s “Bent”

Knowing ourselves goes a long way in helping us grow as a counselor. We all react to counseling situations in ways unique to us. We will call these “bents.” “Bents” are how we tend to react to the stories people share with us. Knowing our “bent” is helpful and will help us grow in our counseling maturity. These “bents” can be classified into 4 categories.

- Analyzer
- Sympathizer
- Personalizer
- Empathizer

Watch the video in the course.

Video notes:



## Lesson 2 The Counselor’s Skill Set

Every job has a skill set. An array of skills and techniques that set the worker free to accomplish their job. The counselor has a skill set also. We will consider five foundational elements of counseling.

- The Bible
- Attending disposition
- Listening
- Questioning
- Empathizing

Watch the lesson 2 intro video linked in the course.

Video notes:



## Using the Bible

Peter makes a powerful statement about the effect the knowledge of Christ has on our lives.

***“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” 2 Peter 1:3***

God has given to us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” This is good news. The Word of God and the example of Christ provides us so much grounding in our counseling. **Watch the video linked in the course.**

Video notes:



## Attending Disposition

Safety is key when it comes to building an environment conducive to hearing another person's story. One way counselors build this safety is being mindful of their "attending disposition." Our attending disposition is how we present ourselves in the meeting. It is the non-verbal messages we send to the individual we are counseling. Some tips to use as guides are below.

1. Listed below are non-verbal messages we can convey with a good attending disposition. For each one, describe the body language we can use to send these positive messages:
  - **Convey Attention:** Leaning forward does this more readily than reclining.
  - **Convey Empathy:** Warm compassionate facial expressions do this more readily than a stern look.
  - **Convey Interest:** Eye contact does this more readily than eye avoidance.
  - **Convey Importance:** Being fully present does this more readily than being distracted.
  - **Convey Safety:** Open-arm gestures does this more readily than folded arms.

## Questioning

The discipline of questioning stems from the initial mindset that "we don't know." A counselor is slow to jump to conclusions. Instead, they use questions to prompt the story. Getting the individual talking is important for gathering the much needed details. In the video linked in the course, Kaleb Beyer presents 6 types of questions.

- Investigative
- Direct
- Open-ended
- Close-ended
- Clarifying
- Hypothetical

Video notes:

## Listening

A counselor understands that listening is a gift to give. He/she understands that it is an honor to hear the painful story of another person. Hand-in-glove with questioning, a good listener understands they need to be slow in making judgements. By careful listening, the counselor gathers the information needed to make wise decisions in counseling.

Consider the article linked in the course to equip you with guidelines for effective listening.

- Prepare to listen.
- Paraphrase and encourage further sharing.
- Check your listening attitudes.
- Be aware of both content and delivery.
- Be aware of your own emotions and reactions while listening.
- Resist distractions.
- Listen for themes.
- Don't get carried away by your own curiosity.
- As you listen, avoid "preaching", lecturing, or arguing.
- Like Jesus did, use well-placed questions to draw out information.

## Empathy

Empathy is feeling with another person. It is a critical component in connecting with another person. In the video linked in the course, Amber Miller explains what empathy is and why it is important to the counselor.

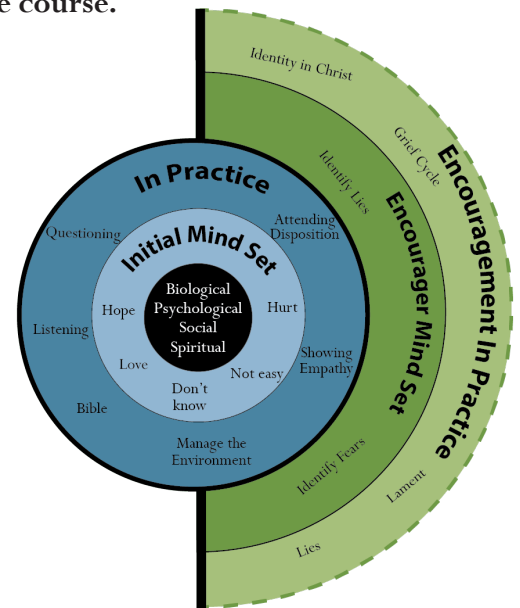
Video notes:

## Lesson 3

### How to Encourage

Some who come to us for counsel simply need encouragement. Encouragement is much more than superficial comments of commendation. Encouragement thrives in two conditions: when it touches on a person’s fear; or when it touches on a destructive lie a person believes. You can be a good encourager if you can identify these two things in a person’s life—their fears and the lies they believe. **Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:



### Circumstantial and Non-Circumstantial Encouragement

Most of us want circumstantial fixes to our problems. We want people to encourage us by saying it will all get better. And there are time when this can and should be said. However, sometimes we must acknowledge that things may not get better. That is, the circumstantial encouragement might not be the honest truth. Wonderfully, Jesus makes a non-circumstantial encouragement always relevant. **Watch the video linked in the course.**

Video notes:

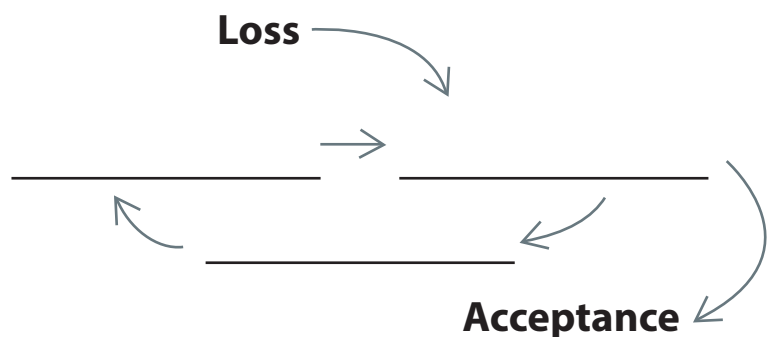
## Grief

As mentors, we will be called on to administer comfort. The comfort we extend to others comes directly out of the comfort we receive of God.

***“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Cor 1:4***

To appropriately provide comfort to the grieving, it is important to understand the grief cycle. Learn more about the grief cycle by watching the video linked in the course.

Video notes:



## Lament

The Bible has a lot to say about lament. Lament is the discipline of taking your complaints to God in faith. Some have counted 1/3 of the Psalms as laments. Job lamented, Habakkuk lamented, Jeremiah lamented, and even Jesus lamented. Watch the video linked in the course.

Video notes:

## Reversing Lies

Satan is the father of lies. No wonder people are plagued with them. Furthermore, lies have consequences. Lies will always play themselves out in unhealthy ways. By identifying and correcting lies in people's lives we go a long way in helping them become healthier. Learn more about lies and how they can be reversed by the following resources **Listen the the podcast linked in the course & read through the worksheet linked in the course.**

Notes:

## Identity in Christ

The Gospel reverses the order.

The world says, *"Tell me your experience and I'll tell you your identity."*

The Gospel says, *"I'll tell you your identity and that will make a difference in your experience."*

No wonder the world is so insecure.

Time and time again Paul reminds believers who they are...

***"You are reconciled."***

***"You are holy."***

***"You are unblameable and reprovably."***

Then he tells us how that translates to our experience.

***"Then you are grounded and settled."***

***"Then you seek those things which are above."***

***"Then you put to death the works of the flesh."***

The good news of the Gospel has everything to do with receiving a new identity.

One that gives us:

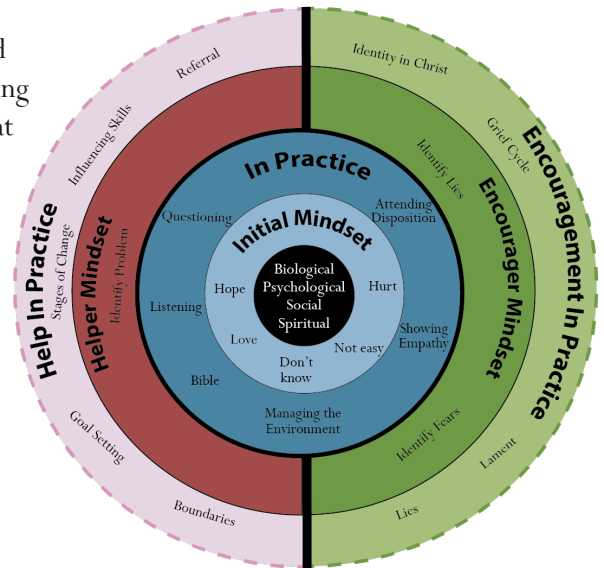
**Belonging, Security, & Worth.**

# Lesson 4

## How to Help

This lesson focuses on the act of helping, giving advice, and challenging and urging change. In some ways this is the lesson you have probably been waiting for. It comes at the end not because we are pushing it off but because all that came before it is foundational to this skill set. **Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Video notes:



## Stages of Change

Has change come easy in your life? Specifically those areas of your life that are less than desirable? If you answered “no”, you are not alone. Many people find change to be difficult. Most likely, the folks you counsel towards change will find change to be a process. One lens through which to view the process of change is through the “Stages of Change.” They are as follow:

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance

Learn more about the Stages of Change in the video linked in the course.

Video notes:

## **Boundaries**

Boundaries are an issue that comes up often with people in relational distress. By boundaries, we mean those limits we have in our lives that allows us to interact with others on a basis of volunteered grace and not coerced obligation. Coerced obligation very often engenders bitterness and resentment. Volunteered grace very often engenders health. Consider the content resources below to understand this space of boundaries better. Learn more about boundaries using the resources linked in the course.

Notes:

## **Goal Setting**

Part of the helping process is providing vision. This is something we all can do with those we work with. Helping an individual see what could possibly come of their situation if they yield to God can be very hopeful. Very often, individuals are very short sighted in their vision. They cannot see what you can see. Help them envision a life where Christ is at the center. A resource to help you do this is linked in the course.

Notes:

## Influencing Skills

At the end of the day, we hope to be able to influence people towards health, growth and nearness to Christ. There are a few simple tips to influence effectively.

- Help counselee “envision” target behavior.
- Give information in the form of suggestions.
  - “How would you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - “I wonder what would happen if you \_\_\_\_\_?” People like change to be their idea. The influencer honors that and helps them own the idea. For example, instead of saying “I think you should...” rephrase the idea by saying, “Suppose you...”

## Guidelines for Making Referrals to Professional Counseling

There are some situations that are best referred on to professional help. Knowing when and how to do this is important. Consider the article linked in the course, “Making Referrals.” Read and note that this document is available for you to reference.

Notes: