



Christian Counseling Services

2166 Indian Head Road, Champion, PA 15622
South Campus (724)-455-2122 FAX 724-455-6651
www.champion.org/counseling email: info@champion.org

About your first counseling session...

If your first contact with Christian Counseling Services has been typical you have emailed, called, or messaged us in some manner to find out more about us. Here is some information you might want to know about your first session:

Many sessions take place at our South Campus in Indian Head located at 2166 Indian Head Road, Champion PA. At that campus you will park in the lower parking lot (the first lot that you come to if you are coming up the hill from Indian Head) and use the sidewalk around to the rear of the building and enter through the door located beside the preschool playground. Through that door you will turn right and follow the signs to the top of the steps and turn left into the upstairs counseling offices. There is a waiting room there where you will be greeted before your appointment.

If you meet at our North Campus located at 1076 King's Way Donegal you will enter through the main entrance and ask for your counselor. They will direct you to where you are meeting. The driveway entrance is located at the intersection of Route 711 North and Route 31 in Donegal. This is across from the intersection of 711 N and Route 31 by the Day's Inn.

Before arriving to your first session: It is recommended that you go to our website at www.champion.org/counseling and review the forms and handbooks. You may print out and sign the Informed Consent Agreement and bring it with you to the first session to save time. If you do not do this in advance, you will be required to do this on site before we can begin. Please allow at least fifteen minutes ahead of your scheduled time to do paperwork.

Review the fee structure. Your session fee will typically be \$75. Please review the payment models on the website, and there is financial aid available if you cannot afford the typical fee. You will pay after the session.

Review the Counseling Handbook online. Before we can begin to work together you will need to review this handbook to make sure that you understand our process in working together.

Review the Therapeutic Guidelines online. Before we can begin you need to review this document to be sure you understand how therapy will work. Part of our agreement to work together will require this to have been reviewed.

Read, print out and sign the Informed Consent Agreement. This agreement is an important part of our work together, so that both you and the Center know what we are expecting *out of our time*. A

Bringing a Driver: Your driver may stay in the car in the parking lot, or may accompany you to the waiting room which is by the counseling office. At North Campus there is little waiting room space, so we suggest that guests that are not attending the session, remain with their vehicle. Remember, that there are school programs associated with the Center and guests have limited access to school areas when students are present. After normal school hours, and times when school is not in session those areas are open such as play areas, computer labs, etc.

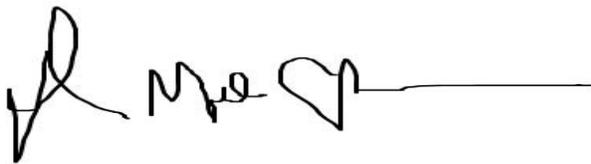
Your first session will begin with: Reviewing the Informed Consent Agreement, answering your initial questions, and you sharing your reason for coming to counseling. Counseling can be hard and emotional, and at times is hard to end, but we will be very conscientious with your time. At the end of the session, you will schedule your next appointment. Normally ongoing counseling will have homework assignments that will relate to the issues that you are dealing with in counseling.

The first session does take some time to get oriented there will be lots of things that relate just to your needs. Some of these are:

1. Sharing your particular situation, and the goals that you have as part of our time together. Sometimes you do not know what those are, and at times one of our first important steps will be to set a couple of goals for counseling that are specific to you and your needs.
2. We will determine how our initial time together will go which usually involves several sessions. Normally it takes a couple of sessions for clients to develop some specific goals for counseling. As we identify issues to address, then the next goals are to begin to work on them. Although many clients are concerned about the amount of sessions, our goal is to make counseling as efficient as it can be, and maximize our time together. The goal is to use counseling to create independence in clients, not dependence. You will be fully in charge of how many sessions, and the nature of those sessions. Normally it does take some time to develop a good working pattern. Some clients can achieve their goals in a few sessions and some prefer to continue in counseling for a time to work on deeper issues. We will work with you on an individual basis to establish the pattern that works for you.
3. After the initial issues have been established we will have some additional forms that you can complete at home and bring back. Sometimes these are screening measures, sometimes these are Bio-social history forms.
4. Counseling will probably be difficult at times. There will be silences, there will be times when the work that you do in therapy will be difficult and you may feel worse. However, sometimes hard places need to be faced in order to get better. Although our counselors use a variety of methods, one of the methods that has been proven to be effective for many issues is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT. With this method, clients are taught ways to explore new ways of thinking and behaving, which leads to healthier options in life. Our approach to all counseling has God at the Center of it.
5. There is no right or wrong way for you to do counseling. It is all about you and a counselor connecting to be able to walk together in working on the concerns that you have. Just be yourself. Honesty, openness, and hard work are the ingredients to success in counseling. Sometimes you will feel like you are jumping all over the place and talking about many things. You may find a clarifying question or a comment will be asked to make sure a counselor understands something in your life. At times there will be some silence as we both reflect on something that was said. At times you will feel challenged. That is all very normal. Our goal is to work together to help you find a path that God would have for you to move forward in your life.

Let's get started!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Merle Skinner', followed by a horizontal line.

Dr. D. Merle Skinner, Director of Counseling
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BS Child Development;MS Organizational Leadership;EdD Counseling Psychology

***A program of the Christian Family & Children's Center
Educating...Equipping...Engaging the World for Christ***