



## When to Refer from Pastoral Care

If someone is dealing with personal or family struggles, they are most likely turn to their pastor or spiritual advisor first. As a pastor, providing counsel to the broken and hurting among us is an incredible privilege. However, sometimes it's hard to know if someone needs more intensive care or medical help. This guide provides you the answers to when it's appropriate to refer to LifeWay, or other mental health services.

*Note: Anytime an individual is a danger to themselves or others, call 911.*

### **Here are some situations that may require referral:**

- The individual is experiencing an issue that exceeds your expertise or training.
- You have attempted to help the person, but they are making no progress.
- The amount of time required to adequately address the individual's struggles is greater than your availability (i.e. you are a pastor who cannot devote multiple hours a week, for months, to counseling relationships).
- You have a dual relationship with the individual (i.e. they are your friend, family member, small group member, etc.) that may interfere with your objectivity in counseling.
- The individual is struggling with issues that you have personally experienced and which may still be sensitive for you.
- There are multiple issues such as physical, medical, and emotional which might require a team approach.
- There is a personality conflict between yourself and the individual, you dislike the individual, or you find yourself angry at the individual.
- You find yourself physically or emotionally attracted to the individual.
- The individual has an addiction.

**The deciding factor should always come down to your level of comfort. The moment you are unsure or uncomfortable, that is when you should refer.**

*Whether it's a member of your congregation, your church staff, or friends and family, trust LifeWay Counseling Centers to provide hope and healing.*