

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FAITH-BASED COUNSELING

Welcome to the Chaplain's office.

Please review and sign the following acknowledgment of faith-based counseling.

1. I am an ordained minister with [CHAPLAIN ENDORSER], endorsed to serve as a Chaplain in the Armed Forces. I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and I base my counseling and ministry on Biblical principles. The [ENDORSER] statement of faith and policies are available at [CHAPLAIN ENDORSER WEBSITE]. I am willing to discuss these beliefs at your request and may reference them throughout our counseling.
2. IAW SECNAVINST 1730.9, you are assured of confidentiality of any communication made (1) as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience; (2) to me (or to the Religious Program Specialist) in my capacity as a spiritual advisor; and (3) intended to be confidential. A communication of this nature is also privileged under Military Rule of Evidence (MRE) 503. I will not and cannot disclose our conversations to anyone without your express permission. In order to better serve you I may discuss the general themes and issues of this counseling with my supervisory chaplain. I will not maintain records in any system of records that may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.
3. As we walk together we will talk about many issues. My goal is to empower you to experience the healing, forgiveness and grace of God through Jesus Christ. I will encourage you to live out your faith even if it is not my own. While we may disagree I am committed to your well-being and will honor and respect your beliefs.
4. My door is open. You are free to come and go as you need. If we meet once, or many times, you are always welcome. If I am not able to serve you I will do everything I can to link you to other Chaplains or service providers to ensure you have every opportunity to exercise your religious freedom and meet your needs.

I understand I will receive faith-based counseling from a [ENDORSER] Chaplain as described above. This communication is confidential per SECNAVINST 1730.9, and privileged under MRE 503.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Additional counseling dates:

WHY IT MATTERS

Chaplains ensure the religious freedom of all service members by providing avenues for spiritual growth and personal development. Among many other responsibilities, they personally provide counseling in accordance with the dictates of their faith and the guidance of their endorser. Increasingly, chaplains who counsel on the basis of their Christian faith are targeted. Chaplains who hold a traditional view of marriage, for example, come under fire for expressing opinions in accordance with their faith.

The Acknowledgment of Faith-Based Counseling will make the chaplain's dual roles as facilitator and provider clear from the outset—hopefully during intake—so that potential conflict is avoided. This way, every service member receives access to the counseling they need and every chaplain can counsel without fear of retribution.



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