



## Ethical Guidelines

### ***The God-given Dignity of All Persons***

The counselors from Your Ever After, LLC recognize and uphold the inherent, God-given dignity of every human person, from the pre-born to those on death's bed. Human beings are God's creation and are therefore due all the rights and respect and ordered logic that this fact of creation entails. Therefore, regardless of how we respond to and challenge harmful attitudes and actions, Counselors will express a loving care to any client, service-inquiring person, or anyone encountered in the course of practice or ministry, without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual behavior or orientation, socio-economic status, education, denomination, belief system, values, or political affiliation. God's love is unconditional and, at this level of concern, so must that of the Christian counselor.

### ***No Harm or Exploitation Allowed***

Prohibitively, then, counselors avoid every manner of harm, exploitation, and unjust discrimination in all client-congregant relations. Counselors are also aware of their psychosocial and spiritual influence and the inherent power imbalance of helping relationships—power dynamics that can harm others even without harmful intent.

### ***Managing Client Conflicts***

Counselors acknowledge that client conflicts are unavoidable. In fact, conflict and resistance are often a central dynamic of the helping process. We will attempt to resolve all counseling conflicts in the client's best interest. Counselors tempted to respond in harmful ways to clients shall seek out consultative and restorative help. If self-control is not accomplished—and client harm is not avoided—counselors shall terminate counseling relations and make referral in the client's best interest.

### ***Action Regarding Clients Harmed by Other Helpers***

Counselors take proper action against the harmful behavior of other counselors and pastors. We will act assertively to challenge or expose those who exploit others, and protect clients against harm wherever it is found, taking care to honor and support client decision-making regarding curative action against violators.

### ***Refusal to Participate in the Harmful Actions of Clients***

Counselors refuse to condone, advocate for, or assist the harmful actions of clients, especially those that imperil human life from conception to death. We agree that the protection of human life is always a priority value in any professional or ministerial intervention. We will not abandon clients who do or intend harm, will terminate helping relations only in the most compelling circumstances, and will continue to serve clients in these troubles so far as it is humanly possible.

### ***Deadly and Threatening Behavior***

Counselors refuse to condone, advocate for, or assist the suicidal, homicidal, or assaultive/abusive harm done to self or others by clients, including that which is threatened by verbal or other means. In fact, we are under an affirmative ethical duty to prudently intervene for the sake of protecting life, and under certain conditions, to report deadly threats to the proper authorities and those threatened by clients (see Code sections 1-430ff).

### ***Application to Abortion***

Counselors refuse to condone or advocate for abortion and the abortion-related activities of clients. All counselors will consider and inform clients of alternative means to abortion and, as far as it is possible, will continue to serve clients and work compassionately with them through the abortion crisis.

### ***Marriage***

Counselors acknowledge the biblical definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman for one lifetime. Counselors refuse to condone or advocate for the pursuit of or active involvement in same sex marriage by clients. We may agree to and support the wish to work out issues of sexual behavior, identity, and attractions, but will encourage sexual celibacy or biblically proscribed sexual behavior while such issues are being addressed.

### ***Premarital and Extramarital Sexual Behavior***

Counselors refuse to condone or advocate for the pursuit of or active involvement in pre-marital and extra-marital sexual behavior by clients. We acknowledge that sex is God's good creation and a delightful gift when confined to one man and one woman in marriage. We may agree to and support the wish to work out issues of sexual behavior, identity, and attractions, but will encourage sexual celibacy or biblically proscribed sexual behavior while such issues are being addressed.

### ***Homosexual and Transgendered Behavior***

Counselors refuse to condone or advocate for the pursuit of or active involvement in homosexual, transgendered, and cross-dressing behavior, and in the adoption of gay & lesbian & transgendered lifestyles by clients. We may agree to and support the wish to work out issues of homosexual and transgendered identity and attractions, but will refuse to describe or reduce human identity and nature to sexual reference or orientation, and will encourage sexual celibacy or biblically proscribed sexual behavior while such issues are being addressed.

Counselors differ, on biblical, ethical, and legal grounds, with groups who abhor and condemn reparative therapy, willingly offering it to those who come into counseling with a genuine desire to be set free of homosexual attractions and leave homosexual behavior and lifestyles behind. Either goal of heterosexual relations and marriage or lifelong sexual celibacy is legitimate and a function of client choice in reparative therapy.

It is acknowledged that some persons engaged in same-sex change or reparative therapy will be able to change and become free of all homo-erotic behavior and attraction, some will change but will still struggle with homosexual attraction from time to time, and some will not change away from homosexual practices.

### ***Divorce***

Counselors refuse to assume the decision for client divorce. We may assist clients in analyzing and making the decision to divorce, insofar as it is biblically permissible, as God does allow for divorce in some cases. Therefore, we may assist clients through the divorce process without being a divorce advocate, as that divorce decision must always reside in and be owned by the client. Counselors working in divorce mediation will be careful to communicate that such work is not an endorsement of divorce, but rather a decision to offer a better choice than adversarial litigation and its destructive family impact when divorce is inevitable.

### ***Sexual Misconduct Forbidden***

All forms of sexual misconduct are unethical. This includes every kind of sexual exploitation, deception, manipulation, abuse, harassment, relations where the sexual involvement is invited, and relations where informed consent presumably exists. Due to the inherent power imbalance of helping relationships and the immoral nature of sexual behavior outside of marriage, such apparent consent is illusory and illegitimate.

\*\*\*\* Adapted from the AACC Code of Ethics Y2004