



FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about the profession of Pastoral Counseling

1. How does “pastoral counseling” differ from “counseling”?

Pastoral counseling is very much like the counseling that you would receive from any other counseling professional (psychotherapist, licensed social worker, psychologist), except that pastoral counselors also have been trained in issues of spirituality and faith. When a counselee seeks to integrate their faith and religious understanding into how they address their problems, a pastoral counselor can competently facilitate this process.

2. How is a pastoral counselor trained differently than a social worker or psychotherapist?

Pastoral counselors, clinical social workers and psychotherapists receive the same type of education and clinical training in psychology and behavioral health. Pastoral counselors receive additional education and training in spirituality, theology, biblical studies, and faith development.

3. What is the difference between a pastoral counselor and a biblical counselor? Spiritual director? Christian counselor?

Biblical Counselors base their entire counseling practice on the authority of scripture as sufficient for all human concerns and, therefore, do not make use of behavioral science theory and method in counseling. The website of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors defines this further: www.nanc.org/aboutus/standardsofconduct.htm. Pastoral counselors believe that integration of behavioral science methods in practice is essential for treatment of the whole person.

Christian Counselors, while subscribing to an evangelical theology and belief in the authority of scripture as the inspired, inerrant word of God, will also make use of behavioral science insights in treating the whole person. This is further defined in the website of the American Association of Christian Counselors: www.aacc.net. Pastoral counselors generally employ a more moderate theological position and study the Bible from a literary, historical-critical, and contextual point of view.

Spiritual direction is primarily focused on the spiritual journey of persons and their relationship with God. It is intentionally not counseling or psychotherapy, as defined by Spiritual Directors International: www.sdiworld.org. Pastoral counselors may include spiritual direction as part of their method when appropriate.

4. Can pastoral counselors become Licensed Professional Counselors?

Yes. In the state of Pennsylvania the term “Licensed Professional Counselor” refers to an individual whose academic and clinical experience meets the rigorous criteria set forth by the state licensing body. Licensed Professional Counselors can receive insurance reimbursement for their services

5. What type of person becomes a pastoral counselor?

Just like in other counseling professions, there isn't a stereotype of a pastoral counselor. All pastoral counselors do believe that by integrating psychology and spirituality into the counseling experience you offer a more holistic approach to healing.

6. Is pastoral counseling a form of ministry?

Most of the students who enroll in the MAPC program at Moravian consider pastoral counseling a form of ministry. Some denominations recognize pastoral counselors as specialized ministers and may ordain or endorse them. (Check with your denomination as to the status of pastoral counselors.) The academic and clinical background that pastoral counselors receive prepares them for counseling ministries, not for preaching and teaching ministries.

7. Do pastoral counselors preach to their clients?

No. Pastoral counselors respect the religious beliefs of their counsees and do not impart their religious convictions to them. Pastoral counselors help counsees utilize the resources of personal faith to respond to their presenting situation.

8. Do pastoral counselors see clients from faith traditions other than their own?

Yes. Pastoral counselors see clients from all faith traditions as well as persons who espouse no faith tradition.

9. Do pastoral counselors work with families or only with individuals?

Pastoral counselors work with families, groups, and individuals.

10. Where do pastoral counselors work?

Pastoral counselors serve as counselors in behavioral health agencies, in private practice, at pastoral counseling centers, and as chaplains. Congregations have included pastoral counselors on their ministry teams.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling at Moravian Theological Seminary

11. How long does it take to complete the MAPC program at Moravian Seminary?

The MAPC at Moravian is a 62 credit masters program. Full-time students can complete the program in 2 years. Part-time students must complete it within 6 years.

12. What are the prerequisites to entering the MAPC program at Moravian?

There are no program or counseling prerequisites to enter the program. The following items are required for application to the MAPC at Moravian:

- Graduation from an accredited undergraduate school with no less than a 2.5 GPA.
- Transcripts from all schools attended beyond high school.
- Letters of recommendation from 3 individuals.
- Autobiographical essay.

These requirements are spelled out in our catalog and on our website: www.moravianseminary.edu.

13. Is there a clinical component to the MAPC program?

Yes, students will log at least 300 supervised counseling hours in professional counseling placements while enrolled in the MAPC program. The comprehensive clinical experience includes one-on-one counseling, agency supervision, and classroom assessment.

14. How do I find a clinical placement while at Moravian?

The MAPC Clinical Director will assist you in locating a clinical placement site that is compatible with your vocational interests.

15. Is a master's thesis an academic requirement of the MAPC program?

No, a master's thesis is no longer an academic requirement of the MAPC program. Students wishing to write a master's thesis can do so and fulfill 6 elective credit hours.

16. How can I get connected with other pastoral counselors to find out more about the profession, career opportunities, and licensure?

Moravian Seminary is the only counseling program in the region that has an Alumni Mentoring Program. Students are given the option to join this program in which alumni, who serve as pastoral counselors, are matched with students for the purpose of networking and discussing issues that are unique to the profession, such as vocation, licensure and credentialing, and clinical practices.

17. I will be taking classes while I am still working full-time, how flexible is the program at Moravian?

Many of our students enroll in the MAPC program while working full- or part-time. The majority of our courses meet for one, 3-hour session/week. Many of our classes meet at night. All of the courses that accompany the clinical placements take place on Fridays.

18. Do I need further training after the MAPC at Moravian to become licensed in the state of Pennsylvania?

The MAPC program at Moravian Seminary is designed to meet the academic requirements in Pennsylvania for Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC). As with all other master programs in counseling, additional hours of supervised clinical work are required for state licensure and/or certification in professional organizations. These hours of clinical supervision can be obtained following graduation while serving as a counselor with an approved supervisor.

19. Do the 300+ clinical hours of experience I get in the MAPC program count toward the required hours of supervised counseling needed for state licensure as a LPC?

No. However, the clinical placement may fulfill the master's degree practicum requirements for clinical membership in the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (see http://www.aamft.org/index_nm.asp) and for certain required categories of supervision for Certified Pastoral Counselor status in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (see <http://www.aapc.org>).

20. Is there an active MAPC alumni network at Moravian Seminary?

Yes, many of our graduates maintain connections to the Seminary through their involvement in the MAPC Alumni Committee and through their attendance at continuing education programs for pastoral counselors. Each year Moravian Seminary sponsors a one-day retreat for MAPC alumni and students in the fall. Issues pertinent to pastoral counseling are the topic of the annual Psychology and Spirituality lectures held in February. An MAPC alum who has brought distinction to their counseling ministry is honored at the March Alumni Reunion Luncheon with the Bishop Kortz Pastoral Counseling Award.

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