

## **Eden Counseling Ministries' Counseling Assistance Program**

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### **Mission of Eden Counseling and Consulting**

*Eden Counseling and Consulting provides transformational Professional Christian Counseling and Consulting and develops Innovative Services and Effective Leaders.*

### **Mission of Eden Family Institute**

*Eden Family Institute Helps Leaders develop Healthy Families, Dynamic Communities, and Meaningful Legacies.*

### **Core Values of ECC and EFI**

1. Respect everyone
2. Upstanding service delivery
3. Stewardship always
4. Honor God in all things

### **History of Eden Family Institute and Eden Counseling Center**

Paul Van Valin, PhD, started Eden Family Institute (EFI) in 1994. By placing resident (not yet licensed) counselors in office space provided by local churches, Dr. Van Valin was able to provide professional counseling services for sliding scale fees that are adjusted for family size and annual family income. In 1996 Eden Family Institute was chartered as a 501 (c) 3 corporation.

Eden Counseling Ministries [also doing business as Eden Counseling and Consulting (ECC)] was founded in 1995. ECC employs licensed Christian professionals including psychologists, social workers, counselors and marriage and family therapists. ECC also trains developing clinicians. Our goal is to provide affordable, Transformational Professional Christian Counseling and psychological services, train leaders in Professional Christian Counseling and support the church and community with services, training and consulting. We have offices in Virginia Beach and Portsmouth.

Eden Counseling and Consulting is funded in part by traditional means such as insurance and personal payments for services and tuition for training and workshop events. There are times when churches provide funding for services for membership as in our Counseling Assistance Program members. Eden Family Institute is funded by grants and contributions from private sources and churches.

The following services and programs are currently provided by ECC and EFI:

1. Counseling Assistance Program
2. Individual, couple, family and group psychotherapy
3. Psychological testing
4. Conference and church event speaking
5. Intensive Leader Assessment and Consulting
6. Intensive Marital Assessment and Consulting
7. Intensive Personal Assessment and Consulting
8. Intensive Team Assessment and Consulting
9. Coaching and Consulting to church and mental health leaders
10. Parent Child Interactive Therapy services and training (research validated treatment for attention and behavior problems in children ages 2-8)
11. Practical Parenting Solutions (training for lay leaders to run a research validated parenting class)
12. Dialectical Behavior Therapy services and training (research validated adult treatment for severe, disabling and chronic mental illness)
13. Kelso's Choices group therapy and training (research validated group therapy for social skills development ages 2-8)
14. Pre-marital counseling
15. Prepare/Enrich training workshops
16. Clinical Psychology pre-doctoral practicum, internship and post-doctoral residency training two to four students per year
17. Clinical Social Work residency training one to two residents per year
18. Licensed Professional Counselor residency training two to four residents per year
19. Publication of books and materials to promote mental health (i.e. *V-8 Engine Kids in a 4-Cylinder World* was published in 2003)

### **EFI Board of Directors**

- Paul Van Valin, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, is the President and founder of EFI and ECC.
- Robert Buick, MBA, is the President of Buick and Associates, a business consulting firm in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has been a volunteer board member for Eden Family Institute since 1996.
- Linda Vaughan is the Chief Executive Officer of Union Mission, a 501-c3 in Norfolk, Virginia. She became a volunteer board member in 2004.
- Susan Martin has many years of experience in the office of development of a Christian university. She is presently employed as a director in Development by Christopher Newport University. She became a volunteer board member in 2012.

## **The Need for Christian Counseling Services in the Church**

Dr. Gary Sweeten (info@sweetenlife.com) devised a simple model that we call “Gary’s Wedge” that provides a description of the needs of a flourishing congregation, the helping activities that a church may provide, and professional relationships needed for referral. The following information is contained in *Hope and Change for Humpty Dumpy* by Gary Sweeten and Steven Griebing available as a download for \$5 or purchase for \$20 at <http://bookstore.authorhouse.com/Products/SKU-000383743/Hope-and-Change-for-Humpty-Dumpty.aspx>.

60 to 70% of the members and attendees of healthy churches get their needs for discipleship and affiliation met within conventional structures of the church. Worship services, classes, small groups, and personal ministry opportunities will meet the needs of most of the congregation. Most of a church’s resources should be devoted to developing and sustaining these activities.

25 to 35% of any church’s members require special attention, sometimes for brief periods of time. Many churches provide pastoral and lay counseling, supportive prayer ministry, thematic support groups, financial education, premarital intervention, marriage enrichment programs, and parenting education. Program development is most effective when the needs of the largest groups are addressed first. Volunteers equipped for people-helping ministry often have a passion to serve because of how they have been blessed. Lay volunteers experience personally enriching ministry as they provide these services under the direction of pastor or elder leadership. Some churches schedule educational and preventative activities on an annual basis and create a culture with a strong focus on relationship skill development. These programs are also useful for outreach, evangelism and charity when offered to the community.

10 to 15% of church members manifest genuine mental health disorders and will require treatment by mental health professionals. These individuals may have biologically based problems, severe personality problems, trauma induced disorders, addictions, or severe stress reactions. Personal and family counseling is a labor-intensive activity. Some churches mistakenly attempt to develop programs and services for the most distressed individuals and families, since their needs often appear dramatic, before establishing successful programs for the other 85-90%. This taxes the church’s resources and often leads to discouragement. The most successful church based professional counseling centers eventually become separate 501 (c) 3 corporations and function independent of the church.

We differentiate Professional Christian counseling from Pastoral and lay counseling. Professional Christian counselors have graduate degrees in psychology, social work and counseling and are licensed by the state board regulating professional practice. They adhere to national and state ethical and practice standards and are licensed to diagnose and treat mental health disorders. Professional Christian counselors have been called to service by God and dedicate their life and livelihood to serve Him and His church. Professional Christian counselors are members and participants in a local church, but rarely provide services within their own church in order to avoid conflict of interest situations. Professional Christian counseling is not intended to replace, or compete with, pastoral or lay counseling and prayer ministries.

We presently have three service delivery models in place in churches in Hampton Roads. Churches partner with ECC and EFI based on their congregational needs and church staff resources. Using current technology we are now able to partner with churches worldwide.

### **Example One – Relationship and Mutual Support**

Each year the number of churches who refer to us increases. As we become acquainted with your church, we are in a position to recommend your church to people who are seeking a church home. Fees for in office services at ECC are the usual and customary fees consistent with standards in Hampton Roads. ECC accepts insurance where appropriate. Telephone and Skype Consulting can be paid on per session or monthly basis. In office fees at EFI are based on family size and income. We call this a “Sliding Scale” fee structure. All counselors in EFI have graduate degrees and are contracted with the Commonwealth of Virginia and licensed therapists at Eden Counseling and Consulting, receiving supervision toward obtaining a counseling, social work or psychology license. EFI is liable for the counseling outcomes. The church provides referrals and/or occasional financial assistance to the family. All Counselors in ECC are licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **Example Two – Financial Assistance for Membership**

The church provides a fixed amount of funding per session that they will contribute for a specified number of counseling sessions and services. Eden Counseling and Consulting determines the appropriate counselor and treatment modality. The church’s donated funds may cover 100% of the cost, or the member may be required to contribute something as well with the church funds reducing the out-of-pocket cost of the member seeking services. Eden Counseling and Consulting bills insurance when applicable. An example is our relationship with Western Branch Community Church where pastors make referrals and we have worked out a simple communication system including written release of information forms to make the referrals simple and comfortable for the pastor and counselee.

### **Example Three – Counseling Assistance Program Annual Contract**

Example: Dr. Bob Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk (FBCN), approached Dr. Van Valin in 1997 and asked, “What can we do for our congregation for \$10,000 per year?” Dr. Reccord wanted counseling services to be provided off site due to space limitations and liability. Dr. Van Valin prepared a proposal for a voucher system similar to the program with Western Branch Community Church previously described above. This proposal included the provision of Eden Staff to assist in triage and distribution of counseling cases at the church. EFI employs a member of FBCN known to both Dr. Van Valin and Dr. Reccord as the triage or assessment person. Bonnie Erb, Licensed Professional Counselor and member of FBCN, has been available 4 to 6 hours per week to meet with prospective clients in 30 minutes interviews. She assesses the problem and determines the best resource to meet the need of the church

member. She also provides staff Consulting and is available 7 days a week for telephone Consulting.

As the dialogue of needs and the vision for congregational growth continued, Dr. Van Valin proposed two other models of service delivery. The final agreement offered FBCN the previously mentioned Eden assistance with on-site assessment, traditional counseling, premarital counseling, family enrichment programs, support group development, personal and professional Consulting for staff and their families, and organizational Consulting. The church views this contract as a tremendous resource. One full time pastor with administrative support utilizing church office space would cost the church over \$125,000 with a total budget of about \$250,000 if program development, such as lay or prayer ministry, was part of the vision. The Counseling Assistance Program can provide the services for a small fraction of the cost of an in-house counseling service.

The Counseling Assistance Program protects the church from being viewed as a provider of medical services, which is a substantial liability. With the Counseling Assistance Program, Congregants will not develop an unrealistically dependent expectation that the church should provide for all of their emotional and relationship needs.

The Counseling Assistance Program has been in place through three pastoral changes and will probably continue for a number of years at First Baptist Church of Norfolk. The contract is modified as the needs of the church change.

A similar arrangement with Kempsville Presbyterian Church (KPC) in Virginia Beach began September 1, 2003. In the first two months of introducing this program to KPC, we processed over 60 seekers of services.

Hope Haven Children's Home contracted with EFI for a Counselor Assistance Program (CAP) in July 2004. EFI has placed counselors on site to serve the residents and staff at Hope Haven Children's Home and the older adult home. Dr. Van Valin provides staff training on a monthly basis.

**Summarizing Three Counseling Assistance Program Models  
Provided by Eden Counseling and Consulting**

### **Option One – Relationship and Mutual Support**

The Church and ECC have a relationship of mutual trust and respect and support each other through referral and endorsement.

### **Option Two – Financial Assistance for Membership**

The Church allocates a budget to create a voucher system to financially help meet the needs of membership in the area of professional counseling.

### **Option Three- Counseling Assistance Program Full Service Annual Contract**

This model offers a wide range of counseling and consulting services funded by the church, the congregant, and health insurance where applicable. The Counseling Assistance Program is individually designed to meet the needs of the church and complement established ministries provided by the church.