

COUNSELING INITIATIVE

- 1. Redeemer Redmond Church greatly appreciates the role, and the value, of trained professional counselors. Many of our leaders and members at Redeemer report having personally benefited from such counseling. We heartily encourage Redeemer members and non-members to consider using such services, when needed.*
- 2. For members needing assistance with professional counseling expenses, the Deacons have established a Redeemer Counseling Fund. Contact Deacon Frank Huston with any questions or requests: counseling@redeemerredmond.org*
- 3. In consultation with our pastor and elders, the Deacons will prepare a list of recommended professional counselors for people to consider. At present, that list includes three Redeemer members – David Noor (www.counselo.com), and Leanne Konzelman and Drew Konzelman (www.novolifecounseling.com). We are also asking other pastors in the area to recommend trusted, professional counselors for us to consider adding to the list.*
- 4. The Deacons will also use the Fund for similar assistance to people outside the church – like other mercy ministry outreaches. To that end, the professional counselors in our church have indicated their willingness to serve in this ministry. Non-members can contact David, Leanne or Drew directly, and these counselors will coordinate with the Deacons on funding.*
- 5. You can contribute to the Redeemer Counseling Fund at any time by noting it on your check that you make. Please make check out to Mercy Fund/Counseling Initiative.*

The Need

On the surface, many people in Redmond and the Eastside have very few needs for mercy. They are educated, affluent and have nice homes, expensive cars, good jobs and happy families. But below the surface, these same people have great psychological, emotional, and relational needs. They experience intense psychological and relational suffering and misery. This is true not only in our city (Redmond) but in our church as well (Redeemer). Redeemer Redmond seeks to minister to our church and community by helping people with these very real needs.

In his book *Ministries of Mercy*, pastor Tim Keller explains that mercy is “...meeting felt needs through deeds.” He explains that there are four circles of human need or what he calls alienation (he defines alienation as “disintegration which arises from using an object for a purpose other than what for which it was designed”): theological alienation, psychological alienation, social alienation and relational alienation.

Theological Alienation

Our deepest need as people is reconciliation with God, the restoration of our relationship with God. We are made for a loving relationship with God, yet sin has separated us from

God. When God is not at the center of our life we experience a profound misery. This is what Keller calls theological alienation.

Psychological Alienation

The next circle out is psychological alienation, that is, alienation from the self. We experience unhappiness, guilt, fear, loss of personal identity, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicide and sexual problems. This psychological alienation can propel guilt and shame that drive us away from God, even though our deepest need is fellowship with Him, and He is the one that can ultimately heal our psychological pain. This lack of fellowship with God can also exacerbate our psychological alienation, creating a “vicious cycle” of loss and profound loneliness.

Social Alienation

Our internal, emotional and psychological brokenness results in the breakdown of our external relationships with others and our communities. Keller calls this “social alienation”: loneliness, inter-personal conflicts, marital and family problems, poverty, class struggle, racism, etc. can all be understood as the direct result of the alienation we experience from ourselves and from God.

Physical Alienation

Theological, psychological, and social alienation results in physical alienation: homelessness, lack of basic necessities like food or clothing, sickness, disease, poor stress coping, and ultimately death.

Jesus’ Holistic Mercy

Jesus’ mercy meets every level of human need. Through Jesus’s cross we are reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:16-21). Jesus heals us internally, at the emotional and psychological level: to those who mourn He gives a “beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit” (Isaiah 61:3). Jesus creates a new spiritual family, a community of grace and peace (Ephesians 2:11-22), and helps us love and forgive others (Ephesians 4:32-5:2). Finally, Jesus addresses the most basic physical needs of people, healing them (John 5:1-17), feeding them (John 6), and ultimately providing the gift of the resurrection of their bodies and life everlasting (John 11).

As a church, the “body of Christ,” Redeemer wants to embody Jesus’ holistic mercy. *Redeemer’s counseling initiative seeks to directly address the profound psychological and social-relational “felt needs” of people with an eye to helping meet all people’s deepest need: reconciliation with God.*

The Opportunity

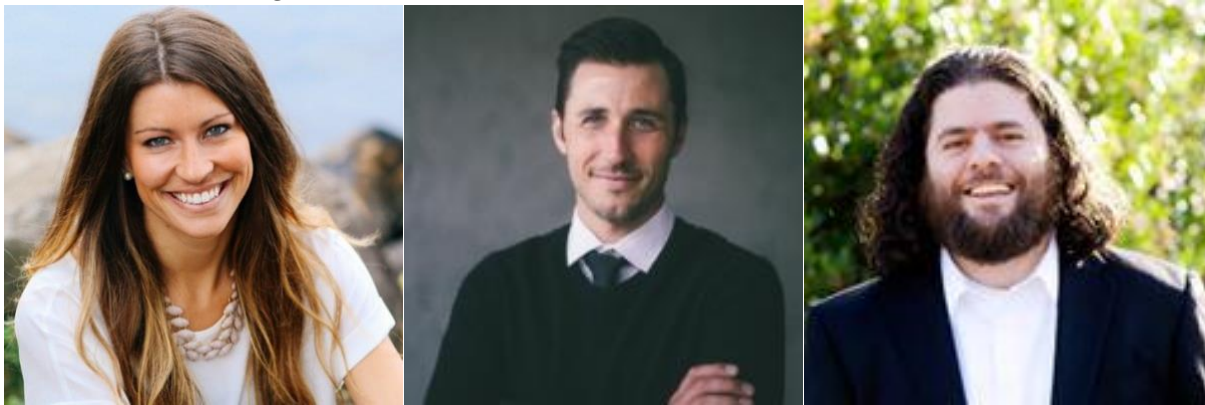
Our church and community have great psychological and social needs. A great opportunity to meet those needs is before our church. There are three reasons why the opportunity is ripe to address these needs by a *Counseling Initiative*.

First, Redeemer is committed to the gospel of grace that transforms lives.

By His grace, God has established Redeemer with a passion for the grace of Jesus and a commitment to proclaim the gospel to both believers and unbelievers. Redeemer's slogan "*Transforming People. Transforming Redmond*" speaks of our church's vision to see people's lives transformed by the gospel and our conviction that transformed people impact the families, workplaces and neighborhoods in which they live. *One of the primary ways we hope to see the gospel transform people's lives is by addressing their psychological and social alienation through the Counseling Initiative.*

Second, we have the support of the professional counselors in our congregation.

The Holy Spirit has brought gifted professional counselors into our congregation. They have training, gifts and a passion to address the psychological and relational needs of people in both our congregation and broader community. They are a great resource to equip us to be a congregation able to provide for basic emotional needs and deep relational connections. They are excited to help us launch Redeemer's Counseling Initiative. *Their presence and help is a critical factor in our being able to move forward with this Counseling Initiative.*



Third, there is a cultural "common ground" for professional counseling.

Third, professional counseling is a way for us to meet people in our community where they are. Counseling is a place where we have common ground with people in our community; people understand and appreciate the need for professional counseling. Since we live in an affluent area, many people will be able to often afford counseling. Making professional counseling affordable through offering scholarships is a very practical way we can help people in our community in their time of need. *The counseling initiative is a way that we as a church can be part of the common good of Redmond and the Eastside.*

And, Lord willing, over the years, God will use it to introduce many people to Jesus Christ and to Christian community.

The Approach

Redeemer seeks to offer a full-orbed approach to our social-relational and psychological needs through three levels of care.

Level One: Community Care

We are made for deep, loving connection with other people. Much of the care, counsel, comfort, support, wisdom and encouragement we need can and should be met at the level of Christian community through spiritual friendships, community groups, etc. In the future, Redeemer hopes to create groups that have as their special focus addressing specific needs like addictions, forgiveness, etc.

Level Two: Pastoral Counseling

Sometimes we need more focused help on issues we face. Redeemer provides pastoral counseling to help congregation members navigate through these issues. While pastors are not professionally trained counselors, they are able to offer biblical wisdom and life experience to help us navigate the struggles, “stuck-ness,” and brokenness in our lives. These are the essential elements of pastoral counseling:

- It is Bible/Gospel based
- It is limited (1-5 sessions)
- It is free

Level Three: Professional Counseling

Many psychological and relational needs are most effectively treated by professional counselors. Professional counselors that Redeemer partners with are able to fully hear the situation and story you experience, to help you more fully understand your story in the context of the Gospel and God’s Story, and to use their expertise and training to facilitate growth, change, and restoration.

Redeemer's counseling initiative will assist people in our congregation and city to get Christian counseling by providing scholarships to assist in paying for that counseling.

Our Values for Professional Counseling

The following values guide us as we discern what Professional Christian Counselors we will provide scholarships for.

Bible and Gospel centered

Counseling must be Bible and Gospel centered because the Bible is the foundation of what we know about God, ourselves, salvation and personal and relational healing. Through the Gospel – the good news of Jesus life, death and resurrection – people are set free from slavery to sin and brought into a new relationship with God and each other. Our counseling partners will be Christians and share our commitment to God’s Word and the Gospel as the foundation of their counseling practice, even when they are not practicing overtly “Christian counseling.”

Personal and Holistic

Counseling is intensely personal and therefore needs to be holistic to meet the needs of each particular person. Every person is different, and must be understood and counseled based on their particular context and needs. Since all truth is God’s truth, we affirm a holistic approach to addressing people’s issues. There is not just one “right” approach to counseling. The counseling offered should take into account the spiritual state of the person, the nature of their struggle, the gifts and training of the counselor, etc.

Redemptive and Transformative

The good news of Jesus redeems people. The truth of the Bible sets people free from false beliefs, guilt and shame, addictions, and unhealthy patterns of living and relating. The grace of Jesus helps us set boundaries, forgive others, step into our calling and live courageous lives. While only God can change a person’s heart, we hope and expect that the professional counseling we provide will have such a redemptive and transformative impact on people’s hearts lives and relationships.

People who would like to learn more about the process of applying for a counseling scholarship should contact Frank Huston who facilitates counseling scholarships at Counseling@redeemredmond.org.