



Biblical Counselling UK

Biblical Counselling Consultation Groups

1. Aim

To enable those in church leadership and/or pastoral ministry to gain case wisdom in biblical counselling and receive training to provide mentoring/supervision to those within their own churches (or other churches they are in partnership with) who are providing biblical counselling within their local church or who are involved in complex pastoral situations.

This is one way in which Biblical Counselling UK is working toward its vision

“That churches in the UK would have more pastorally skilled church leaders and members who are both providing ministry themselves as well as training and modelling ministry skills to others.”

2. Participants

Participation is by invitation only. Invitations will usually be extended by an individual's Certificate Course Tutor or Summer Intensive Tutor. Participants need to have completed the BC UK Certificate Course or specific CCEF modules online (to include as a minimum, Dynamics of Biblical Change, Helping Relationships and a Counselling Observation course or the BCUK Summer Intensive). Suitable candidates would normally be approached towards the end of the Certificate Course or following the summer intensive, or in the case of graduates of Oak Hill College, invited by Andrew Nicholls.

Participants will require the Senior Minister or Pastor of their church to confirm they agree to the individual's joining a BC UK Consultation Group for the benefit of pastoral care within their church. The minister and Participant must confirm they understand that pastoral responsibility and safeguarding for any cases discussed in the group remain the responsibility of the church leadership. Most Participants will be ministers/pastors, church elders, church women's workers or church pastoral care workers. Participants must complete an application form prior to being accepted into a BC UK Consultation Group. BC UK are keen to invite Participants whose church has not had a BCUK church-based intern.

It is not anticipated that these Consultation Groups will be open to Christians involved in parachurch organisations, with the possible exception of a mission agency.

Graduates of Oak Hill College will have the option of joining a group led by Andrew Nicholls and will need the support of their senior minister or eldership to participate.

3. Consultation Group Facilitators

The responsibility for appointing Consultation Group Facilitators (“Facilitators”) rests with the Executive Director of BC UK (after consultation with others). Facilitators must be Christian believers currently involved in providing individual pastoral care within their local church and must have received training through BC UK or CCEF. Normally this will include practical training in biblical counselling such as that provided through the BC UK church-based Intern scheme. Facilitators must have case wisdom of their own to draw on and would normally have at least 120 hours of supervised experience of providing biblical counsel.

Facilitators must be in agreement with the doctrinal and confessional statements of faith adopted by BC UK:

- [The UCCF Doctrinal Basis](#)
- [The Biblical Counseling Coalition Doctrinal Statement](#)
- [The Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#)

BC UK will require confirmation from their church minister that prospective Facilitators show fruit consistent with a godly character and growth in grace. If at any time the individual needs to step back from serving within the local church, BC UK requires them to inform the BC UK Executive Director and simultaneously step back from the BC UK Facilitator role.

Facilitators will usually be part of a biblical counselling peer supervision group or a similar mentoring group or be receiving regular individual biblical counselling supervision where they are regularly discussing cases with which they are involved. Facilitators are encouraged, where necessary, to discuss cases from their Consultation Group on an anonymous basis in their own supervisory group. They may also contact the BC UK Executive Director to help identify suitable additional support.

4. Purpose of the Group

The main purpose of the Group is to facilitate discussion between Participants so that relevant biblical wisdom can be shared. This wisdom will be drawn from Participants as well as the Facilitator. Personal spiritual growth and proper pastoral care is a vital aspect of the life of every biblical counsellor, but pastoral care of the Participants is not the main aim of these Consultation Groups. Such care will continue to be the responsibility of the local church.

Information shared within the Consultation Group must be presented in such a way that relevant details are shared but confidentiality is respected. All such information must remain confidential to the Group except where the Facilitator seeks additional wisdom as described above. Participants need not specifically inform counselees that they are discussing their case, but Participants are encouraged to make all their counselees aware that they will be seeking wisdom from their minister and from a group of other people involved in biblical counselling.

The Group will also model proper discussion of biblical counselling cases so that, in due course, Participants might offer a similar ministry within their own local church. This modelling may also encourage Participants to set up their own peer supervision groups (hopefully with Participants from their group) when this Consultation Group comes to an end.

5. Format

Participants are expected to be actively involved in counselling at least 3 individuals or couples. Each Consultation Group will have about four participants and one Facilitator, and will meet monthly through a virtual platform such as Google Hangouts or Zoom for one hour each month. During each meeting two cases will usually be presented and discussed, unless the Group agrees that one case is sufficiently complex to need the whole meeting. A rota will be agreed to allow each Participant to present a case every other month. Assuming a break in the summer, each Participant will get at least five opportunities to present a case each year.

Participants will generally be expected to agree to a year's commitment to provide continuity and improve the quality of the group discussions. The initial meeting of the Group will last two hours to allow an hour for introductions and for Participants to describe their current churches. Groups would typically start in September or January, but could start at any time in the year provided sufficient Participants and a suitable Facilitator can be identified.

6. Responsibility and Liability

Participants and Facilitators must each sign an agreement with Biblical Counselling UK before joining a Group. These agreements explain that the responsibility for the pastoral care and biblical counselling delivered by the Participant remains the responsibility of the local church where the care is provided. It also covers issues such as confidentiality, expectations of Participants, experience of the Facilitator, safeguarding and GDPR. The agreement limits any liability on the part of Biblical Counselling UK.

If a situation discussed within the Consultation Group raises safeguarding concerns, it is the responsibility of the Participant who brought the particular case to seek safeguarding advice within their own church and to follow that advice. For example if a women's worker discusses a case in a Consultation Group where domestic abuse has been identified, it will be the responsibility of that women's worker to speak to the safeguarding lead within her church, and if advised to seek external advice (eg from Thirtyone:eight or Christian Safeguarding Services) or to refer to a local statutory body, they must do so. If the Facilitator is concerned about the severity of the situation and is considering making a safeguarding referral themselves, then they should discuss this with the BCUK safeguarding lead. It might then be necessary for the Facilitator to contact the Participant individually to obtain identifiable information in order to make a safeguarding referral.

7. Cost

The 2021 Introductory rate for Participants is £10 per person per session. Fees will be invoiced in advance and if wished, can be payable in two, six-monthly instalments.

8. Records of Consultation Group meetings

A register of attendance must be kept by the Facilitator. Formal notes from each meeting will not be kept or circulated. Individual Facilitators may keep personal notes to help them follow up cases in future consultation meetings. The Facilitator should inform their Group if they plan to take such notes and these may only be kept while the Consultation Group is meeting (usually one year) and must then be destroyed. It is the responsibility of the Facilitator to keep notes securely.

9. Conclusion of a Consultation Group

At the end of the 10 sessions, Participants may request involvement in a BCUK Consultation Group for 12 months. This may mean continuing with the same group or joining a new group. Participants may request a change of Facilitator to gain experience from a broader range of people, but such a change will depend on availability.

10. Concerns about a Facilitator of a BCUK Consultation Group

If a participant has concerns about their Facilitator, we would encourage them, in line with Matthew 18, to raise their concerns directly with their Facilitator on a one-to-one basis. Safeguarding concerns may, however, make this direct approach inappropriate. In that case, or if an initial conversation with the Facilitator fails to resolve the Participant's concerns, the Participant must raise their concerns with the BCUK Executive Director.

If there are immediate safeguarding concerns about the Facilitator, the Participant is expected to seek safeguarding advice from their own church's safeguarding processes, respond appropriately and communicate in writing the safeguarding concerns, advice received and actions taken to the BCUK Executive Director and BC UK safeguarding lead.

Updated: 15 December 2020