

Comparison of Helping Relationships

One-to One Helping Modalities	People involved Who comes? Why?	Goal/Purpose Why stay?	Relational Process What happens?	Techniques How does it work?	Content What to talk about?	Assessment How is it going?	Professionalization
Spiritual Direction	A person who is mentally stable and mature and is seeking Mystery many name God	Deepen one's relationship with God; discover, attend to, and savor presence of God every day	Telling of stories; open responses; silence; waiting; noticing together God's guidance	Sharing; listening; discernment; and contemplative practices, e.g. prayer, surrendering ego to God's guidance	Daily life, relationships, deepest desires, struggles, prayer, God's presence and spiritual directee's responses	Discernment; mutually agreed-upon evaluation; deepening of relationship with Mystery many name God	Potential for fees or exchange of services; variety of training programs; not accredited; professional guild
Pastoral Care	A mentally stable parishioner or member of a congregation in need of specific pastoral services	To receive spiritual support in a time of need, transition, and growth	Clergy or spiritual leader offers a service; parishioner receives its spiritual benefits	Depends on the service needed. Examples may be: house visit, sick visit, liturgical service, programs, etc.	Revolves around the specific life events of the service being offered	Formal methods like boards, elders, bishops, etc., depend on community	Fees for services, not for visits; training usually in seminary; oversight depends on denominational structure
Pastoral Counseling	A mentally stable person with areas of dysfunction who seeks a faith perspective	Facilitate growth, personal integration, and freedom of choice through increased self-knowledge and awareness of God's healing within a faith context	Talking, getting it out; advice giving; support; resolving issues; client and counselor discern faith meaning together	Understand the source of the issues; provide techniques and ideas for how to become freer; model healthy interactions between client and counselor	Relationships; life experience related to areas of pain, shame, and guilt; discover God's presence in the healing process	Increased sense of freedom, independence	Fees might be covered by parish or by person; academic training programs; accredited institutions offer training
Psychological Counseling (developmental)	A mentally stable person with a specific problem seeking help finding a solution	Alleviate pain and disorder, resolve inner conflicts, and promote growth and integration	Talking; analysis; often learn "through" relating with the counselor	Get "under" the issues; teach or model techniques; problem solving, challenging	Relationships; life experience related to areas of pain, shame, and guilt; discover places for healing	Developmental comparison to others in similar stages; increase in personal freedom, independence	Usually involves fees; academic training programs; certification monitored by state and national standards

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Psychotherapy (abnormal psych)	A mentally unstable person; unable to function	Get back to—or achieve—healthy functioning; recover from trauma	Depends on form of therapy; return to stability and functioning	Will vary depending on the school of practice, e.g. psychosomatic, shock, hypnosis	Life dimensions related to the problem	Diagnosis by skilled practitioner	Usually involves fees; specialized training programs; certification monitored by state and national standards
Coaching or Mentoring	A mentally stable apprentice, often a “junior” seeking to model an admired “senior”	Set and attain specific goals in chosen area of life; with specific steps increase one’s capacity; learn a particular trade	Often marked by a specific time period based on goals	Intake; setting goals; assessing progress; imitating; teaching, networking; encouragement	Usually centered on a specific area like, health, career, relationships, etc. or balance between areas	Acquisition of skills; accomplish goals; vitality of relationships; life balance	Can involve fees or other benefits; variety of courses and training; areas of specialization; life experience
Discipleship	A mentally stable community member seeking to be formed in a particular faith tradition	Become familiar with one’s faith; be held accountable by others in living out one’s faith	Teaching; modeling; witnessing; evangelizing	Spreading the Word; personal testimony; communal gatherings	Components of faith such as beliefs and practices; assessing one’s growth and ability to witness	Adherence to disciplines; commitments to the community; increase in numbers; deepening personal engagement	Fees unlikely; often done by volunteers who are recognized and authorized by a particular community
Sponsorship	A mentally stable person seeking guidance from another individual who has experience in the tradition (e.g., AA*, RCIA**)	Become familiar with the tradition in order to choose whether to follow it or not	Teaching content such as practices, beliefs; sharing stories and experiences; learning from others in the past	Storytelling; accountability; checking in regularly and frequently	Sponsor relays information about the tradition; sponsee asks questions, integrates content into daily life choices	Sponsee chooses each and every day and also at a certain “conversion” point to belong to the group or tradition	Fees unlikely; stipends or donations from the sponsoring group possible; mostly done by volunteers who are recognized for their adherence to the group

* Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve-Step Recovery
** Rite for Christian Initiation for Adults

Comparison of helping relationships. Retrieved from <https://www.sdiworld.org/comparison-helping-relationships>, Spiritual Directors International. 2019.