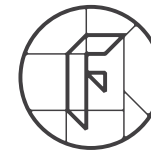




Annual Report

2024

FIELDSTONE COUNSELING



FIELDSTONE COUNSELING

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Fieldstone Counseling exists to engage with life's hardships through biblically-based, Christ-centered, and clinically informed counsel. We serve individuals, couples, and families as well as providing seminars and workshops for local churches and organizations. We exist and desire to help all come to know Jesus Christ and grow in their personal faith.



From the Executive Director

Dear friend of Fieldstone,

As I was combing through my files, I came upon a folder entitled, “Fundraiser- 10.6.17”. This was pre-Fieldstone Forward days; some of you were around for that first event held in a small classroom at Parkside Green. I remember reflecting on how grateful and humbled I felt for the handful of people who gathered that evening to listen to what I had to share about this new venture we were hoping to launch called Fieldstone Counseling.

The following years have only increased my deep, deep appreciation for all of you who have faithfully supported this small ministry start-up, whose vision to offer lasting hope for life’s hardships was not just a tagline but truly embodied what we believed we were called to do. Much has changed since that initial gathering, but one thing has not, and that is our resolute commitment to offer biblically-based, Christ-centered, and clinically informed counseling. That mission has been and will continue to animate all we do.

With this constant vision in mind, the changes to our offerings have been continually exciting. Post-covid, the opportunities to offer counseling outside of northeast Ohio have opened doors we had never dreamed possible. From a small team of six counselors, Fieldstone has grown to a full-fledged practice of forty-six counselors and a dozen staff members ministering to over a 1,000 people each month. In God’s kindness, Fieldstone is being invited to expand our counseling into classrooms, churches, universities, church planting networks, and local communities.

I, along with my team, stand back amazed at what the Lord is doing. In the next few years, I believe Fieldstone will have more opportunities to offer gospel-centered care to a broken and needy world. We are expanding and growing, but to do that we need your help. We need your partnership as we enter into messiness and brokenness of people’s lives. Your support—both prayer and financial—are an indispensable part of our work. “Thank you” is not enough.

Looking ahead,

Jonathan Holmes

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Grow With Us

What Brings You In Today?

WRITTEN BY
MELISSA AFFOLTER

When we think about taking a step toward counseling, whether researching options or submitting forms and scheduling an appointment, we may feel uncertain or anxious, and we may be second-guessing if we can muster up the courage to do it.

Those are normal apprehensions. Asking for help—admitting we are unable to affect change on our own—is a practice that requires a measure of tender self-awareness and deliberate trust in our Great Helper.



Bob Shull
Counselor

“A wise and careful counselor will be adept at offering support in early sessions as you identify the problems and concerns, followed by the ongoing work of counseling as you seek out change and growth.”

One of the hindrances to beginning the counseling process can be the confusion we face as we try to assess our concerns and come to conclusions about the areas where we most desire growth. Perhaps we've known for quite a while that something needs to change.

- Things “just don't seem right.”
- Loved ones have expressed concern.
- Disturbing thoughts and patterns linger unresolved.
- Chaos abounds, and hope feels beyond our grasp.
- Coping strategies or previous counseling techniques no longer help.
- Relationships feel complicated or marked by tension, sorrow, or confusion.
- A significant life change has prompted troubling emotions or distress.

How do we summarize our concerns? How can we identify particular impacts we experience or goals we might have that are prompting us to seek help?

We often collaborate with one another on our counseling team at Fieldstone, sharing ideas and resources to help us develop our skills and deepen our understanding of the counseling process. During a recent brainstorming session, several of our counselors offered various questions that might help narrow down areas of concern as you think about the possibility of how counseling could benefit you in your current season.

Contributions from Fieldstone counselors Ian Tully, Jonathan Holmes, Danielle Ware, Richard Buesch, Lori Tanaka, and Rachel Dunn.

HERE AND NOW

- What's hard for you right now?
- Tell me what it's like to be you today.
- What's the most challenging thing you are facing right now?
- You have a million things to consume your time and energy every day, yet you feel like now is the time to come to counseling. What's driving that decision, and why now versus kicking the can down the road?

YOUR INNER WORLD

- What is troubling you and your world?
- What do you daydream about?
- What do you find your heart and mind dwelling on most often?
- What's working, what is not?
- Where are you experiencing the most frustration?
- Are there areas of grief, loss, relational or emotional distress?
- What keeps you awake in the middle of the night?
- What is life like, given the situation you are in?
- Say your counseling season has come to an end. What would it look like for you to look back and say, “Counseling was so helpful; I'm a different person now than before.”?

PAST HURTS, WOUNDS, OR TRAUMA EXPERIENCES

- Do you find yourself experiencing heightened anxiety, emotional distress, anger, or other triggering reactions when you think about or put yourself in proximity to particular situations or people related to a past relationship or event?
- It is important to distinguish between conflict and abuse, which may be a part of what brings people to counseling sometimes. If you aren't sure what you are experiencing in your relationship, but you know there is distress or confusion, Darby Strickland's book, *Is It Abuse?: A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* might be a helpful starting place.

RELATIONSHIPS

- How do your closest companions experience you? Have you asked them?
- Do you experience unresolved conflict or confusion in any particular relationships?
- Describe your support system or close community. If things took a hard turn, who would you reach out to?

INTENSITY AND IMPACT

- Which wound hurts the most? Which issue feels like a good place to begin because it holds the most history or lays the foundation for other issues?
- How frequently do you notice “ways of being” that you desire to see changed?



You may believe you need to have a clear understanding of the problem in order to ask for help, but sometimes, we need a reassuring presence to guide us as we grapple with the complexities of our troubles in order to narrow our focus. A wise and careful counselor will be adept at offering support in early sessions as you identify the problems and concerns, followed by the ongoing work of counseling as you seek out change and growth.

If you have found yourself wondering if now is the right time to start the counseling process, our team of counselors at Fieldstone would be grateful for the opportunity to come alongside you with biblical hope and help in this season. We have forty-four experienced and skilled counselors and residents, providing counseling services at our offices in Green and Lakewood and remote options in various time zones. We also offer one-time consultations for those wanting to learn more about the kinds of counseling services we offer or for help determining if one of our counselors is the right fit for your needs. 

Melissa Affolter has served in counseling and women's discipleship for over twenty years, in local church settings and non-profit organizations.

ReStoried

ReStoried speaks into the trauma responses that those who have experienced abuse may sense in their lives, offering a counselor-led group context for processing. While there are distinct ways that different forms of abuse impact us depending on the type of abuse, all forms of abuse impact how we view ourselves, God, and the world around us. In ReStoried, we seek to address a handful of abuse dynamics, whether the abuse was physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or spiritual.

- Recognizing impact by learning more about how we have processed what has happened to us.
- Affirming “normal responses to abnormal circumstances and events.”
- Using appropriate descriptors and increasing our vocabulary to name what we experienced.
- Considering the whole person by noticing and honoring who God has created us to be, how abuse has distorted our perception of those things, and how we can grow in our experience of relief and recovery.
- Processing what it means to enter into community with others again, particularly when community has harmed us by ignoring, minimizing, or otherwise dismissing our experiences of abuse.

OVERVIEW

ReStoried is a counseling support group for those who have experienced abuse and the impact of trauma.

FORMAT

Before each meeting participants can engage with 30 minutes of pre-recorded content. Then each month the group will meet for a live 60-minute group discussion with the counselor facilitating.

AIMS

Melissa has developed the ReStoried content from a Christ-centered theological framework and clinically informed perspective, giving careful consideration to the varieties of backgrounds represented in the groups. Instruction and group discussion seeks to honor the dignity of participants as embodied souls in need of a whole-person approach to care.

FOR COUNSELEES

The ReStoried model is intended for a particular season in the life of the person who has experienced abuse and/or the impact of trauma. These groups are not intended for those who want to learn more about abuse or trauma, or how to help those who have experienced abuse. The groups are not for engaging in “talk therapy,” providing resources to flee an abusive relationship, or finding specialized therapeutic treatments.



Melissa Affolter
Counselor, Director of Content
& Senior Counseling Supervisor

Jess Dotson
Volunteer

KRISTI, FORMER RESTORIED PARTICIPANT

“Ten women. All carrying such deep wounds for so long. Several of us were not young, and life has not been kind. Gentle testimonies. Tearful recitations of seasons of deep, complex pain. And so much Jesus. Each of us, hanging to the hem of his robe praying it would be enough to sustain, to heal, to bring hope when the cost had already been so high.”

Learn With Us

Concatenation

WRITTEN BY
CRYSTAL KERSHAW

Concatenation. When you learn a cool theological word like concatenation, you want to drop it in conversation all the time! Of course, there aren't many contexts that concatenation fits right into. Throwing it around also sounds pretty pretentious, so I've contained my use of concatenation to sessions. As it represents a key aspect of growth in sanctification, it's quite useful there.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, concatenation is "a series of interconnected things or events." I learned about concatenation from my dear friend, Jonathan Edwards. The Puritan preacher and I have a rather complicated relationship. I taught Edwards' sermons for years in my American Literature classes. Try getting a bunch of juniors to understand the nuances of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and you'll understand why the relationship was complicated! There is more to Edwards than fire and brimstone, however, and as a counselor he has taught me so much. Concatenation has given me a new perspective on growth.



Edwards teaches on concatenation in many of his works, but his book, *Charity and Its Fruits*, outlines his view of how God works through it in our lives. That work discusses concatenation as a mechanism of sanctification. In that light, my counselees and I often discuss it in connection to the Fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5. When we talk about the Fruit of the Spirit, we begin with John 15.

John 15 is one of those passages I've often struggled with. For many years I read John 15's beautiful illustration of the vine and the branches with frustration and sorrow. Each time I thought about the metaphor, I was confronted with the fact that the fruit at the end of my branch wasn't good. If the fruit referenced in John 15 represented the Fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), I had a problem. Reading John 15 reminded me of the meager state of my fruit. Each time I thought about it I took a guilt trip. I needed to be more patient, more self-controlled, more gentle, and kind. Fruit problems pained me.

Then one day, in God's providence, I was listening to the radio when a sermon on John 15 came on. I do not know who preached that sermon, but he outlined the passage in a way I had never considered. Jesus obviously refers to a grapevine in John 15. On a grapevine, the vine presents vertically with roots that go deep into the soil. Those roots carry the moisture

and nutrients that nourish the plant. The branch of the vine is connected on top, and generally trained horizontally on a wire or fence. The fruit of the vine, which is the cluster of grapes, appears at the end of the branch.

The radio pastor mentioned that when most of us think about the vine and the branches, we immediately think about our fruit. We think that we have to work on our fruit or that our fruit is feeble and we need to do something about it. We feel defeated by our lack of fruit. When we have that perspective, we're not reading John 15 correctly. Not many of us are vinedressers, but if we were, we would realize that a fruit problem occurs only when there is a disruption in the branch's connection to the vine. Fruit problems are actually connection problems. The primary purpose of the branch is connection to the vine. As connection with the vine strengthens, the fruit will grow.

This perspective wildly encourages me. I can work on my connection to the vine, through time in God's Word, prayer, and active participation in the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Stronger connections to the vine lead to more abundant fruit.

That's where Edwards and the concept of concatenation comes in. Edwards teaches that when the Fruit of the Spirit grows, it grows in unison. If we are looking for a larger grape of patience, it will come as we strengthen our



“The primary purpose of the branch is connection to the vine. As connection with the vine strengthens, the fruit will grow.”

connection to the vine. When that grape grows, the rest of the bunch, representing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, will also grow, in concatenation. They will all grow at the same pace, and they will grow to give God, the Vine, glory.

So feel free to start dropping the word concatenation around in your conversations too! Concatenation is another way to see the imputed righteousness of Christ at work in our lives. As we strengthen our connections to the Vine, we can expect a beautiful harvest.

Thank you for serving Christ with the fruit of giving. Your support fuels the ministry of Fieldstone Counseling, and your gifts help us connect others with the hope of Jesus Christ! Your donations make a difference in our ongoing ministry of hope and help. Thank you! 🙏

Crystal Kershaw is a Christ-follower, wife, mother, and friend. As a Fieldstone counselor, she is passionate about connecting others with the truth of God's miraculous power and sustaining presence.

Standards of Care

Fieldstone Counseling Standards of Care is a 12-month course designed to offer both continuing education for seasoned biblical counselors as well as an introduction and enculturation to a biblical counseling model.

After completion of the course, counselors will be able to:

- Understand the biblical and historical roots of biblical counseling as well as the broader landscape of Christian counseling
- Articulate a historic, confessional, Reformed view of the sufficiency of Scripture
- Have a holistic view of the counselee that realizes we are created as embodied souls
- Minister Scripture in counseling and understand the overall process of biblical change
- Engage with mental illness, DSM-V diagnoses, and medication conversations
- Carefully and wisely examine their posture toward secular psychology and have a paradigm to utilize secular concepts
- Understand the dynamics of abuse and how trauma impacts counselees

OVERVIEW

Standards of Care is a 12-month course designed to offer both continuing education for seasoned biblical counselors as well as an introduction and enculturation to a biblical counseling model.

FORMAT

These twelve sessions can be taken individually or together as a course. Each session will feature a lecture, a recommended reading list, an assigned reading, and an optional time of discussion and Q&A.

AIMS

This course could be used for several purposes:

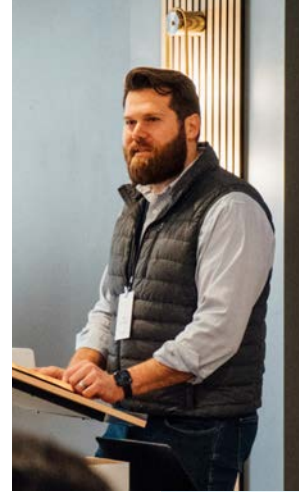
- Pastors and ministry leaders can use this course to train and equip lay counselors.
- Lay individuals seeking to learn and grow in counseling ministry.
- Clinical counselors can use this course to inform and align their counseling to a biblical counseling approach.
- Counseling centers executive directors or counseling pastors could use these courses to facilitate group discussion and training.
- Established and seasoned counselors will be refreshed and challenged as they further their education.



PASTOR AARON CHOI,
BEREAN MISSION CHURCH

“Going through Standards of Care has been such a blessing to members from our church who have desired to learn and be equipped in biblical counseling. Those new to biblical counseling, as well as those who have received previous training in other contexts, have benefited tremendously from the course content. We are especially grateful for the careful and practical ways each topic has been addressed, and the foundation the class is laying in helping us to build a counseling culture throughout our church body.”

Team Retreat



February 2024



Fieldstone Team Retreat
February 2024

Partner With Us



Jonathan Holmes
Executive Director
& Counselor

A History of Fieldstone

WRITTEN BY
JONATHAN HOLMES

WHO WE ARE AND
WHY WE EXIST

One of the most frequent questions I get asked is this, “How do you launch a counseling center?” If you had asked me that question nearly six years ago, I would have struggled to put together an informed response. Despite that, Fieldstone Counseling was launched in January of 2017, and it was officially incorporated in August of that year. How did that come about, and more importantly why did it come about?

In the fall of 2015, the staff and elder team of Parkside Green spent a day away praying and imagining a future where our church could have an impact for the gospel in our community. Parkside's mission is to see unbelieving people become committed followers of Jesus Christ. We desired to reach our community with the hope of the gospel—that Christ Jesus saves sinners!

After many conversations and the identification of several objectives, it became

clear that one of the ways we could reach and have an impact for our community was through faith-based counseling. Parkside Church Bainbridge and Green had a strong lay counseling ministry, and we received numerous requests on a regular basis for counseling from both the community and other local churches. Having to turn those requests away was both heartbreaking and disheartening, but also served as a stark reminder of the immense need there was for biblical counseling in our area.

We desired to reach our community with the hope of the gospel—that Christ Jesus saves sinners!



Danielle Ware
Counselor & Remote
Counselor Supervisor
Assistant

In the summer of 2016, myself and one of my interns (now colleague and fellow counselor), Crystal Kershaw, embarked on a robust study and examination of counseling center models both locally and abroad. We surveyed the counseling centers we believed were striving hard and well to offer solid counsel to those in need of help. We interviewed, we read, we researched. We endeavored to learn from their mistakes as well as benefit from their knowledge. During that time, those people were incredibly gracious with both their time and information.

By the end of the summer, Crystal had a well-composed overview of the landscape of biblical and Christian counseling, and we felt confident we could put together a model based here in Northeast Ohio.

In January of 2017, we earnestly began the process of laying the groundwork for Fieldstone. Over the next six months, there was a flurry of meetings, numerous amounts of paperwork, and a ton of prayer that went into preparing everything necessary to launch a counseling

The workload to prepare Fieldstone was immense, but also a joy. To this day, we are grateful for the many individuals who played a part in helping us lay that solid foundation.



Barry Cureton
Counselor

center. This entailed partnering with a local firm in our area (Each + Every) to research and design our logo, name, branding, and website. From applying to the IRS for our non-profit status to forming a board of directors to govern Fieldstone, the workload to prepare Fieldstone was immense, but also a joy. To this day, we are grateful for the many individuals who played a part in helping us lay that solid foundation.

Since our opening, the growth has been steady and at times more than we ever anticipated.



When we officially opened our doors for counseling (presently at our Green Office) we were not sure what to expect. We had a small team of counselors (six total) and no staff! Within days, requests for counseling came in, and as they say—the rest is history. In those first few months, the learning curve was steep and yet the excitement was real. We believed in Fieldstone's vision and mission:

Offering lasting hope through life's hardships through biblically based, Christ centered, and clinically-informed counseling

Since our opening, the growth has been steady and at times more than we ever anticipated. We quickly grew from one location in Green to adding three other locations—Fieldstone Lakewood, Fieldstone Bainbridge, and Fieldstone Lake County. Our small team of counselors grew from 6 to 23, and we now have a wonderful

administrative staff of nearly a dozen individuals who help support the work of our counselors behind the scenes.

My team is frequently (consistently and constantly you might say) in awe of what the Lord is doing at Fieldstone. We echo the words of the psalmist, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." (Ps. 118:23) Our counselors, staff, and board (now 8 members strong) are committed now more than ever to offering quality counseling to our community, our state, and our world. Fieldstone Counselors now offer on average 700 sessions a month to people locally and across the globe.

Fieldstone counselors provide and consult with churches, organizations, and schools to help in a variety of ways. From complex case consultation to working with other churches to help grow lay counseling ministries, our counselors stand



Jonathan Holmes is the Founder and Executive Director of Fieldstone Counseling.

ready to help. We love and support the local church in all we do. We understand and realize that the local church is a primary location and vehicle for God to grow his people. We weep and rejoice when those we counsel come to saving faith in Christ, and we mourn and grieve when those broken by sin and suffering come through our doors.

What we once believed would be a counseling center for the Akron-Canton community has now expanded through the blessing of the Lord. Our staff and counselors remind each other regularly that apart from Christ and his word, we have nothing! Our strength and counsel come from him. Our prayer is that when people leave their sessions with us, they comment not on how amazing we are...how wise we are...or even how clever we are...but on how amazing the person and work of Jesus Christ is! That is our ultimate hope! 🙏

Supporting Partners

Fieldstone depends on partnerships with churches, Christian schools and universities, businesses, and ministry organizations to sustain our work.

Ministry and Business Partners

THE CHAPEL IN AKRON

PARKSIDE BAINBRIDGE

PARKSIDE GREEN

THE CHAPEL IN NORTH CANTON

GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

LAKEWOOD NEW LIFE CHURCH

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

PARKSIDE HEIGHTS CHURCH

PARKSIDE WESTSIDE

CITY CHURCH CLEVELAND

TRINITY CHURCH OF DAYTON

LOCAL CHURCH

BRANDYWINE GRACE CHURCH

OLD NORTH CHURCH

THE CHURCH AT WEST CREEK

GATEWAY CHURCH

EVERMORE COMMUNITY CHURCH

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH (MT)

LEROY CHAPEL

LAKESIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FBC NEWCASTLE

ONTARIO CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MISSION VIEW CHURCH

DOXA CHURCH (CA)

LINWORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

REDEEMER CHURCHES & MINISTRIES

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY

HRM ENTERPRISES, INC

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CROSSINGS

WIERS FARM

YOUTH FOR CHRIST OF GREATER CLEVELAND

HAMMOND CONSTRUCTION

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NATE HAMBLIN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
MINISTRY RESOURCING,
FELLOWSHIP OF
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

“As a fellowship of churches committed to establishing reproducing churches worldwide we are committed to the health of our pastors and ministry leaders. We are beyond grateful for Fieldstone’s ability and willingness to serve our leaders with counselors who are rooted in Scripture, focused on Jesus, and have a depth of training and expertise in mental, emotional and relational health.”

Team90

We believe that quality counseling and teaching thrive in a community rooted in wisdom and support. With the rising costs of providing these vital services, we're asking those who were previously

part of "Team 75," giving \$75 per month, to consider increasing their gift to \$90 or more per month and become "Team90" as a way to help us continue meeting the needs of those we serve.

AS A MONTHLY GIVER OF \$90 OR MORE, YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- **Monthly Prayer Zoom Calls:** Join us in prayer each month as we lift up our team and those we serve and share in the power of collective prayer.
- **Exclusive Workshops:** Attend special virtual workshops throughout the year, hosted by the Fieldstone Counseling Team, designed to deepen your understanding of the biblical counseling landscape and connect with other supporters.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF MONTHLY GIVERS AND MAKE AN IMPACT

Your ongoing support is crucial in helping us provide affordable biblical counseling to all who seek it. By increasing your monthly gift, you're directly impacting lives and supporting our mission of healing and hope.



JOIN TEAM90 TODAY.
TOGETHER, WE CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Grace Bikis
Counselor

Reflect With Us

ALL STATISTICS
FROM 7/23-7/24



1,140 New
counselees

12,102 Counseling
sessions

As of 2024, we are
blessed to serve
counselees from across
the nation in all 50 states
and across the globe
in 26 countries.



Fieldstone
Team

41 Counselors

05 Residents

13 Staff Members

08 Board Members

Support

\$126,052 Scholarships
Awarded



38 Team75
Donors

70 Monthly
Donors

35 Supporting
Ministry Partners

32 Equipping
Events

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daughter



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TRUTHFORLIFE
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Fieldstone Counseling

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