

◀ **Unity South Central Region**

Exploring ETHICS

www.unitysouthcentral.org

What would you do IN THIS CASE?

- An elderly couple comes to your office after Sunday service.
- They are both suffering from terminal diseases and have months to live.
- They are long-time members.
- They tell you they are going to go home, close the garage door, and leave the car running.
- They want you to support their grown children afterward.
- They ask you to keep what they've shared confidential.





DISCUSS

Confidentiality:

Clergy can be liable for disclosing communications shared with them in confidence without the permission of the counselee.



ETHICS

(also called moral philosophy,) is the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad or morally right and wrong. The term is applied to any system or theory of moral values or principles.

How do we define moral values?



MORAL VALUES

practices or teachings :
modes of conduct

Moral EXAMPLES

Virtually every society has well-established norms dealing with matters such as

- family organization and individual duties,
- sexual activity,
- property rights,
- personal welfare,
- truth-telling, and promise keeping.


Among all societies, some moral rules are nearly universal—such as those forbidding murder, theft, and **infidelity**.

Our Societal Standards are set by UNITY WORLDWIDE MINISTRIES

When did you last review
UWM's code of ethics?

<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/codes-ethics>

UWM'S CODE OF ETHICS COVERS

- 
- Beliefs
 - Self-Care
 - Authority and Power
 - Relationship with Others
 - Confidentiality
 - Sexual conduct
 - Ethics review system
 - And more

UWM's Code of Ethics says:

III-E Confidentiality

1. I am honor bound to hold sacred all confidences reposed in me, except if a confidence reveals that the person confiding may pose a threat to self or others;

I will abide by law mandating or authorizing reporting to agencies.

In addition, where law shields from liability voluntary disclosure of suspected possible child abuse, elder abuse, dependent adult abuse, or animal abuse, I will make a good faith report of such abuse to the appropriate agencies whether or not reporting is mandated by law.

The background features a dark blue field with intricate, glowing red lines that form a series of overlapping, wavy patterns, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A small globe icon is positioned to the right of the word "TO".

**IT'S YOUR JOB TO
KNOW THE UWM
CODE OF ETHICS.**

Pastoral Care AND LAW

Churches face a number of legal risks when they offer counseling services by ministers or laypersons. These include negligent selection, retention, or supervision of a counselor who engages in sexual misconduct or negligent counseling. A church also may be vicariously liable for a counselor's failure to report child abuse, breach of confidentiality, and breach of a fiduciary relationship.

Source: Church Law & Tax

MENTAL HEALTH LAWS

Mental health licensing laws vary from state to state. Generally, pastors employed in a church are free to provide pastoral counseling to church members and are exempt from state licensing.

States differ, however, in their exemption from licensing for lay persons who will provide lay counseling on behalf of a church. Some state mental health licensing laws set restrictions relating to:

- Licensing exemptions if you charge a fee for counseling
- Providing or advertising pastoral and lay counseling services to the general public
- Using certain titles or descriptions of service

Source: Church Law & Tax

Pastoral Counseling?

In their Youth Worker's Guide, Van Pelt and Hancock recommend that **no use of the term counseling should be allowed unless staff are formally trained and currently licensed to provide clinical counseling services.**

Instead, they suggest using terms like helping relationship, discipling relationship, mentoring relationship, coaching, or pastoral care.



What are your STATE LAWS

- Secretary of State
- Mental Health
Department
- Licensure Laws
- Certification Laws
- Attorney

Who is affected by UWM'S CODE OF ETHICS?

In harmony with Unity Worldwide Ministries Ethics Policy, this Code of Ethics applies to the following:

- All credentialed leaders
 - Licensed or ordained Unity ministers
 - Licensed Unity teachers
- All non-credentialed leaders serving in the capacity of a credentialed Unity leader
- All ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All member ministries and expansion ministries
- All members of the UWM Board of Trustees
- All UWM staff members
- All individuals certified to serve as consultants to our ministries
- All members of UWM Ministry Teams



**DO YOU HAVE A
CODE OF ETHICS
FOR YOUR STAFF/
MINISTRY?**

Mid-month CONVERSATION

Real Life Situations like:

Abortion decision - Down Syndrome Baby

End-of-Life Decisions

Trans Debates

Physician-Assisted Suicide

The use of donated gambling proceeds or
accepting a tithe from a lottery win

Confessional Issues