



## Counselling Benefit Policy

### **Purpose and Intent**

Wallenpaupack Church has partnered with Foundations Christian Counseling (i.e., Foundations) to provide subsidized, professional Christian counseling (i.e., the benefit) for eligible individuals and/or couples who regularly attend Wallenpaupack Church. The church hopes that subsidizing the cost of counseling sessions will help to remove barriers for those who could benefit from such services. This reflects Wallenpaupack Church's commitment to the holistic wellness of those who come through their doors, recognizing the inextricable link between spiritual and mental wellness. This investment also aligns with Wallenpaupack Church's mission to support spiritual growth.

### **Eligibility**

- Must have attended Wallenpaupack Church for at least 3 months
- Must attend regularly, defined as at least 3 out of 4 weeks per month
- Ongoing regular church attendance is required for ongoing eligibility

### **Application Process**

- Interested individuals should complete the online benefit application form
- Applications are reviewed by the church staff person designated as the Wallenpaupack/Foundations liaison and a determination is made within one week of the request. If an application is being denied, a second reviewer from church leadership (paid staff, Board of Administration, etc.) must be brought into the decision to affirm/reject the denial. All decisions will be documented.
- Completion of any intake, application processes as proposed by Foundations

### **Counseling Terms**

- The benefit will cover 50% of the intake and 50% of 5 counseling session costs, with adjustments possible on a case-by-case basis.
- Upon completion of the initial sessions, benefit recipients may apply for a renewal, subject to a review process to assess ongoing need, eligibility, and funding availability.
- If the renewal is approved, the recipient may receive another 5-session block.
- Each approved 5-session block must be used within 6 months of the block's first session. Unused sessions within the 6-month period will be forfeited.

- Missing 2 sessions results in forfeiting the balance of the benefit.

### **Confidentiality**

- Information shared during *counseling sessions* is confidential and benefit recipients can trust that their privacy will be respected and protected per the terms of their signed releases with Foundations.
- The Pastoral Release offered by Foundations is *optional* and Wallenpaupack Church is committed to adhering to the terms of that release if signed by the benefit recipient.
- The Release of Information for *billing*, required by Foundations and Wallenpaupack Church for purposes of administering the benefit, allows the Church to limited pieces of information as outlined in the release, strictly as related to attendance, billing, etc.

### **Commitment to Support**

Wallenpaupack Church is committed to provide a supportive environment, fostering well-being through their partnership with Foundations.

### **Communication Protocol**

Clear communication between benefit recipients, the church, and Foundations is essential for a seamless partnership. Regular updates and open dialogue, as allowed by any signed releases, contribute to the success of the program.

### **Review and Update**

This policy will be reviewed every 6 months or when the church's subsidy balance is 75% spent, whichever is sooner.

### **Emergency Situations**

In case of emergencies, participants should contact appropriate emergency services or hotlines. This partnership does not substitute for immediate crisis intervention. Crisis intervention is appropriate for when someone is (or is around someone who is) homicidal, suicidal, and/ or is subjected to a dire situation where they are failing to thrive.

- Wayne County Crisis Hotline: 1-833-557-3224
- Pike County Crisis Hotline: 570-992-0879
- VIP for Wayne and Pike Counties (domestic and intimate partner violence): 570-253-HELP
- National Suicide Hotline: 988

Adopted on: February 19, 2024

Adopted by: Board of Administration, Wallenpaupack Church