

Pastoral Skills Training Family Life Course
 Lesson 6: Pastoral Conversation
 Instructor Guide

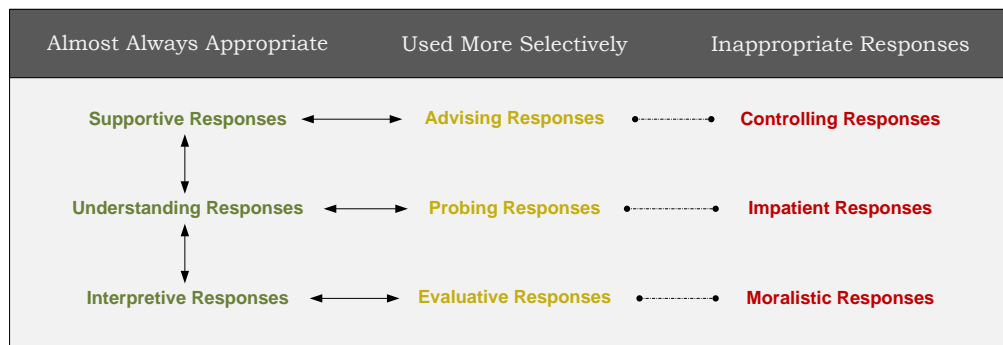
Lesson Information	
Lesson Objectives	Describe the effective structure for a pastoral conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the types of counselor responses in an effective pastoral conversation. • Identify the types of conversations used in pastoral counseling. • Identify the three phases in the structure of a conversation.
Class Time: Presentation	Approximately 1 hour
Class Time: Discussion	Approximately 1 hour
Lesson Materials	
Webinar Presentation	Page 2
Webinar Discussion	Page 8
PowerPoint Slides for Webinar Presentation	06-slides.ppt
Supporting Lesson Materials	
Student Guide	The student advance sheet containing the objectives of the lesson and the materials required for participation
Student Readings	<i>How to Construct a Conversation</i> (Donald Capps) 06-How-to-Construct-a-Conversation.pdf
	Case Study 06-case-study.pdf

Webinar Presentation		
Title	Description	Slide Number
Objectives	<p>At the end of this presentation, you should be able to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the effective structure for a pastoral conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the types of counselor responses in an effective pastoral conversation. ○ Identify the types of conversations used in pastoral counseling. ○ Identify the three phases in the structure of a conversation. 	Slide 2
The Purpose of the Pastoral Conversation	<p>Pastoral counseling is composed of a variety of techniques, methods, goals, and tools. But at its heart pastoral counseling is nothing more or less than a conversation between a person and his or her pastor. Because it plays such a central—albeit seemingly mundane—role, it deserves attention.</p>	Slide 3
	<p>Question: <i>What are the elements of a good or rich conversation?</i></p>	
Counselor Responses	<p>The counselor’s responses have the biggest effect on the direction the conversation takes, and on how the conversation reflects good listening. Effective counselor responses can be categorized into six types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Understanding • Interpretive • Probing • Evaluative • Advising 	Slide 4
Counselor Responses: Tone-	<p>As you review the various types of responses below, ask students to come up with and share examples.</p>	Slide 5

Setting Phase	<p>The following types of responses are used mostly in the tone-setting phase of the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive: Responses indicating the intent to reassure, undergird, or inspire, and perhaps reduce the counselee’s intensity of feeling. Used during the tone-setting phase of the conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “Hang in there ...” ▪ Ex: “You’re showing a lot of courage right now.” • Understanding: Responses indicating the intention to communicate understanding and, in effect, to inquire whether this understanding is accurate. Reflects empathy for the client’s feelings and attitudes. Understanding responses are also used in the initial rapport-building phase of the conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “I can tell you’re furious about this ...” ▪ Ex: “You must have been terrified!” • Interpretive: Responses indicating the intent to teach, to impart meaning, or explain dynamics (the <i>why</i>) of a person’s thoughts, feelings, or behavior. Used during the tone-setting phase of the conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “As upset as Bill was, we might not want to take his words too seriously ...” ▪ Ex: “When our children are threatened, we sometimes do things that make us say later: What was I thinking?” 	
Counselor Responses: Exploratory Phase	<p>The following types of responses are used mostly in the tone-setting phase of the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probing: Responses indicating the intent to query, to seek further information, or provoke further discussion along a certain line. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “Can you tell me what emotion is behind those words?” ▪ Ex: “What happened then?” 	Slide 6

- **Evaluative:** Responses expressing a judgment concerning the relative appropriateness, correctness, or effectiveness of the client’s thoughts, feelings, or behavior.
 - **Ex:** “It took a lot of courage to confess like that ...”
 - **Ex:** “I’m not sure that action was going to achieve what you wanted it to achieve ...”
 - **Ex:** “I think that was a very appropriate thing to say.”
- **Advising:** Responses indicating the intent to recommend certain approaches, actions, attitudes, or beliefs (or to recommend against them). Offers some type of constructive suggestion for coping with a problem.
 - **Ex:** “You might want to think it through a bit more before doing that.”
 - **Ex:** “I really think your idea to give her a gift might be a great thing to try.”

Correlations Between Response Types



This chart shows the correlation between the various types of responses, particularly between those used in the tone-setting phase and the exploratory phase of the conversation.

- **Supportive-Advising:** If the supportive response is intended to reassure the other person, the advising response goes beyond reassurance by offering recommendations. Crossing the line into advising should always be done with caution.

Slide 7

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding-Probing: While an understanding response is intended to communicate and confirm the minister’s understanding, the probing response suggests that there are aspects to the problem or issue that are not yet understood – and the person starts to ask “why?” A probing response during the tone-setting phase could make the client defensive. • Interpretive-Evaluative: If the interpretive response is meant to teach or explain, the evaluative response takes this a step further and expresses a judgment on the other person’s thoughts, feelings, or behavior. 	
<p>Inappropriate Response Types</p>	<p>There are also responses that are simply not conducive to a good, productive conversation between the counselor and the client. These correlate to the other responses, but are found further down the continuum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling: A counselor might take a few steps beyond the advising response to provide a response that attempts to force a client down a specific path. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “Why do you come to me to talk if you aren’t going to take my advice?” ▪ Ex: “I know you’re not dumb enough to do that ...” • Impatient: An impatient response is based on understanding, but it attempts to cut out critical steps in getting the client from point A to point B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “How long are we just going to keep talking about this before you will act?” • Moralistic: A moralistic response attempts to lay down a solid judgment even though there may not be sufficient evidence to support it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ex: “The Bible says “The wages of sin is death.” Why would you expect to act that way and get anything different?” ▪ Ex: “So you thought maybe God wasn’t watching when 	<p>Slide 8</p>

	you did that?”	
Types of Conversations	<p>There are several different types of conversation. Understanding these types allows you to be aware of what type of conversation is desirable in a given situation, and then unobtrusively steer the conversation so that it takes that form.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turning-point: A person is at a junction in life, trying to make a decision, and feels that a talk with the counselor may help to bring clarity and identify an appropriate course of action. 2. Shared self-disclosure: The counselor and the client move to a new level of mutual understanding because either one or both reveals something about oneself that was not previously known. 3. Growing edge exchange: The interests of one person and the competence of the other are in such resonance that both learn from the conversation. 4. Rehearsal: Conversation that enables the participants to share, celebrate, or remember certain events 	Slide 9
The Structure of the Conversation	<p>While it may seem like a simple concept, it’s important to recognize that the pastoral conversation should have a beginning, middle, and end. It begins with the formulation of the situation, continues with the exploration of the situation, and concludes with some type of resolution of the problem. In the conversation, these phases include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone-setting phase: In this phase, information is gathered that sets the stage for the conversation. Here the counselor can determine what type of conversation it is and what direction it needs to take. • The exploratory phase: In this phase, the counselor and the client travel together to an unknown region (whether it represents feelings, relationships, history, etc.) to learn more about it. • The resolution phase: The resolution phase begins when both the counselor and the client begin to have a sense that their exploration has been as productive as it is likely to be on that occasion. A decision is 	Slide 10

	then made as to what the next step or future action is.	
Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What kinds of questions might you ask, or what statements might you make, during the tone-setting phase?</i> • <i>What about the exploratory phase?</i> • <i>How will it be beneficial for you to know and recognize the types of counselor responses in a conversation?</i> 	Slide 11
Ask for questions.		
Give reading and case study assignments to prepare for the discussion webinar.		
End webinar.		

Case Study

C: Chaplain

S: Soldier

Setting: Chaplain is sitting at his desk typing, looking at the screen. Soldier knocks on the door frame.

S: [*Smiling.*] Forgive me, father. I have sinned!

C: Oh no, I better clear my calendar, and probably call the psychiatrist. Once I hear your confession, I may never be the same ...

S: [*Flops down into the chair.*] You got a minute?

C: Of course. Closed door or open door minute?

S: Closed door this time, if you can.

C: Of course. [*Moves over, closes door—says something out the door as he closes it to the CH Asst. Then moves back and sits down in a chair next to the Soldier.*] So what's going on?

S: [*Smiling.*] I'm afraid I really stepped in it this time, Chap.

C: Uh, oh, tell me about it.

S: Well, I kinda ... cheated on my wife.

C: Kinda?

S: Well, yeah.

C: Hmmm. Does Karen know about this? How's she doing?

S: Oh she's fine. She doesn't know anything about it. She's just fine ... I feel like shit.

C: I can imagine. That's not you, is it?

S: I don't know. I don't know what happened. I went over to Sgt Jones' house last weekend for a squad party. I didn't even want to go, but thought I should. Then I had a couple beers and felt I should hold off on leaving until the beers burned off.

C: Well, that sounds like wisdom.

S: Yeah, sounds great. So I pulled out a guitar and started singing, and SPC Bane's sister was there. She's recorded some songs. And we just hit it off.

C: Hmm. Was she the one?

S: Yeah ... I kept having beers, and I guess my singing gets better ... You can probably fill in the blanks.

C: Yeah, I suppose so. I'm so sorry.

S: [*Long pause.*] So what do I do, father?

C: That's a tough one, isn't it? What have you thought so far?

S: Really, I haven't thought much at all. I'm just so afraid Karen will find out.

C: Afraid of that ...

S: She'll freak. And I'm afraid she'll just take off and head home, and I'll never see her again or the baby.

C: That will hurt her ...

S: I'm so sorry. I can't believe I did that. I just wish I could take it back. It's so stupid.

C: Yeah, it would be great if we could just rewind the clock, wouldn't it? There's sure been things I wish I could erase ...

S: [*Pause, head in hands for about 10 seconds.*] ... Ahh! I can't handle it! #%*&\$ stupid! I'm going to lose family, and a son I've never seen, all because I couldn't keep my #%*&\$ dick in my pants!

C: I can tell you're sorry about it. I know you didn't want to hurt Karen.

S: Of course not. She's the best thing that's ever happened to me. She's a great wife. I can't even say I did this because she doesn't give

me sex. She's great. I'm just a shit.

C: You're being pretty hard on yourself.

S: I just want to have my family. I love my wife. And I want to be a great father. Give that boy everything I didn't get from my dad.

C: It's a boy? I bet you'll make a great father!

S: I thought so, now I don't know. I can't trust myself.

C: Well, it sounds like you're really clear on who you want to be: You want to be a good father and husband.

S: Absolutely.

C: That's clear. It's a foul wind that doesn't blow at least some good. You're clear about who you want to be now ...

S: Right ... So what do I do now? Do I tell her?

C: Well let's not rush on this. Let's think it through. Do you have a little more time?

S: I told SGT Jones I was coming over here. I don't think he expects me back today, and Karen won't expect me until supper time. I usually hit the gym for a bit before heading home.

C: Okay.

Case Study Discussion Questions:

- 1) For each chaplain statement above, code it as to whether it is: Supportive, Understanding, Interpretive, Probing, Evaluative, or Advising.
- 2) What was pastoral about this conversation?
- 3) Is there anything here the chaplain said or did that felt inappropriate?