

MINISTRY	Pastoral Care	Spiritual Direction	Counseling/Therapy
ROLE	Pastor, priest, minister, deacon, chaplain, etc.	Spiritual director, spiritual companion	Counselor, therapist, psychologist, social worker
SETTING	Congregation or other public ministerial setting (e.g. hospital, military, campus); “called” by a community or ecclesiastical body to provide for the congregation/community. Pastoral care takes place within both public and private/confidential encounters. [Pastors are also called to preach, teach, administrate the sacraments, and provide organizational leadership for the congregation/community.]	Invited by an individual or small group to accompany him/her/them in paying attention and responding to the movement of God in their lives. Private and confidential encounters.	Works with individuals or groups to promote emotional and mental health, to alleviate crisis or to assist in acquiring new life skills, and/or deepen self-awareness. People seek out counselors, may be referred for counseling, or even required to be in therapy. Private and confidential encounters.
PROVIDED BY	Trained clergy—or trained designated laity.	Someone with gifts, skills, and sensibilities for compassionate, contemplative listening—may or may not be institutionally trained; may be clergy or laity.	Someone professionally trained and certified in mental health and wellness, with various degree options (e.g., LCSW, PhD, Psy.D and licensed by the state.)
CO-CREATES RELATIONSHIP WITH	Congregation, congregational leadership and members	With each directee, individually; or with small group	With each patient, individually; or with small group
TRAINING	Three to four years of graduate study (usually including internship); training in biblical studies, theology, preaching, worship, pastoral care, etc.	Varies widely in depth and breadth. Ideally a spiritual director has special received training, formation, and supervision in listening for the presence and movement of the Holy in their own and other lives, the life of the church, etc. Versed in biblical-theological and contemplative traditions of the church; familiar with contemporary psychology, etc.	Trained in human developmental sciences, psychology, social work, mental health and wellness. “Pastoral Counselors” would also be trained in most of the same areas as “Pastors” (i.e., have an MDiv or equivalent).
LISTENING APPROACH AND MINISTERIAL “TOOLS”	Active listening, rites, rituals, prayer, worship. <i>Liturgical/theological</i>	Contemplative listening, silence, ritual, prayer. <i>Contemplative/Discernment</i>	Various types of listening, depending on skills and type of training—i.e. cognitive-behavioral, psychoanalysis, art therapy, etc. <i>Analytical/Diagnosis</i>
ACCOUNTABILITY	Congregation, congregational leadership, ecclesiastical authority (e.g. presbytery, synod, bishop, diocese).	Directee, supervisor(s) – perhaps to the same authorities as Pastor and Counselor.	Professional associations which certify/credential counselors.
PAYMENT	Ordained pastors receive a salary, benefits, etc. from the communities they serve.	A spiritual director may charge a fee or request an honorarium, depending on how they support themselves. Many spiritual directors are not exclusively spiritual directors—they may work as pastors, counselors, teachers, artists, cooks, doctors, nurses, etc.	Ordinarily paid per hour/per session. Insurance may help defray the patient’s expense.

*A work in progress by Sam Hamilton-Poore, Jen Herrmann, and Lewis Rambo. Shared by permission.