



Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Lexington & St. Vincent Mission

Budget Counseling Program

Counseling is a serious commitment on the part of the counselor and client. Behaviors, patterns and relationships may be challenged. Please take a few moments to review these guidelines and policies so that you will know what to expect while you are in counseling and what we expect from you.

St. Vincent Mission's Goals:

St. Vincent Mission is encouraging people to participate in this budget counseling program, so that they will:

- 1) live better on the income they have,
- 2) learn new ways to save money,
- 3) find ways to make more money,
- 4) identify the talents and gifts they have that make their budgets work,
- 5) improve their lives in other ways.

Client Responsibility:

The counseling hour belongs to the client. While the counselor will make suggestions, provide feedback and assign tasks, the client determines what will be discussed, worked on and perhaps changed in how income is handled.

The client is expected to be on time and to be prepared for each of the four sessions by collecting and bringing bills and receipts for the month's expenditures to each session.

Counselor Responsibility:

In turn, the counselor makes a commitment to counseling by canceling only when necessary, being on time unless there is an emergency and not allowing interruptions, such as phone calls, during sessions.

The counselor, Gwen Hall, is employed by Catholic Charities and is a licensed clinical social worker. She will use forms to structure the budget counseling process that can be duplicated and used for budgeting after the counseling is completed.

Confidentiality and Exceptions:

It is the policy of Catholic Charities to keep confidential what is told privately in counseling sessions. All client information is kept in locked files and Catholic Charities follows the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPPA) regulations for client privacy and security. Information will not be released to anyone without the client's written consent. The following are HIPPA-approved exceptions to this policy:

1. Mandatory reporting of child/adult abuse - KRS 620.030 states that "any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child/adult is dependent, neglected or abused must report the same." KRS 209A.030 mandates the same for reporting adult abuse, which includes spouse abuse.

2. Duty to warn obligation - KRS 202A.400 mandates all mental health professionals to warn intended victims of client's threats of violence. Any threats of violence must be reported to any identified person and proper law enforcement authorities. In the absence of an identified person, law enforcement authorities alone are contacted.

3. When the counselor judges a client to be at immediate risk for suicide and/or in need of emergency hospitalization, confidentiality is waived for the protection of the client.

4. Catholic Charities staff, students, volunteers and contracted supervisors may share information for the purposes of supervision, temporary coverage (when assigned counselor has an emergency or is on vacation), billing, scheduling and statistical tracking of services within the agency. These people are all bound by confidentiality and their information-sharing is limited to what they need to know to best serve our clients.

5. St. Vincent Mission will be informed of appointment times and will receive a signed verification form from the counselor as evidence of client participation efforts. St. Vincent Mission staff reserve the right to review the intake form and completed Spending Plan Worksheet for statistical or verification purposes.

St. Vincent Mission/ Catholic Charities Guidelines:

1. Clients are requested to commit to four, monthly, budget counseling sessions. At the end of each session, the counselor will verify attendance.
2. Counseling sessions are 50 minutes in length.
3. Clients need to arrange child care for children who cannot sit quietly during a session or who do not need to hear what is being discussed.
4. A fee of \$1 will be charged for budget counseling sessions. Discussing finances may bring up other family or personal issues. If clients wish to schedule additional sessions to deal with other problems, a fee based on income and family size will be charged.
5. Clients will be charged \$20 for missed appointments when they fail to give 24-hour notice, except for a verifiable emergency. (This will help cover the costs of the counselor's wasted time and travel.)
6. Clients who cancel appointments on a regular basis will forfeit their counseling slot to someone else on the waiting list.
7. Clients who do not keep their appointments and fail to give notice to Catholic Charities will not be rescheduled.

I have read and understand this handout.

Signature of Client

Date

I have received a copy of the Catholic Charities Confidentiality Policy, which is in compliance with HIPPA guidelines. I have reviewed and discussed this counseling agreement with the counselor.

Initials or Signature of Client

Counselor

Date