

Why the Anabaptist Discipleship Center Requests an Advocate

The Anabaptist Discipleship Center (ADC) understands counseling as a form of Christian discipleship that is best lived out within the life of the church. Rather than viewing counseling as an isolated service, ADC approaches care as a relational process that is strengthened by meaningful, ongoing support from the Christian community. For this reason, each counselee is asked to identify an **Advocate** who walks alongside them throughout the counseling process.

The Purpose of an Advocate

While formal counseling occurs for a defined season, the care of the Christian community continues beyond that time. Advocates help bridge counseling with the ongoing life of the church, ensuring that support, encouragement, and growth continue after counseling has concluded. This may take place within the counselee's local congregation or, when necessary, the broader Christian community.

An Advocate's primary role is to provide consistent, relational support. Advocates offer prayer, encouragement, and presence inside and outside the counseling sessions, helping the counselee thoughtfully apply biblical truth in everyday life. This role is not one of accountability or counseling, but of supportive companionship—reinforcing hope and reminding the counselee that they are not walking through their struggles alone.

The Advocate's Role in Counseling Sessions

Advocates attend all counseling sessions alongside the counselee. Their participation helps foster clarity, continuity, and shared understanding of the counseling process. Having an Advocate present connects what is discussed in counseling to real-life relationships and circumstances, strengthening the effectiveness of care and reflecting ADC's value of walking together in discipleship rather than addressing struggles in isolation.

Because of the relational nature of this role, an Advocate should demonstrate Christlike character, including humility, wisdom, compassion, faithfulness, and a genuine desire to walk with others in love. Advocates are not expected to be trained counselors. Rather, they are spiritually mature individuals who offer care through presence, prayer, and encouragement.

Practical Guidelines

- Advocates attend all counseling sessions and continue providing support after formal counseling ends.
- Advocates are typically of the same gender as the counselee.
- When a couple is receiving counseling, a married couple normally serves as Advocates.

- Advocates should not usually be immediate family members, as the role benefits from clear relational boundaries.
- In certain situations, a spouse may serve as an Advocate with ADC's approval.
- If an advocate requests a meeting with the counselor outside of the regular scheduled sessions with the counselee, they will be charged an hourly rate of \$50 per hour.
- Requests for exceptions are considered prayerfully on a case-by-case basis, particularly in situations involving broken or complex circumstances, church-related challenges, or when suitable advocates are not readily available within a healthy church context.