

Brief Pastoral Counseling: Short-term Approaches and **Strategies**

Howard W. Stone

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Most pastoral counselors, clergy, and psychotherapists assume that truly effective counseling requires months or even years. Research suggests otherwise. Studies have provided two startling findings. First, most persons come for four or fewer counseling sessions, whatever the counseling method employed. Second, the majority of any counseling's effectiveness occurs in the opening few sessions. Part One uses brief pastoral counseling as a framework for detailing specific issues and approaches: getting the problem clear, assigning homework between sessions, and focusing on strengths. Part Two connects many of the typical problems encountered in parish ministry to specific counseling interventions which work in only a few sessions. Using many examples formulated out of Stone's years of counseling experience, it allows the reader to visualize each approach and make use of it as a counseling strategy.



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