

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (CPM), PRESBYTERY OF MONMOUTH

POLICY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

Introduction

Inquirers under the care of the Monmouth Presbytery CPM (CPM) must complete a psychological assessment to become eligible to be considered for candidacy. “The primary purpose of such an evaluation is to determine the inquirer/candidate’s psychological health and fitness for ministry and to screen for pathology.” *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry*, p, 85 (2017).

The presumptive provider of psychological assessments is Trinity Counseling Service, located at 22 Stockton Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540-6813 (<https://trinitycounseling.org/>). This document outlines the steps for completing psychological evaluations for inquirers through Trinity Counseling Service. Trinity’s fee for this service is \$1,650 (split evenly three ways among the inquirer, the inquirer’s home church, and the presbytery) per person through June 30, 2019¹ and \$1,950 effective July 1, 2019.²

Inquirers who wish to obtain a psychological assessment from any other provider must seek and be given advance approval by the CPM.

All agreements with clinicians, whether Trinity Counseling Service or any other service, shall provide that the CPM is the client of record, not the inquirer.

Steps of the Process

1. The inquirer’s CPM liaison makes sure the inquirer understands that this requirement exists, how it will be satisfied, and that it is a precondition for being eligible to be moved to candidacy. The discussion covers the following major points:
 - a. The inquirer’s financial situation and understanding of the usual distribution of the cost evenly (one-third each) among the inquirer, the session of the inquirer’s sponsoring church, and the CPM. If the financial resources of either the inquirer or the sponsoring church are problematic, the CPM liaison may bring the matter before the full CPM for review and determination of how the cost will be underwritten.
 - b. The presumption by the CPM that the psychological evaluation will be completed through Trinity Counseling Service and what the alternatives would be should the inquirer wish to use another resource. If the inquirer wants to complete the assessment elsewhere, the CPM liaison will bring that request before the CPM and it must be approved in advance.

¹ The fee was increased to \$1,650 from \$1,500 effective July 1, 2017.

² E-mail from Ann Ruggieri, Senior Client Care Coordinator (March 25, 2019).

- c. Once the payment matter has been resolved, the CPM liaison will make sure the inquirer understands that his or her share, if any, will have to be paid directly to Trinity on the date he or she goes for the initial session at Trinity.

Throughout contacts with the inquirer during the inquiry phase the CPM liaison will watch for any special concerns or issues that may arise. The CPM liaison will also consider whether there are any documents (e.g., a field education assessment, another psychological report) that may be helpful to provide to Trinity staff in support of the assessment. This may include aspects of the inquirer's history, personality, language and/or cultural challenges, and anything else that may affect producing a thorough and reliable assessment of the inquirer's suitability. If the liaison or the CPM as a whole has any special questions or concerns about a given candidate, Trinity welcomes being apprised of them up front before seeing the inquirer. NOTE: The CPM liaison must obtain the inquirer's consent before sending any such document to Trinity.

2. When step one has been completed and the inquirer is ready to move forward with the assessment, the CPM liaison or moderator advises Trinity to commence the assessment by doing the following:
 - a. As far in advance as possible, contact Ann Ruggieri, Senior Client Care Coordinator, at 609-924-0060 (FAX: 609-924-7436) or ann.ruggieri@trinitycounseling.org to alert her to the forthcoming request and determine whether it's still best to send the details to her via e-mail.
 - b. Upon confirming that this is still the appropriate procedure, send the following information to her e-mail address (see above):
 - i. Pertinent details about the inquirer: his or her name, mailing address, telephone number(s), e-mail address, and date of birth;
 - ii. The payment arrangements that attend this particular assessment as determined in step 1 above;
 - iii. Description of any special concerns or factors that have arisen, if any, or provision of documents, if any, that would be useful pursuant to step one; and
 - iv. Contact information for the CPM person to whom Trinity should mail the final assessment.
3. Trinity staff then contact the inquirer directly to schedule a date and time that's mutually convenient for the clinician to whom Trinity assigns the assessment and the inquirer for the initial session.
4. When an assessment date has been confirmed, Trinity will invoice the Presbytery and the sponsoring church for their respective portions of the fee. Invoices are sent to:
 - a. Accountant, Monmouth Presbytery, 617 Hope Chapel Road, Lakewood, New Jersey 08701-1518, if applicable; and
 - b. The Clerk of Session of the inquirer's sponsoring church, unless other arrangements have been made.

5. At the initial session the inquirer will spend most of one day at Trinity's offices, completing several standard psychological tests and engaging in an interview with the clinician. In addition, he or she will make full payment of his or her portion of the fee, if applicable.
6. After the initial session is completed, the clinician conducting the assessment will prepare a draft report and schedule a follow-up session to discuss it with the inquirer.
7. The clinician and the inquirer meet again to review the draft report, making whatever revisions may be warranted, issuing a final report, and securing the inquirer's consent that it is final.
8. It ordinarily takes several weeks for a report to be written, reviewed and agreed to by the inquirer, and then mailed. Trinity will mail the final report to both the inquirer and the person identified per §2.b.iv when the inquirer has signed the Release of Records form and full payment has been received from all parties.

In the event any issues or questions arise that Ms. Ruggieri cannot handle or is not available to respond to, CPM members may contact the Executive Director, Whitney B. Ross, Ed.M., Ph.D., at the same phone number (see §2.a).

Other Considerations

1. Assessments are presumed to have a shelf life of ten years. In the event a candidate has not been certified to receive a call and found a call after ten years under care, the CPM may request a new assessment to assess continued readiness for ordination.
2. Reports are confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the CPM, nor may members disclose any information contained in the report to anyone outside the CPM, except with the knowledge and consent of the inquirer. Ordinarily only the Moderator, Co-Moderator (if any), and the inquirer's CPM liaison will have access to reports. Only when serious concerns have been flagged in a report that the full CPM needs to review will other members of the CPM see a report.
3. If they wish, inquirers may share their own report with anyone at any time and do not need CPM approval to do so.
4. Since e-mail is not a secure means of transmitting confidential documents, Trinity Counseling Service and the CPM will distribute copies of a report only via regular mail or in person.

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Third draft (with Ms. Ruggieri's suggestions incorporated): May 27, 2016

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