

NICC TxP - (I) Grief

Resources

- James, J. W., & Friedman, R. (2014). *The Grief Recovery Handbook, 20th Anniversary Expanded Edition* (p. 224). Harper Perennial.

Introduction to NICC Treatment Protocol for Grief and Spiritual Wrestling

Welcome to the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC) treatment protocol, designed to guide counselors in effectively supporting individuals navigating the profound challenges of grief and spiritual wrestling. This protocol is rooted in the comprehensive understanding of human psychology, neurobiology, and Christian spirituality that NICC promotes, aiming to provide a holistic approach to counseling that honors both the emotional and spiritual dimensions of healing.

Purpose of the Protocol

This treatment protocol aims to equip counselors with the tools and insights necessary to assist participants in:

Processing Grief: Facilitating the healthy metabolization of grief through the NICC framework, which encompasses understanding the neurobiological underpinnings of grief, employing the "Feel-It-Thru" intervention during the Open-Hearted Phase, and helping participants integrate their experience of loss into their ongoing life narrative.

Addressing Spiritual Wrestling: Providing strategies to create a safe therapeutic space for participants to express doubts, disappointments, and frustrations with God, and to explore these feelings deeply within the context of their faith.

Key Components of the Protocol

1. **Setting Therapeutic Goals:** Establishing clear, participant-centered goals that focus on emotional healing, spiritual understanding, and personal growth.
2. **Attuning to the Participant's Emotional and Spiritual State:** Utilizing BrainSync to achieve a deep level of empathic connection with the participant, facilitating a secure base from which difficult emotions and spiritual doubts can be explored.
3. **Engaging the Thrive Drive:** Trusting in the God-given innate drive towards growth and healing, guiding the counseling process as we explore painful areas needing attention.
4. **Mismatch Experiences:** Creating therapeutic experiences that contrast with participants' painful memories or negative spiritual beliefs, thereby facilitating new insights and emotional relief.
5. **Replay and Thriving Home Experiences:** Ensuring that new understandings and emotional shifts are fully integrated into the participant's self-concept and life story, enhancing their capacity to thrive post-counseling.

- 6. Navigating Defensive Parts:** Identifying and working through any resistance within the participant's psyche that may impede accessing and healing wounded parts of the self.

Outcome Expectations

By following this protocol, counselors can expect to help participants not only to navigate their grief and spiritual doubts but also to transform these experiences into sources of strength and wisdom. The ultimate goal is to enable participants to achieve a state of thriving, characterized by a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper, more resilient faith.

Independence & Mastery

Learning to grieve well is an essential skill that forms a critical part of the Internal Working Model (IWM) associated with Independence and Mastery within the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC) framework. This skill is vital because it recognizes that loss is a pervasive aspect of human experience, ranging from minor disappointments to profound life changes. Developing a healthy approach to grieving enables individuals to process and recover from losses effectively, fostering resilience and facilitating personal growth and mastery over life's challenges.

The Role of Grieving in Independence and Mastery

In the NICC character structure domain of Independence and Mastery, the capacity to grieve well is crucial for several reasons:

Resilience Building: Effective grieving equips individuals with the ability to bounce back from setbacks and challenges, thereby enhancing their overall resilience. This resilience is foundational for independence, as it enables individuals to navigate life's ups and downs without being overwhelmed.

Emotional Regulation and Processing: Learning to grieve well involves developing sophisticated emotional regulation skills that allow individuals to experience and express a range of emotions without suppression. Proper processing and expression of grief help prevent emotional stagnation and complications such as depression or anxiety.

Realistic Self-Appraisal and Adaptability: Part of mastering independence involves having a realistic understanding of oneself and one's circumstances. Recognizing and accepting losses and disappointments is crucial for maintaining a grounded perspective on life. It allows for adaptability, as individuals learn not just to endure changes but to actively adapt and find new pathways.

Personal Growth and Self-Actualization: Encountering and overcoming losses can lead to significant personal growth. Each loss, while painful, offers unique insights into personal values, strengths, and areas for growth. This aligns with Maslow's concept of self-actualization, where overcoming difficulties is part of reaching one's full potential.

Navigating Day-to-Day Disappointments

Day-to-day disappointments, whether trivial or significant, require the application of grief processing skills. These disappointments might include:

Minor Setbacks: Everyday inconveniences or minor setbacks, such as a favorite item being unavailable, provide opportunities to practice regulating disappointment and managing expectations.

Significant Personal or Professional Setbacks: More considerable disappointments, such as job losses, failed relationships, or unmet personal goals, require deeper emotional processing. These situations challenge one's sense of self and future and thus are critical for developing robust grief management strategies.

Profound Losses: Extremely painful losses, such as severe illness, death, or profound disillusionment (including spiritual crises like feeling let down by God), necessitate an even more profound engagement with grief work. These are the times when the skills developed through smaller disappointments are put to the test, requiring a person to draw deeply from their spiritual and emotional reserves.

In the NICC framework, learning to grieve well is fundamental to thriving across all aspects of life. It supports independence and mastery by enabling individuals to handle disappointments and losses in healthy, growth-oriented ways, ultimately fostering a resilient and adaptive approach to life's inevitable challenges.

Reality

In the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC) framework, the development of a healthy internal working model (IWM) for grieving within the Independence and Mastery character structure domain is critical. This model not only facilitates effective personal coping and adaptation in response to loss but also aids in forming other healthy IWMs, particularly those related to Reality, which involve realistic expectations of life's inherent challenges, including loss and disappointment.

Capacity of Self@Best in Grieving

When an individual operates from their "self@best," they are engaging the healthiest part of their constructed self, which has integrated both personal values and coping mechanisms in a way that aligns with God's design and purpose for their life. These models involve realistic expectations about life, acknowledging that loss and disappointment are not aberrations but integral parts of the human experience. Here's how a healthy grieving model influences this:

Realistic Expectations: Recognizing that life inherently involves both joy and pain helps temper the unrealistic expectation that life should be devoid of hardship. This understanding fosters a balanced view of the world where one is prepared for and can thus better handle adversities.

Personal Responsibility: With a healthy model for grieving, individuals learn that they hold the responsibility for managing their own reactions and emotions in the face of

disappointment. This reduces the tendency to externalize control or blame others, including God, for personal suffering.

Emotional Maturity: The ability to navigate loss with resilience reflects and promotes emotional maturity, where individuals accept that while they cannot control all aspects of life, they can control their responses and decisions in the aftermath of loss.

Constructive Theology: A healthy grieving process within a Christian context encourages a constructive theology that sees God not as a shield against all forms of suffering but as a steadfast presence throughout life's trials. This theology supports a realistic and mature relationship with God, characterized by trust and faith even when faced with life's painful realities.

Enhanced Interpersonal Relationships: Understanding and accepting the reality of personal and others' limitations fosters healthier relationships. It helps individuals set and respect boundaries, communicate needs and expectations more clearly, and cultivate compassion and empathy.

Overall Impact on Thriving

When individuals can navigate loss effectively, gaining wisdom from each experience and moving forward with a balanced view of life, they are better positioned to thrive. This thriving is not just about overcoming or rebounding from setbacks but involves a deeper, more meaningful engagement with life.

It encompasses a sense of fulfillment that comes from recognizing and embracing both the blessings and challenges of life, maintaining hope and joy amidst trials, and contributing positively to the lives of others through empathetic understanding and shared experiences of resilience.

In NICC, the self@best with a healthy IWM for grieving supports the development of realistic IWMs of Reality, enhancing overall emotional, spiritual, and relational health. This comprehensive development is essential for living a life that is not only resilient in the face of losses and disappointments but also rich with wisdom and spiritual depth.

Spirituality

In the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC) framework, the character structure domain of Spirituality is crucial, as it directly addresses how individuals perceive, interact with, and understand their relationship with God, particularly during times of suffering and disillusionment. Counselors play a vital role in shaping, reinforcing, or transforming Internal Working Models (IWMs) related to spirituality. They do this by creating an environment that invites open dialogue about spiritual crises and by guiding participants through these challenging spiritual landscapes.

Creating a Safe Space for Spiritual Wrestling

Validating Emotional and Spiritual Experiences: Counselors reinforce the legitimacy of the participant's feelings of confusion, disillusionment, disappointment, and anger towards God. By acknowledging these feelings as valid and common in the spiritual

journey, the counselor helps participants feel understood and safe to express their innermost thoughts and fears without judgment.

Encouraging Honest Dialogue: Participants are encouraged to articulate their doubts and frustrations openly. This process helps in identifying the core issues that might be influencing their spiritual distress. Counselors facilitate this by asking probing questions that guide participants to explore deeper emotional and theological underpinnings of their crises.

Normalizing the Struggle: By sharing biblical examples and historical accounts of figures who wrestled with God (like Jacob, Job, and David), counselors show that spiritual struggle has always been part of the faith experience. This helps to normalize the participant's experiences and frame them within a broader, redemptive narrative.

Encouraging Direct Engagement with God

Promoting Prayer as Dialogue: Counselors encourage participants to engage in prayer not just as a practice of devotion but as an open, honest dialogue with God. Participants are supported to express their doubts, anger, and disappointments in their prayers, reflecting the psalmists' raw emotions in the Bible.

Modeling Non-defensive Theology: It is crucial that counselors convey an image of God that is non-defensive and open to scrutiny. They reassure participants that God is not threatened by their questions or anger. Instead, He invites them into a deeper relationship through these honest conversations.

Theological Reframing: Counselors help participants reframe their understanding of God's character and His ways. This might involve challenging faulty or harmful images of God (e.g., God as a punitive judge) and encouraging a more nuanced understanding of God's sovereignty, love, and presence in suffering.

Supporting Theological and Emotional Integration

Scriptural Anchoring: Using scripture, counselors help participants anchor their experiences and emotions in biblical truths. For instance, highlighting scriptures that speak of God's unchanging nature, His compassion in human suffering, and His promises to be present with His people in their pain (e.g., Isaiah 43:2, Matthew 28:20).

Promoting Community and Fellowship: Encouraging participants to share their struggles within a trusted community can provide additional layers of support and perspective. This fellowship can offer both practical and spiritual insights that enrich the individual's journey.

Spiritual Practices for Comfort and Insight: Introducing spiritual practices such as meditative reading of scripture, contemplative prayer, and communal worship can help participants experience God's presence and find peace, even in the absence of immediate answers.

Fostering Growth and Transformation

Witnessing and Testimony: Encourage participants to document their journey of wrestling with God, noting any shifts in understanding or moments of insight. Sharing these stories

can become powerful testimonies of faith that not only solidify the participant's own spiritual growth but also encourage others.

Continuous Open Dialogue: Counselors maintain an ongoing, open dialogue about spiritual issues, allowing for the participant's understanding of God to evolve and deepen over time. This ongoing conversation is crucial for adapting the IWMs to incorporate new theological insights and personal experiences with God.

By addressing spiritual questions within this therapeutic framework, NICC counselors facilitate a process where participants can navigate their spiritual crises, leading to a more profound and resilient faith. This approach respects the complexity of human spirituality, accommodating both the intellect and the emotions in the pursuit of a deeper, more authentic relationship with God.

The Process

In Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC), the approach to grief work embodies the same foundational principles and processes that govern other treatment protocols within this framework. NICC integrates the complex interplay of neuroscience, spiritual beliefs, and psychological theory to provide a comprehensive method for addressing the multifaceted nature of human suffering, including grief. Here's how these elements coalesce in the context of grief work:

Setting Goals

The process begins with setting clear therapeutic goals. In the context of grief, these goals often focus on processing and integrating the loss, developing new meanings, and fostering an environment where the participant can begin to envision a future that incorporates their experience of loss in a healthy way. Goals are set collaboratively with the participant, ensuring they are resonant with both the participant's values and their spiritual beliefs.

BrainSync (Attunement)

This involves the counselor attuning to the participant's emotional and physiological states, which is crucial in regulating the participant's nervous system during the exploration of painful grief-related emotions and memories. This synchronization helps in creating a safe therapeutic space where deep emotional processing can occur.

Embodied Spirituality

This concept recognizes that spiritual experiences are also embodied experiences, deeply intertwined with our neurobiological processes. In grief work, acknowledging the embodied nature of spiritual and emotional pain helps in addressing the physiological aspects of grief, such as somatic symptoms and the impact on one's health.

Thrive Drive

Thrive Drive is the inherent motivation towards growth and healing, guided by God's design for individual lives. In grief work within NICC, trusting the Thrive Drive means believing in

the natural progression towards healing and wholeness, even in the aftermath of significant loss. The counselor and participant together rely on this intrinsic motivation to uncover and process unresolved pain that surfaces during counseling.

Navigating Defensive Parts

Defensive parts often emerge in counseling as resistance to accessing the wounded parts of oneself that need healing. In NICC, navigating these defenses involves recognizing and dialoguing with these parts, understanding their protective functions, and gently encouraging them to allow access to deeper wounds. This process is crucial in grief work, as individuals often develop defenses that help them cope with loss in the short term but may hinder long-term healing.

Open Hearted Phase and Feel-It-Thru

In Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC), the "Feel-It-Thru" intervention is a pivotal therapeutic technique used during the Open-Hearted Phase of grief work. This intervention focuses on deeply experiencing and processing emotions related to grief to facilitate healing and integration. This method is rooted in the belief that fully feeling and expressing one's emotions is essential for resolving grief and moving towards a state of thriving.

The Role of the Open-Hearted Phase

The Open-Hearted Phase in NICC is characterized by a readiness to confront and work through emotional pain in a supportive and therapeutic environment. This phase is critical for participants who are grieving, as it encourages them to open up about their deepest fears, sorrows, and losses in a setting where they feel safe and understood. The counselor's role is to facilitate this process by providing empathetic attunement and guiding the participant through their emotional experiences.

Feel-It-Thru

Feel-It-Thru helps participants engage with their grief by encouraging them to fully experience their emotions without avoidance or suppression. This involves several key steps:

1. **Identification of Emotions (Notice & Name Implicit):** Participants are helped to identify and name their feelings related to the loss. This could be sadness, anger, guilt, or confusion. Accurate identification is crucial for effective emotional processing.
2. **Expression and Experience (Name Explicit):** Participants are encouraged to express these emotions openly. Expression might be through words, tears, art, or movement. The idea is to externalize the emotions in whatever form feels most natural, which can lead to a significant release of emotional tension.
3. **Physical Awareness (Notice & Name):** Participants are guided to notice any physical sensations associated with their emotions. This might include tightness in

the chest, a lump in the throat, or an empty feeling in the stomach. By connecting emotions to physical sensations, participants can gain a deeper understanding of how their grief affects their body and mind.

4. **Emotional Validation:** The counselor validates the participant's emotions, reassuring them that their feelings are normal and expected responses to their loss. This validation is crucial for the participant to feel safe in continuing to explore their emotions.
5. **Regulation Techniques:** Participants are taught and guided through emotional regulation techniques to manage the intensity of their feelings. This might include breathing exercises, grounding techniques, or mindfulness. These skills help participants to not become overwhelmed and promote resilience.
6. **Integration and Meaning-Making:** As participants move through their emotions, the counselor helps them to begin integrating these experiences into a larger narrative of their life and the loss. This might involve redefining relationships to the deceased, understanding the personal growth that has come from the grieving process, or reconnecting with life's purposes and meanings.

Therapeutic Benefits of Feel-It-Thru

The Feel-It-Thru intervention allows for a therapeutic process where grief is not just something to get past but is fully experienced and thereby transformed. Benefits include:

- **Reduction in Avoidance Behaviors:** Engaging fully with grief decreases the likelihood of avoiding painful emotions, which can lead to complicated grief or depression.
- **Neurological Reorganization:** Fully feeling through the grief helps reorganize the neural pathways associated with the memories of the loss, leading to a decrease in the intensity of pain over time.
- **Enhanced Emotional Resilience:** By facing and processing intense emotions, participants build resilience and a greater capacity to handle future stressors and losses.
- **Deeper Self-Understanding:** This process can lead to greater self-awareness and understanding, as participants connect their emotional experiences with their values, beliefs, and identities.

Overall, Feel-It-Thru in the Open-Hearted Phase of NICC is a powerful part of metabolizing grief, allowing participants to process their loss fully and move toward a state of healing and thriving that integrates their experience into a meaningful life narrative.

Mismatch Experiences

Mismatch involves creating experiences in counseling that starkly contrast with past traumatic or painful memories associated with the loss. This could involve reimagining past events, revisiting memories with a new perspective, or experiencing corrective emotional experiences in counseling that counter the negative beliefs formed by grief. Such

interventions aim to disrupt maladaptive emotional patterns and facilitate the integration of new, healthier narratives.

Replay

After a mismatch experience, replaying the scenario helps to solidify the new, healthier narrative. This stage allows for reflection on the emotional shifts that occurred, reinforcing the new understanding and integrating it more deeply into the participant's life story.

Thriving "Home"

This phase focuses on consolidating the changes made during counseling and applying them in real-life contexts. It involves adapting to life in light of the loss, with a renewed sense of purpose and identity that includes the loss as a part of one's ongoing narrative but not as a defining element.

Integration into Identity and Autobiographical Narrative

Ultimately, the goal of NICC in grief work is to help the participant integrate their experiences of loss into their broader self-concept and life story in a way that acknowledges the pain but also the growth stemming from it. This integration fosters a sense of coherence and meaning, allowing the individual to move forward with a sense of continuity and resilience.

NICC aims to offer a holistic approach to grief work, addressing the emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions of the individual. This approach is underpinned by the belief in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to bring comfort and healing, aligned with 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, which speaks of God as the "Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles."

Kinds of Loss

Grief is a multifaceted response to loss, not limited solely to the death of a loved one. It encompasses a wide range of experiences where individuals may feel significant sadness or distress as they adjust to a new reality. Understanding the different kinds of losses that can provoke grief helps in providing appropriate support and counseling. Here are several types of losses that may lead to grief:

Loss of a Loved One: This is the most commonly recognized form of loss, including the death of a family member, friend, or pet. The grief experienced can vary widely depending on the relationship, circumstances of the death, and cultural or personal beliefs about death.

Loss of a Relationship: This includes the end of significant relationships through breakups, divorce, or estrangement. Such losses can challenge one's sense of identity and emotional security, leading to profound grief.

Loss of Health: Experiencing a decline in one’s physical or mental health due to illness, injury, or aging can lead to grief. This kind of loss not only affects the individual but can also impact their loved ones.

Loss of Financial Security or Employment: Losing a job or facing financial instability can provoke a grief response. Such losses affect one’s lifestyle, future plans, and sense of stability and security.

Loss of a Home or Community: Being displaced from one’s home due to reasons like natural disasters, foreclosure, or having to move away from a cherished community can trigger grief. This loss encompasses not just the physical space but the sense of belonging and safety that was associated with it.

Loss of Safety and Security: Experiencing or witnessing violence, abuse, or a traumatic event can lead to a loss of personal safety and trust in the world, which is a profound form of loss.

Loss of Identity: Significant life changes such as retirement, children leaving home, or significant changes in social roles can lead to grief as one’s sense of self is altered.

Loss of Dreams or Expectations: This form of loss occurs when life events prevent dreams or expected life plans from coming to fruition, such as infertility, the loss of career opportunities, or the failure of significant projects.

Cultural or Spiritual Loss: Changes in one’s spiritual beliefs or cultural identity, either by personal choice or societal influence, can lead to grief as one’s previous worldview shifts.

Each of these losses can affect individuals deeply and uniquely, often requiring personalized approaches to healing. In counseling, particularly within the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® framework, addressing these varied types of grief involves understanding the specific contexts and meanings these losses have for the individual, as well as integrating their spiritual and emotional dimensions to support recovery and growth.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a pioneer in the study of grief and bereavement, is best known for her development of the "Five Stages of Grief" model, which outlines a framework through which many people progress in response to grief and trauma. These stages include:

1. **Denial:** A state of shock or disbelief following a loss.
2. **Anger:** Frustration and helplessness turning into anger.
3. **Bargaining:** Struggling to find meaning or attempting to negotiate a way out of the pain.
4. **Depression:** Profound sadness and realization of the loss.
5. **Acceptance:** Coming to terms with the reality of the loss and moving forward.

Kübler-Ross emphasized that these stages are not linear and may not be experienced by everyone. Her work has greatly influenced how we understand and approach the process of grieving.

Reality - Grief Work as Acceptance of the Unchangeable

Grief work involves the psychological process of coming to terms with a significant loss. This often means accepting what cannot be changed and learning to live with that reality. The goal of grief work is not to move on from the memory or impact of the loss but to integrate it into one's life in a way that allows for continued growth and personal development. It involves making sense of the loss, attributing meaning to it, and finding a way to continue living with purpose and fulfillment.

Role of Co-regulation and Co-constructed Meaning-Making

Co-regulation (Bearing One Another's Burdens):

- In the therapeutic context, co-regulation refers to the counselor's role in helping to stabilize the participant's emotional state through empathetic engagement and support. This process mirrors the biblical concept of "bearing one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), providing comfort and reducing isolation.
- Co-regulation supports the participant's ability to process emotions and experiences more effectively, as the presence of a supportive other can help modulate emotional responses and promote resilience.

Co-constructed Meaning-Making:

- This involves the counselor and participant collaboratively exploring and constructing meanings around the grief experience. Through dialogues, reflection, and therapeutic interventions, they develop narratives that incorporate the loss into the participant's life story in a way that honors the loss but also facilitates personal growth.
- This process helps in transforming the raw pain of grief into a more structured and understandable experience, which is crucial for psychological integration and healing.

Metabolizing Grief to Prevent Trauma and Complicated Grief

- **Metabolizing Grief:** Just as the body metabolizes food to extract nutrients, the psyche processes emotional experiences to integrate them fully. This metaphorical digestion prevents the stagnation of grief, reducing the risk of trauma and complicated grief, which occurs when grief becomes debilitating and persists without progression towards healing.
- **Thriving:** Following Kübler-Ross and integrating NICC principles, thriving post-grieving isn't merely about returning to baseline but about achieving a state of well-

being that incorporates the grief experience into a richer, more nuanced understanding of life.

Neurobiology of Grief

The neurobiology of grief provides insights into how the brain processes and responds to the experience of loss, revealing why grief can have such profound emotional, cognitive, and physical effects on individuals. Understanding the neurobiological aspects of grief helps in devising more effective therapeutic interventions, including those within the Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® (NICC) framework.

Brain Regions Involved:

Prefrontal Cortex (PFC): Involved in regulating emotions and making decisions, the PFC helps manage the intense emotions of grief and assists in adapting to new life circumstances post-loss.

Amygdala: This region processes emotions and is particularly active in the response to fear and sadness. In grief, the amygdala may be hyperactive, leading to the heightened emotional responses commonly experienced.

Hippocampus: Important for memory, the hippocampus helps individuals recall memories with the deceased, which can trigger grief reactions long after the initial loss.

Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC): Associated with emotional pain processing, the ACC has been shown to be active during experiences of social rejection and loss, which mirrors the pain of grief.

Neurochemical Changes:

Cortisol: Often referred to as the stress hormone, cortisol levels can increase due to the stress of bereavement, impacting the body in various ways, including disrupting sleep and immune function.

Oxytocin: Sometimes called the "bonding hormone," oxytocin is involved in forming emotional bonds. Its levels can influence grief intensity and the feeling of longing for the deceased.

Dopamine: Associated with reward and pleasure, changes in dopamine levels during grief can affect motivation and enjoyment, contributing to feelings of sadness and depression.

Neural Plasticity and Grief:

The brain's plasticity means it can reorganize itself by forming new neural connections. After a loss, the brain may need to reorganize networks that are associated with the deceased, which is a part of adapting to life without the loved one.

This reorganization can be painful and disorienting, which is why grief can feel so disruptive and why it can take significant time to heal.

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) Responses:

Grief can activate the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight response), leading to increased heart rate, blood pressure, and anxiety. Conversely, grief can also engage the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest), dorsal vagal, which might explain the lethargy and withdrawal often seen in bereaved individuals.

About the Author



Rev. Josh Spurlock, MA, LPC, LMHC, CST, is a passionate Jesus follower, theology nerd, certified sex therapist, and innovative entrepreneur. He and his wife Cassie have launched 5 adopted daughters, are now grandparents to 10, and have four biological children still at home on the Colorado front range.

Holding a BA in Biblical Languages and a Masters in Counseling, Josh is licensed in Missouri, Colorado, and Florida, bringing over 10,000 hours of clinical experience in complex trauma, marriage, and sex therapy. An ordained minister with advanced training in EFT and AEDP therapies,

Josh, alongside Cassie, co-founded [MyCounselor.Online](https://www.MyCounselor.Online). There, they developed [Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling® \(NICC\)](https://www.NICC.org), a faith-based model that integrates biblical principles with neuroscience. For more on his work, including articles and videos, visit [JoshSpurlock.com](https://www.JoshSpurlock.com)