

Pastoral-Care Decision Authority Catalog

A plug-and-play reference for identifying the decisions your church needs to authorize.

WHAT THIS CATALOG DOES

We have already listed common pastoral-care decisions. Your team decides which ones apply.

How to Use It

1. Review each decision with your leadership team.
2. Check Applies to Our Church, Does Not Apply, or Needs Discussion.
3. Add any decisions unique to your church on the final page.
4. Transfer each decision marked Applies to Our Church to your Decision Authority Worksheet.

YOUR DECISION AUTHORITY WORKSHEET WILL ESTABLISH:

- Who normally handles the decision
- What they can decide on their own
- Who they must consult
- When the decision must move to higher authority

1. Receiving & Responding to Care Requests

APPLIES NO DISCUSS

1.1	Who decides who responds to a new pastoral-care request?	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Who decides how quickly someone needs a response?	☐	☐	☐
1.3	Who decides whether a request needs immediate attention?	☐	☐	☐
1.4	Who decides what happens when a request comes in after hours?	☐	☐	☐
1.5	Who decides what happens when the person who normally receives requests is unavailable?	☐	☐	☐

2. Assigning & Reassigning Care

APPLIES NO DISCUSS

2.1	Who decides which pastor, leader, or care team member is assigned?	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Who decides when more than one person should be involved?	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Who decides when care should be reassigned?	☐	☐	☐
2.4	Who decides who takes over when the assigned person is unavailable?	☐	☐	☐
2.5	Who decides when responsibility for someone's care is transferred to another person?	☐	☐	☐

3. Pastoral-Care Scope & Boundaries

		APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
3.1	Who decides whether a person's need is something the church can appropriately address through pastoral care?	☐	☐	☐
3.2	Who decides when a situation has gone beyond someone's pastoral-care role?	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Who decides when a pastor, leader, or volunteer should stop handling a situation alone?	☐	☐	☐
3.4	Who decides when additional leadership needs to become involved?	☐	☐	☐
3.5	Who decides what to do when someone receiving care repeatedly crosses established boundaries?	☐	☐	☐

4. Ongoing Pastoral Care

		APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
4.1	Who decides how often pastoral-care contact should occur?	☐	☐	☐
4.2	Who decides when the level of pastoral support needs to increase or decrease?	☐	☐	☐
4.3	Who decides when another pastor, ministry, or care team should become involved?	☐	☐	☐
4.4	Who decides when active pastoral care can be closed?	☐	☐	☐
4.5	Who decides when pastoral support should continue after other professional help begins?	☐	☐	☐

5. Mental-Health & Crisis Situations

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
5.1 Who decides when the church's crisis-response process should be activated?	☐	☐	☐
5.2 Who takes leadership when someone may be in immediate danger?	☐	☐	☐
5.3 Who decides when emergency services or a crisis service should be contacted?	☐	☐	☐
5.4 Who decides when a mental-health concern requires immediate professional help?	☐	☐	☐
5.5 Who decides who stays with or supports the person while emergency or crisis help is being arranged?	☐	☐	☐
5.6 Who decides who communicates with appropriate church leadership during a serious crisis?	☐	☐	☐

6. Safety, Abuse & Serious Concerns

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
6.1 Who takes responsibility when suspected abuse or neglect is reported?	☐	☐	☐
6.2 Who decides when a safety concern must immediately move to senior leadership?	☐	☐	☐
6.3 Who makes sure required reporting is completed?	☐	☐	☐
6.4 Who decides what immediate steps the church takes to protect someone who may be at risk?	☐	☐	☐
6.5 Who handles situations involving threats of harm to another person?	☐	☐	☐
6.6 Who decides when the church's safeguarding process should be activated?	☐	☐	☐

7. Referrals & Outside Professional Help

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
7.1 Who decides when someone's needs require help beyond what the church provides?	☐	☐	☐
7.2 Who decides when a mental-health professional should be involved?	☐	☐	☐
7.3 Who decides when another type of outside professional or community service is needed?	☐	☐	☐
7.4 Who decides which professional, organization, or service the church recommends?	☐	☐	☐
7.5 Who approves additions or changes to the church's referral directory?	☐	☐	☐
7.6 Who decides when the church should help make a direct connection instead of simply giving someone contact information?	☐	☐	☐

8. Collaboration & Handoffs

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
8.1 Who decides when the church should collaborate with an outside professional?	☐	☐	☐
8.2 Who decides which church leader will communicate with an outside professional?	☐	☐	☐
8.3 Who decides what pastoral support continues after a referral?	☐	☐	☐
8.4 Who decides when responsibility is being handed from one church leader or team to another?	☐	☐	☐
8.5 Who confirms that the person actually connected with the next source of care?	☐	☐	☐
8.6 Who decides what happens when a referral or handoff does not work?	☐	☐	☐

9. Confidentiality, Consent & Information Sharing

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
9.1 Who decides which pastoral-care roles are allowed to receive confidential information?	☐	☐	☐
9.2 Who decides when pastoral-care information may be shared with another church leader?	☐	☐	☐
9.3 Who decides when the person's permission is needed before information is shared?	☐	☐	☐
9.4 Who decides what information is appropriate to share with an outside professional?	☐	☐	☐
9.5 Who decides what happens when someone asks a pastor or care team member to keep information secret that raises a serious safety concern?	☐	☐	☐
9.6 Who handles questions or disagreements about confidentiality?	☐	☐	☐

10. Documentation & Pastoral-Care Records

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
10.1 Who decides what pastoral-care interactions must be documented?	☐	☐	☐
10.2 Who decides who is responsible for completing documentation?	☐	☐	☐
10.3 Who decides who may access pastoral-care records?	☐	☐	☐
10.4 Who decides how incorrect information in a record is corrected?	☐	☐	☐
10.5 Who decides when pastoral-care information may be released?	☐	☐	☐
10.6 Who is responsible for making sure records are stored and handled according to the church's established process?	☐	☐	☐

11. Follow-Up & Continuity

APPLIES NO DISCUSS

11.1	Who decides who is responsible for follow-up after pastoral care is provided?	☐	☐	☐
11.2	Who decides when follow-up should occur?	☐	☐	☐
11.3	Who decides who follows up after a referral?	☐	☐	☐
11.4	Who decides what happens when someone cannot be reached?	☐	☐	☐
11.5	Who decides what happens when someone continues to need care after the original issue has been addressed?	☐	☐	☐
11.6	Who decides when a pastoral-care matter can be considered complete?	☐	☐	☐

12. Complaints, Problems & Quality Concerns

APPLIES NO DISCUSS

12.1	Who receives complaints about pastoral care?	☐	☐	☐
12.2	Who decides who reviews a complaint or concern?	☐	☐	☐
12.3	Who decides what happens when care was missed or delayed?	☐	☐	☐
12.4	Who decides what happens when a pastor, leader, or volunteer does not follow the church's established care process?	☐	☐	☐
12.5	Who decides when corrective action is necessary?	☐	☐	☐
12.6	Who decides when someone should be removed from a particular care situation?	☐	☐	☐
12.7	Who makes the final decision when leaders disagree about how care was handled?	☐	☐	☐

13. Policies, Exceptions & Ministry Decisions

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
13.1 Who can approve an exception to the normal pastoral-care process?	☐	☐	☐
13.2 Who decides what to do when an unusual situation is not covered by an existing policy or procedure?	☐	☐	☐
13.3 Who has final authority to interpret the church's pastoral-care policies?	☐	☐	☐
13.4 Who can approve a change to an established pastoral-care procedure?	☐	☐	☐
13.5 Who can approve a new pastoral-care policy or process?	☐	☐	☐
13.6 Who decides when a pastoral-care problem needs to be brought to senior church leadership?	☐	☐	☐

14. Pastoral-Care Team & Leader Capacity

	APPLIES	NO	DISCUSS
14.1 Who decides who is authorized to provide pastoral care?	☐	☐	☐
14.2 Who decides what training is required before someone begins providing care?	☐	☐	☐
14.3 Who decides when a team member needs additional training or supervision?	☐	☐	☐
14.4 Who decides when a pastor, leader, or volunteer has too many care responsibilities?	☐	☐	☐
14.5 Who can redistribute care responsibilities when someone is overloaded?	☐	☐	☐
14.6 Who decides when someone should temporarily step away from providing pastoral care?	☐	☐	☐
14.7 Who decides who provides backup coverage when a pastor or care team member is unavailable?	☐	☐	☐
14.8 Who decides when additional people or resources are needed to meet the church's pastoral-care demands?	☐	☐	☐

Decisions Unique to Our Church

Add any pastoral-care decisions that were not included in the catalog.

OTHER DECISION 1

OTHER DECISION 2

OTHER DECISION 3

OTHER DECISION 4

OTHER DECISION 5

OTHER DECISION 6

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Take every decision marked Applies to Our Church and transfer it to the Decision Authority Worksheet. For each decision, establish who normally handles it, what they can decide on their own, who they must consult, and when the decision must move to someone with higher authority.

Leadership Approval Signature: _____ Date: _____