



SHEPHERD'S HEART MINISTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE

Student Handbook and Information

A 15-month certificate program designed to equip Ministry Leaders with practical tools to impact marriages, ministries, and communities.

Shepherd's Heart Ministry Training Institute (SHMTI)

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Welcome to the Shepherd's Heart Ministry Training Institute (**SHMTI**). It is our desire that every student apply the principles learned to their own relationships first. The biblically based principles presented have been developed from over 20,000 hours of private counseling experience and 500 six-day faith-based Intensives with pastors, missionaries, and ministry leaders.

OVERVIEW – This 15-month online training program includes counseling tools, techniques, and time-tested skills to improve marriages and equip ministry leaders to serve and teach their staff, congregation, or organization more effectively. This certificate program consists of four semesters of classes (modules) that include teaching videos, practical homework assignments, and group discussions with an assigned cohort group. A complete list of module topics can be found at <https://shministry.com/shmti/>.

The teaching videos are designed with a biblical foundation and supported by numerous scriptures and resources in each module. Classes are taught by seasoned instructors with real-life experience in marriage and ministry.

A class schedule of group discussion dates and module topics will be provided to each student upon acceptance into the program and assignment to a cohort group.

An additional fifth semester is available for those students who would consider joining the SHM Team or becoming an Affiliate Partner with Shepherd's Heart Ministry. Prerequisites for Semester 5 include satisfactory completion of the four basic semesters, application to continue, and endorsement of an SHMTI cohort facilitator (see Semester 5).

This program is not designed or intended as a qualification for a professional career in clinical counseling.

REGISTRATION – Students must be registered to attend and participate in SHMTI classes. Students must be pastoral couples, missionary couples, ministry leaders, or para-church leaders with influence over a group of people. Small groups of elders or deacons in churches led by a pastoral couple or a designated elder are also eligible. New students will not be allowed to join a cohort group after Semester 1, Module 2, and must complete prior missed work. An application may be completed online at <https://shministry.com/shmti/>.

STUDENT ORIENTATION/INTRODUCTORY SESSION – This mandatory orientation will provide basic instructions for each semester, an overview of the online protocol, an opportunity to meet cohort group facilitators, details for cohort group assignments, and an opportunity to ask questions. Please check the **SHMTI** homepage (<https://shministry.com/shmti/>) for the student orientation date and time.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS – Please consider attendance requirements carefully before enrolling in the SHMTI. If a student must miss more than two group discussion sessions in a single semester, please reconsider the timing of enrollment. SHMTI provides students with information and practical tools such as those taught in college-level courses but at no financial cost. Therefore, attendance requirements are implemented. Occasionally, extenuating circumstances (death of a relative, injury, illness of the student, or other special circumstances) may cause unexpected absences. Cohort group facilitators will work with students concerning those absences and will make the final decision about continued participation.

Respect, interaction, and participation are encouraged for all enrolled students, as it will provide a greater grasp of understanding of the subject matter. Sessions will begin and end on time.

Confidentiality is essential to provide a safe place to ask questions, express thoughts, share your heart, and interact in a learning environment. Each student will be required to sign a **Confidentiality Agreement** before participating in the first group discussion.

ONLINE VIDEO & HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS – Each module includes a teaching video, a Life Application homework assignment, reading and writing a resource article summary, group discussion, and module evaluation.

Access to each module is provided directly by cohort group facilitators. Each module has a unique password, also provided by facilitators. Most homework assignments are completed online and submitted to facilitators at least two days before the group discussion for each module. Facilitators will review student homework before group discussions.

Teaching videos and assignments for each module should be completed within the two-week schedule between group discussions (but submitted two days before group discussions). The time required to complete all assignments for each module will typically be 1-2 ½ hours.

GROUP DISCUSSION – Group Discussion dates will be provided to each cohort group. Group discussions will last 1 ½ -2 hours as determined by the facilitator. Facilitators guide the sessions, but student participation is important. Students must have cameras on and be visible throughout the entire group discussion time.

Before a scheduled group discussion, facilitators will send students a Zoom link. It is the student's responsibility to inform their facilitator of any changes in contact information or email address-to receive Zoom links and passwords in a timely manner.

CLASS EVALUATION – Learning Objectives are provided for each module. Students will complete an evaluation based on learning objectives, the teaching video, and homework assignments for each module after the group discussion for that module and before beginning the following module. Class evaluations provide an opportunity to give feedback and suggestions on course content, highlight what students consider most important, and explain how students may use information from the module. Students are highly encouraged to complete the evaluation after every module. All comments are confidential.

LATE/MISSING ASSIGNMENTS – All late or missing assignments must be completed and turned in before the following module's group discussion. SHMTI is committed to helping students understand and complete assigned work for personal enrichment and to benefit relationally from these modules. For this reason, all late and missing assignments are required to be completed.

GRADUATION/CERTIFICATE – To receive an SHMTI certificate and participate in the graduation ceremony, students must complete all modules in all four semesters.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL – The videos, PDFs, and handouts are part of the SHMTI and are considered copyrighted materials. Upon enrolling in the SHMTI, each student agrees that all material and content presented, whether written or recorded, will not be used for personal gain or given away to anyone unaffiliated with or not enrolled in the SHM Training Institute.

TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS/HARDWARE AND PERIPHERALS – You must have reliable access to a personal computer/device. Tablets, iPads, and laptops are all acceptable devices. Smartphone usage is dependent upon the service/coverage.

DEVICE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Desktop Device
 - Processor - i3 or newer (AMD equivalent)
 - RAM – 4 GB minimum (more will help with the video streaming)
- Operating System
 - Windows 7 (Windows 10 preferred)
 - MacOS x with macOS 10.9 or later
- Browser
 - Edge Version 12 or newer
 - Chrome version 30 or newer
- Internet
 - Hi-speed internet running at least 5 MB
 - Can include phones running 4G LTE or 5G
- Audio/Video Requirements
 - Camera, microphone and speakers
 - Microphone must have mute button (to ensure no disruptions)
 - If 2 devices with headphones (speaker and microphone) are used in proximity, ensure that the devices have sufficient distance to eliminate feedback or distortion of sound
 - Muting the microphone during the group discussion is recommended. Unmute to speak, then mute again after speaking

SHMTI Class Module Descriptions

DISC Personality Profile – Understanding personality strengths and weaknesses can help us discover and explore individual personality traits and help explain why couples have difficulty in their marriages. Learn how to help couples manage their personality “differences” to benefit the marital relationship.

Priorities – One of the seven foundational pillars in marriage that requires attention and evaluation if a couple desires to have a marriage that follows God’s Priority Structure. Learn the difference between God’s Priority Structure and the world’s priorities and how to biblically defend the structure God has given us.

Safety – Safety is a key issue in a relationship if a couple desires an emotionally intimate marriage. Learn how to create a “safe place” in relationships and how to identify what makes others feel emotionally, physically, and spiritually safe in their relationships.

Friendship and Covenant – Developing a strong friendship before marriage is crucial, but when a couple becomes involved sexually before marriage, friendship building is stunted. Learn why the emotional state of their relationship has been delayed and how to repair their “Friendship Ladder” and begin growing again.

(Covenant) Couples recite the vow “until death do us part” when they marry, but many later say they did not truly understand what those words meant. Learn the two parts of a covenant marriage, how to determine if couples are in a covenant marriage, and understand how a "Covenant Fence" can bring security into the relationship.

Forgiveness - Central to many marital problems are unresolved issues that plague couples’ hearts, especially where unforgiveness has infiltrated the relationship. Learn why it is important to live in a place of total forgiveness and the process to achieve it.

Trust – Forgiveness does not equal automatic trust. Learn how to differentiate between the two and a proven process to rebuild broken trust in a relationship.

Need Meeting in Relationships – Meeting a spouse’s needs begins with agape love, a biblical, sacrificial love that is like emotional air, water, and food to the soul. Learn the difference between needs and wants and how to develop a Needs List with action steps that will bring definition, understanding, and guidance to the marriage relationship.

Unique Self/Identity – Understanding our true identity in Christ is foundational. Thoughts, actions, emotions, and relationships impact our identity and influence decision-making and behavior. Learn strategies to rediscover and transform self-beliefs to live out a true identity in Christ.

Core Longings & Structures of Healing – God birthed six core longings in our souls. Often, we look for those core longings to be met by others, which can be destructive and result in dysfunctional behaviors and unprocessed wounds. Learn to identify personal core longings, help others identify theirs, and how to walk through the structures of healing to break the cycle of shame, fear, and control.

Burnout, Stress & Compassion Fatigue – Understanding the difference between burnout, stress, and compassion fatigue can help assess our present state of well-being and know how to prepare a plan of self-care to achieve a healthy state of living. Learn the causes, symptoms, warning signs, and how to balance ministry and marriage successfully.

Setting Effective Boundaries – Setting effective boundaries is crucial for pastoral couples to maintain a healthy balance in their lives and ministry. Help couples understand why they struggle with boundaries, recognize when and how to set boundaries, and empower them to protect their well-being while fulfilling their ministry commitments.

Rules of Conflict – When routine disagreements escalate to the point that the safety or well-being of others is at risk, conflict resolution is needed. Explore the Fear Dance (G. Smalley), which helps identify buttons and unhealthy responses in conflict, and learn various examples of how to develop appropriate Rules of Conflict for any relationship.

Issues of the Blended Family/Remarriage – Statistics show an alarming decline in the success of second, third, or subsequent marriages. Transitioning into a new blended family is difficult for both parents and children. Understanding a structure for making parental decisions creates a safe space for children to thrive and contributes to the success of the blended family. Learn why remarriages succeed or fail and the tools to help remarried couples manage the issues of the blended family.

Pitfalls of Pornography – Learn the pitfalls of pornography and understand why it is so difficult for those trapped in this area of sin. Understand the role of the “IP Mistress” as she lures her prey in secrecy and is always available anytime and anywhere. Learn how to make a plan to get out of the cycle and find resources that anyone can use in the struggle.

Sexual Intimacy – Interactions and input of life experiences shape sexual development at different ages and stages of life (Penner). Study the stages of sexual development and explore some “plain talk” to men and women in an area that is not often comfortable for most couples to discuss. This session provides tools to open up communication between a husband and wife in this very delicate area of their relationship.

Six Areas of Intimacy – Most often the word “intimacy” is used to describe sexual behavior. However, true intimacy comes from the heart and is experienced on several different levels. Learn how to help clients identify where they are and how to build or rebuild their relationships at each level.

Building Emotional Intimacy – Emotional intimacy in marriage is a heart-to-heart connection between spouses, sharing feelings, emotions, and experiences, requiring an intentional attachment to one another, and choosing one another over other relationships. How do couples develop a deeply emotional connection in marriage? Learn tools to give couples hope, and prepare them for action, attitudes, and words that will create, restore, and nurture their emotional intimacy.

Grief & Loss – Loss is part of human existence and grief is the natural response. Grief is basic to the human condition, but it expresses itself differently in each person affecting body, soul, mind, and spirit. It takes on many forms, it moves and changes. Grief creates a new normal. Learn to recognize the symptoms and reactions of grief and techniques to manage and mediate grief in light of God’s hope and freedom in the journey.

Creating a Marriage Vision – Most couples enter into marriage with certain expectations. Unfulfilled expectations can cause major disappointment and negatively affect the relationship. Establishing a Marriage Vision can bring clarity and resolution. Learn how to create and implement a Marriage Vision that will provide clarity and help couples reach their desired goals.

Spiritual Issues – Being aware of and equipped to deal with spiritual issues in ministry is crucial. Its negative impact should drive Christians to prayer. Learn to recognize common attacks of the enemy and how to create a battle plan to guard against his attacks.

Microskills – The ability to establish a therapeutic relationship or working alliance with the client is essential for the counseling process and for successful outcomes. In this module, you will learn skills such as empathy, respect, self-disclosure, confrontation, and building hope and the role these skills play in the effectiveness of the counselor or clergy care specialist.

Counselor Pitfalls – Misunderstanding the role of the Clergy Care Specialist/Counselor, making assumptions, and personality incompatibility are just a few of the pitfalls that Clergy Care Specialists/Counselors must be cognizant of in facilitating counseling sessions. Learn to recognize limitations that can cause harm to clients and undermine the effectiveness of the counselor.

Client-Centered Problems – Clients have their own perceptions of reality, wanting a quick fix for their problems, and some may have ulterior motives. Learn how to recognize the issues that could create barriers to the client’s progress and obstacles for the counselor.

Counselor/Client Communication – The ability to communicate well is a cornerstone of any healthy relationship. The ability to verbalize thoughts and feelings in a positive yet assertive manner can be the key to emotional stability and successful sessions. Learn how to ask the right questions and acquire attentive listening skills to open communication pathways with clients.

Cross-Cultural Counseling – How comfortable are you with “different”? This is a question all counselors must address when working with people of other cultures. All cultures have specific rituals and traditions that define who they are and how they view and live life. Values, morals, and ethics are highly influenced by one’s culture, which can be a huge obstacle in relationships, especially multicultural marriages. Learn essential qualities necessary to connect with those from different cultures, and how to help couples understand and manage their cultural differences.

Ethics in Counseling – Ethics in counseling provides a framework for counselors that protects both the client and the counselor. It is imperative to understand the roles, rules, and boundaries set forth by regulatory agencies to operate within legal standards. Learn from a faith-based perspective how to maintain those standards while serving clients with care and compassion.

NOTE: The order of modules and module topics are subject to change.

SEMESTER 5 – You and your spouse are eligible if:

- You have the heart to help pastoral couples, missionaries, and ministry leaders in crisis.
- You have the desire to receive additional training in the SHM faith-based intensive model.
- You have successfully completed Semesters 1-4 of the SHMTI.
- You have your facilitator's endorsement that you are suited for this type of ministry.
- You have the time/finances to be able to travel to the Colorado Training Center (2-3 times). We are exploring additional remote training for follow-up sessions.
- You are willing to go through a personal intensive with the SHM trainers.
- You are willing to observe one or more intensive sessions to get a clear understanding of the process.
- You are willing to raise your own financial support.
- You understand that your title would be *Clergy Care Specialist unless you are a licensed counselor in your geographic area.
- You have completed the Counselor/Clergy Care Specialist application process which includes a personal interview with the ministry director.
- You have served in ministry as a pastor, on the field as a missionary, or in a ministry that understands the sacrifice of servitude.
- You have viewed the 17-minute Intensive video.
- You have your own ministry but desire to partner with SHM as an **Affiliate Partner.

***SHM Counselors or Clergy Care Specialists** are couples who are interested in joining the SHM team on a full-time basis by providing a minimum of two Intensives per month to pastoral couples, missionary couples, or ministry couples at NO COST using the SHM Intensive model and tools.

****Affiliate Partners** are couples who have their own ministry and would like to partner with SHM by providing a minimum of ONE Intensive per month to pastoral couples, missionary couples, or ministry leaders at NO COST, for three years or 36 Intensives upon the completion of their training program. Each couple will be asked to sign a Covenant Agreement with SHM.