

features

What is Cornerstone Counseling of Ashland?

CHANTE RUTHERFORD
Reporter

Located on Claremont Ave., sits a building where people can work their way towards a better life. Cornerstone Counseling of Ashland has made an impact on the Ashland community for not only its natives but for the students at AU.

Their goal is to “help you recognize the problems that are holding you back, draining you of your emotional strength and keeping you from building a full and rewarding life,” as stated on their website.

This has been a passion for the counselors, especially Debbie Portner, the owner and clinical director of Cornerstone’s Ashland location since 2007.

While Portner owns the practice itself, she has been a counselor as part of the Ashland University Seminary School.

“Cornerstone was established 30 years ago in Ashland but I bought Cornerstone Counseling



Clients are greeted with business cards and comfortable seating.

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“We have our own bubbles that we are in but we always reach and tag-team with others,” Portner

get the help they need,” she said. By car, the ride takes less than two minutes. If students decide to

“I’ve dealt with a lot of student-athletes. That is a very stressful thing to balance in your life and especially if someone gets hurt or the whole trajectory of their life changes when they’re not an athlete anymore,” she said.

Portner enjoys working with different age groups, but prefers helping college students.

“I love helping athletes and students get to this level of functioning and integrating back into their sport or school and not feel completely isolated because they no longer feel like this person they identified with,” she said.

Going to counseling is not just for those with depression or anxiety. Life can knock you down and gaining that guidance can make a great impact.

“The cool thing about college students that I love working with is that there is so much hope. I’m dealing with very intelligent people who simply got stuck,” Portner said. “It’s really cool that we can help them get unstuck and get back on track and not say, ‘I’m done.’”

As people call in and explain



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Cornerstone provides pamphlets for other services that aim help improve one’s way of life.

Associates in 2007 when I was a counselor there,” Portner said.

The prior owner of Cornerstone Counseling Associates was John Schulz, former president of the Ashland Theological Seminary.

In 2012, the counseling service moved to its current location.

Portner has been involved with Ashland for a number of years now, with both of her children having attended AU.

In the office, 13 counselors work with many patients ranging from young children to the elderly. These counselors are trained and licensed with various credentials, while specializing in different areas.

“We deal with any mental, emotional or relationship issue you can possibly imagine,” Portner said.

Some specialize in counseling children while others are skilled in marital counseling. Some, like Portner, deal with a wide variety of patients.

For many people who are not immersed in the world of counseling and mental health, they may get confused on who to go to when in need of assistance for their well being.

“Cornerstone has clinical counselors who have worked independently for years and have been licensed in their specific area to the point that they can own their own practice. Testing and diagnosing can be involved, but there is more of a focus on rebuilding the person.

Psychologists are capable of running tests and diagnosing patients, such as tests for learning and mental disabilities. Psychiatrists have the ability to prescribe medication to people.

Knowing the difference allows the general public to understand who needs to be sought out.

walk there, it is roughly under 10 minutes.

Students have the ability to talk



One of the counseling rooms.

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about the struggles of college in a private manner without anyone speculating.

their problems, the search for the best fitting counselor within the practice begins.

group therapy,” Portner said. “This is a great thing to have.”

Cornerstone Counseling at Ashland helps people take the necessary steps to gain counseling and create a better life. If you or someone you know feels they could benefit from this opportunity, contact Cornerstone at (419) 289-1876 or visit their office located at 502 Claremont Ave.



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A conference room for the counselors.