

Client Information and Consent

What is counselling?

The purpose of the counselling is to encourage and help you to make positive changes in your life by

- identifying, clarifying and addressing challenges, issues or problems
- setting personal goals for change
- developing and implementing plans that foster holistic wellbeing.

The role of the counsellor is to work with you toward the goals and aspirations you set. Counselling is a client-led and client-focused relationship. The reality and uniqueness of your life is taken into account. This includes an awareness of influences such as age, development, education, disability, spirituality & religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenous identity, nationality and gender.

The Counselling process may involve work with current issues, an immediate crisis or more long term difficulties. It may explore your personal and family history. It will involve a holistic assessment looking at your wellbeing from multiple (and overlapping) perspectives including mental, emotional, physical, social, cultural and spiritual.

Counselling is a respectful and gentle process. However, it can still be challenging and does involve some risks. There is no guarantee that the outcome of counselling will be what is expected or hoped for. Depending on the nature of the issue and the goals, the counselling relationship may be short term or longer term.

The Counselling Relationship

To make the counselling relationship and process as safe and effective as possible, there are some guidelines we must follow. These flow from the *Code of Ethics and Practice* of the Australian Counselling Association that their members adopt.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Your information and anything you share with us will be treated confidentially and kept securely. It will not be shared outside the counselling context without your written consent unless your counsellor:

- has good reason to believe that you may harm another person, then your counsellor must contact police and ask them to protect your intended victim.
- has good reason to believe that you or someone else is abusing or neglecting a child or vulnerable adult, then your counsellor must contact relevant authorities.
- believes you are in imminent danger of harming yourself, then your counsellor must conduct a verbal assessment and determine the level of risk and appropriate course of action. Your options will be discussed with you.
- is ordered by the court to disclose information.
- is participating in personal professional supervision (see next section)

In addition, if you are receiving counselling as part of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and your employer is paying for your sessions, they are also our client, and we owe a duty toward them too. Disclosure in EAP counselling of anything that poses a serious risk to your employer cannot be considered confidential.

Professional Supervision

Counsellors are required to participate in supervision with a certified supervisor as part of their professional training and personal development. During supervision, your counsellor may discuss aspects of your case for the purpose of finding additional ways of helping you and caring for your welfare. When this is done, you are not identified in any way.

Session recording: To maximise the effectiveness of our professional development and supervision we may ask for your consent to record a counselling session. Recordings are kept secure and confidentially until needed for such supervision and then destroyed. Recording can be stopped at any time on your request.

Fees and Payment

The agreed session fee will be invoiced to you soon after the session concludes. Payment can be made either by credit card or direct account transfer. If you are not able to attend a session, please give 24 hours' notice. Insufficient notice or missed sessions may incur an 50% session cost. In the event of outstanding payments, further sessions will be paused until payment arrangements are made.

If your sessions are covered as part of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) the session fee will be invoiced anonymously to your employer under the terms of our agreement with them. After the agreed number of EAP sessions have taken place, any future session you agree to will be at your expense. This is always be discussed with you prior to completion of your last EAP session.



Acknowledgement and Consent

Please discuss with your counsellor any questions or concerns you have before signing this form. We do not want you to sign until you clearly understand!

- I have read and understood the information in this form.
- I agree to these conditions for the counselling services to be provided.
- I am open to considering a request to have counselling sessions recorded for the purpose of professional development and supervision.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____