



New Perspectives Counselling

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

It is important for you to read over the following points and ask any questions that you may have.

Nature of Counselling: As your counsellor, I will encourage you, the client, to set specific goals for counselling and will generally use a client centred, integrated approach to help meet your stated needs. I will work with you to help you achieve your therapeutic goals through unconditional acceptance, empathy, and a willingness to be sincere. It is not the counsellor's role to evaluate or judge the client's actions. Participation in counselling therapy is voluntary; however the collaborative outcome is directly influenced by the client's honesty, openness, and willingness to actively engage in the therapeutic process with the counsellor/ therapist. The client may terminate the sessions at any time and that decision will be supported.

Effects of Counselling: As a client progresses through counselling there can be emotional ups and downs. Sometimes in counselling one may feel worse before feeling better - this is a normal part of therapy. While benefits are expected from counselling, specific results are not guaranteed. Counselling is a personal exploration and may lead to major changes in your life. These changes may affect others in your life and some of these life changes could be temporarily distressing. The exact nature of these changes cannot be predicted. Together we will work to achieve the best possible results for you. This issue can be discussed in more detail, if there are any questions or comments. Please be advised that some sessions may involve: tapping on specific acupuncture points; unresolved memories, emotions and/or physical sensations surfacing; and after the session, processing may continue.

Session fees: The \$90 fee (plus 5% GST) is set per one 60-90 minute session, (90 minutes is scheduled for the Intake session) and the counsellor agrees to provide counselling services. Session duration could be weekly / bi-monthly / monthly / based on the client's needs. Payment in full for sessions is payable at the end of each session, unless otherwise arranged. In the event that you will not be able to keep an appointment, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance; cancellations of less than 24 hours notice are normally charged half the sessional rate. Other services, such as lengthy letters, reports, consultations and phone conversations may be billed at an hourly rate.

Counselling Relationship: Ours is a professional relationship rather than a social one. Our contact will be limited to counselling sessions arranged with me except in case of emergency when you may contact me by phone. Please do not invite me to social gatherings, offer me gifts, ask me to write references for you or ask me to relate to you in any way other than the professional context of our counselling sessions. If I see you in public, I will protect your confidentiality by acknowledging you only if you approach me first. I will not discuss details of the counselling sessions in public. I may consult with supervisors, colleagues or other health professionals regarding the management of cases. Every effort is made to protect the identity of you, the client.

In the case of couples counselling: I will keep confidential (within limits cited in the consent form) anything you disclose to me without your spouse's knowledge. However, I encourage open communication between couples, and I reserve the right to terminate our counselling relationship if I judge the secret to be detrimental to the therapeutic progress. To protect you against unfair bias on my part, I will not engage in couples counselling after establishing a relationship with one member of the couple through individual counselling. If you have established a relationship with me as a couple, I will then engage in individual sessions concurrent with ongoing couples sessions, should you wish to do so.

Other: As happens from time to time, I may have clients who know each other. I will keep confidential anything you disclose to me. You, of course, are free to disclose whatever you wish. Please be aware that if you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your confidentiality you are always welcome to bring them to me for a discussion. If you do not feel I am adequately addressing these concerns, you can contact my supervisor (contact information below). Finally, in case of any potential conflicts, I reserve the right to continue counselling with the primary client (here being the first client who had first contact), offering a referral to the other.

Records and Confidentiality: All of our communication and what happens in session becomes a part of your clinical record. Keeping files allows me to work with you in a planned and organized manner tracking goals and progress. Most of my client records are kept in my account at Owl Practice - a Canadian website for mental health practitioners. Owl Practice stores all my client data in the cloud, in accordance with PHIPA privacy guidelines. Any paper notes I have will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. These records will be maintained for eleven years after our last counselling contact, in accordance with the Alberta Health Act. Therefore, you will be unable to access your information after this time unless other arrangements are made. In case of my death, a designated registered counsellor will maintain my files.

Responding to a Subpoena: In the event that a subpoena for records or testimony is received, it is the policy of this office to: (1) Notify the client and provide a copy of the subpoena, (2) have the client complete a release of information according to the provincial and federal laws of Canada, and (3) review all client records to be released to the courts with the client. Unless otherwise previously agreed in writing, all services and expenses incurred by the provider for court related issues would be charged to the client and subject to regular payment policies. Any time required for contact with lawyers, depositions or courtroom proceedings would be subject to the estimated professional fees and regular payment policies.

Clients Rights: Some clients achieve their goals in only a few counselling sessions; others may take longer. As a client, you are in control of your healing process and may decide to end the counselling relationship at any time. However, because of the nature of the issues that bring clients into counselling, if you suddenly discontinue counselling without notifying me, I may contact you to ensure that you have received the services you required.

Additionally, because you are in control, you don't have to do anything you don't want to do. I may suggest using a certain protocol that I think will be helpful, and you have the right to ask questions regarding the nature and details of the protocol or technique, refuse or discuss modification of it. Furthermore, you are always welcome to ask about anything with which you have questions.

I assure you that my services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with accepted legal standards as well as acceptable ethical standards, as provided by the association in which I belong. If at any time for any reason you are dissatisfied with my services, please let me know so we can discuss and resolve the issue. If you can't find resolution with me, then you can make a report to my supervisor Kristy Higgins. Her contact information is: kristy.higgins@shaw.ca or (250) 309-9721. If you don't receive satisfactory resolution of your issues through my supervisor, you can report to my regulatory body - The Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada (ACCT). My membership number is #2155.