

Counselling Consent

What is counselling all about?

Counselling is time that has been set aside for **you**. It is a time and place where we can talk about some things that you may be stressed about. But, more importantly, it is a time for you to discover more about yourself.

So that you can better understand what this journey is going to be like, I have created a package for you to read. Please read this package and ask me questions about anything you may be wondering about. I will give you a copy to read and we will also go through this package together. Once we've gone through and discussed it, I will ask you to sign that you have understood the information.

How will counselling help?

You probably have many questions about counselling. Counselling may be helpful to you as it may clarify how you think and feel about issues in your life. It may also guide you in making changes in your life. For example, it can help you set goals and identify ways you can achieve them. But more importantly, it will help you to better understand yourself. You are the one most responsible for making changes in your life. Don't worry if it sounds scary. I will try my best to guide you through it.

Risks involved in counselling

Counselling may change the way you view yourself because a big part of counselling is exploring your feelings about who you are and the things you've experienced. Hopefully, you will find the counselling experience to be supportive, but there may be times that you feel somewhat challenged.

This can be a little upsetting for you and can make you feel somewhat anxious but it's important that you are aware that this might happen. In addition, as a result of some of our conversations, you might make decisions and feel things that you might not have as a result of coming to counselling. It is important to recognize some of the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing so that we can talk about them and give you resources that might help you.

Values Statement

As much as possible, I will remain neutral in regards to personal values and beliefs that you may have. It is important for you to know, however, that there may be times that I feel my values are in conflict with yours. This could be a hindrance to the counselling process, and I will inform you if I feel that this is happening.

Who am I as your counsellor?

My name is Marvin Vandenhoeck. I have a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology from the University of Lethbridge, and am a Canadian Certified Counsellor. I've been working in counselling since 2010, with a variety of populations. I am a member of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association and abide by it' code of ethics.



Contact information

I can be contacted in the following ways:

Phone: 403-894-7302

Email: marvin.vandenhoeke@gmail.com

Please limit information relayed via text messages or emails to things like appointment schedules or other administrative things.

How confidential is counselling?

Because your privacy is important to me, I will take great care to keep things we talk about during our counselling sessions private and confidential. I feel that this is an important part of the relationship between us because what you have to say is very personal and I want to respect your privacy.

However, there are a few exceptions where the law expects that I may have to draw in additional resources:

1. If you threaten to or are seriously harming yourself.
2. If a court orders me to provide information.
3. If I suspect abuse or neglect or you tell me about a dependent adult or child between the ages of 0 to 18 who is being abused or neglected or is witnessing abuse/neglect, I, as a counsellor am required by law to report this information.
4. If you reveal to me information about past, present or future crimes committed by yourself or someone else.
5. If you reveal to me information about illegal or unethical conduct of other health-care professionals.

Alternatives to Counselling

Sometimes counselling is not the right fit for people at this point in their lives. Some examples of alternative treatments may be:

1. Visits to a doctor to diagnose any medical conditions.
2. Self-help programs.
3. Group therapy programs
4. Stress management programs
5. Peer-support groups
6. Meditation/yoga
7. Nutritional therapy
8. Spiritual/Pastoral Counselling

Cost of Counselling

My regular rate for counselling is \$100 per session, payable at the end of each session. If you plan on missing or miss a scheduled appointment, please call at least 24 hours in advance to cancel or you will be responsible for payment. If you are late, the appointment still will end on time. If you are having difficulty making your payments, please discuss this with me and we can make other arrangements.

A little bit more about the Counselling relationship

The therapeutic relationship that we will develop is different from your other relationships. The code of ethics that I follow has rules against the following interactions to protect both of us:

- I cannot be your friend nor have any kind of sexual or romantic relationship with you or a former client because my role is to be a helper.
- I cannot have a social or business relationship with you.
- There may be times that we may meet each other in public. Because I care about your privacy and to prevent any awkwardness, in general, we will have to keep the conversation to “small talk” and keep any “counseling” related things for our sessions together.
- Please use texts or emails only for scheduling or other administrative things.
- I value your feedback and so let’s agree to be open and honest with each other.

Additional Limits to Confidentiality

There are some additional instances that I want to tell you about where your privacy may not be protected and where I reserve the right to take action based on the information provided to me.

- If I am acting in a court appointed capacity.
- If you require hospitalization or if you require immediate medical attention.
- If you are under the age of 18 or a dependent adult.
- If you initiate a court case against me.
- If your information is required for third-party referrals and/or billing or fee collection services.

Expectations of our Sessions

How many times will we see each other?

It is hard for me to know how many sessions you will need right now. I will confirm with you during our next meetings how many sessions you will need after I learn a little bit more about your concerns. Some factors that may influence how many sessions you may need:

1. The nature of the issue(s) you are facing.
2. The rate of progress you are making in counselling.
3. The amount you can afford.

How long will we see each other at each session?

1. Our sessions will generally be 50 minutes in length. However, there may be times that I may ask you to schedule a longer time block if I feel you will benefit from it.
2. It is also possible that I may have to cancel an appointment. If this happens I will let you know as soon as I can.

Counselling Records

Once you have agreed to start counselling, I will keep a file with some basic information. In keeping with my code of ethics, all files will be kept for ten years after the file is closed, and then shredded. Also you have the right to see your file at any time. In addition, as your counsellor, I am also required to write down some things about our time together. This is mainly for me to track progress.

All client files will be kept in a locked, secure place that only training staff (if you have given them permission) and I have access to. Electronic files will be encrypted for additional security. Please note that any email or text message correspondences will also be recorded and kept on file.

Who has access to my files?

As we discussed last week, YOU have access to your files at any time. If you would like any of your information shared with someone like a doctor or a family member, just let me know and it will be arranged. Staff at this office sometimes also trains future counsellors. As a result, trainees may have access to your files for educational purposes. They will only have access if you give permission.

Additionally, management or audit staff may also review some files for accreditation purposes. This is so that we can continue to better the service we are providing to you. There may be times that I would like to share some of your information with one of your family members if I think it may be beneficial for you. I will only do so if I get your give permission. In order to provide you with the best service possible, I may need to consult with another counsellor or my supervisor regarding some of the things we talk about. I will not share any identifying information with them and I will discuss outcomes of these conversations with you as well if it is applicable.

Other Privacy Concerns

There may also be times that our sessions will be recorded either in audio or video format. These recordings will only be viewed by my supervisors or other counsellors/trainees within this agency. The purpose of recording sessions is to make us better counsellors and in turn, make your time with us of more value to you. You will be asked to sign a separate permission form before this happens. If you do agree to this, you have the right to stop the recording at any time. Only staff hired by this organization and who have undergone privacy training will have access to appointment books and/or my day planner.

Favours /Gifts

Sometimes after being in counselling for a while, especially successful therapy, clients want to give their counsellor a small gift to thank them. While I appreciate your gratitude, I am not permitted to give or to receive gifts from clients as my duty as a counsellor is to care for you in a professional role.

Research

In order to help improve my services to you and the profession of counselling, management services may ask the administrative and intern staff to review files of clients to use information about the process of therapy for research purposes. Any data collected for research purposes is NOT permitted unless YOU give permission for this to occur. You will be asked for that permission if and when research is conducted. Please be assured that your name or personal information will not be included in any publications.

End of our Counselling Sessions

You will generally know in advance if we are nearing the end of our counselling sessions as we will be discussing your progress on a regular basis. If you feel at any time that you would like therapy to stop, you have the right to do so. I would ask, however, that if you make a decision between our scheduled sessions to end counselling, that you come back for one last sessions, so we can discuss your reasons. It will give us a chance to talk about your future outside of therapy or work out a transition plan for you. And more importantly, I value your feedback. Similarly, if I decide that I can no longer provide you with therapy, I will be sure to give you sufficient notice and refer you to someone who will be able to provide you with more appropriate care.

Goals of Counselling

Congratulations on making the first step towards a stronger you! In order for these sessions to be an efficient use of your time, it is important that we set some achievable goals.

So, below I would like you to write down three things you want to achieve during these counselling sessions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I can't promise that you will always reach all your desired goals. However, I will be there as a support to you to try to get as close to them as possible.

Overview

- I have read this consent form, and felt like I had enough time to discuss it, ask questions and understand it.
- I agree to engage in counselling with _____ under the conditions outlined in this document.

Client Name (print)

Signature

Date

I, the counsellor, have discussed the content of this consent form with the client.

My observations of this person's behaviour and responses show me that this person understands the nature of treatment, the risks and benefits associated with it, and the contents of this consent form.

Counsellor's Name (print)

Signature

Date

While in counselling, **YOU have the RIGHT:**

- To be respected.
- To be heard.
- To share as little or as much as you want.
- To be informed about the services that are available to you here.
- To question the care you are receiving *especially* if you are anxious or unsure about what we are doing.
- To say "Good-Bye" at any time during our time together.
- To say "No" or "Stop" if you feel uncomfortable.