



# Counselling Agreement Information

## The model of therapy we will be using.

The model of therapy used looks at the past and the present. It considers your family-of-origin, feelings, thought patterns and communication skills, all having in view personal and family restoration to wholeness. It is designed to help you focus on achieving optimum health, encouraging you to seek and find an enriching and fulfilling life.

## What a therapy plan involves

The therapy plan is exactly what the name entails, a plan for your therapy. After the first couple of sessions, usually by the third session, your counsellor will present you with a potential plan for your ongoing therapy. This will lay out for you what the aim of this counselling is, and how it could be achieved. It will also include the frequency and length of therapy and each session, how much each session will cost and how much you would expect to be paying over the full course of therapy. This is discussed with you and an agreement is written up and signed by all parties.

## Confidentially, including matters that must be disclosed to other parties, and note taking and record keeping.

The information discussed will be treated confidentially. However, there are some matters that may not be kept secret in counselling. These include:

- information which you give written permission to disclose,
- matters that relate to possible serious harm to yourself or others,
- children at risk of abuse, and
- matters that need to be disclosed to a court.

In order to maintain counselling association registration, the counsellor is required to have regular supervision and will need to discuss client work with their supervisor. However, they will not disclose your name or anything that would enable you to be identified.

The counsellor will keep brief notes during and/or after each session, again with nothing that could be used to identify you, and these notes will be secured by all reasonable means. Occasionally the counsellor might want to make an audio recording of your session/s for the purpose of monitoring their work, but this would only occur with your prior knowledge and written permission. Again, this data is secured by all reasonable means and any recordings will be destroyed after use.

## Available session lengths, types and their pricing.

Sessions can be as short as 30 minutes or as long as 2 hours billed in half hour increments. These will usually be held once a week, at the same time and day each week, though this is negotiable, and will become more spread out as you gain a handle on your presented issue.

The whole session time belongs to you and the fee per hour is \$50 (\$30 HCC holders) and, whether you attend or not, or are late, the whole fee is still payable. If you arrive late, the counsellor will see you for the remainder of the time, the time will not be made up, unless you wish to pay the extra, and providing the counsellor has the time available to see you.

You are personally responsible to pay for all therapy provided for yourself and your minor children (if applicable) at, or prior to, commencement of each session. Any arrangements with insurance companies, employers and the like for reimbursement of fees are your responsibility.

## What happens with cancelled appointments, failing to show for an appointment, and in the case of illness or holidays, for each of us.

If you choose to cancel an appointment with less than 24 hours-notice, or fail to show for an appointment, the full fee is still owed. Leniency in the case of legitimate illness or emergency's will be offered. Any appointments, where you give the counsellor more than 24 hours-notice, will not be charged for, and the time otherwise filled by yourself may be offered to someone else, in the event you choose to reschedule. Please be aware that session time is important and that any more than two reschedules in succession may incur full fee being charged.

Do you wish to receive text message reminders the day prior to your appointment? Please check that box with a tick to indicate yes or cross to indicate no.

At such times when the counsellor has holidays or might attend training workshops/conferences, they will give you as much notice as possible when these would interfere with your session/s, and arrange an alternative time for makeup sessions. In the

event the counsellor is legitimately ill or has an emergency, the counsellor will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible and arrange an alternative time for makeup sessions. As counsellors need to be there for the client 100%, in speaking of counsellor illness, if they are having a bad or off day, it would not be in your best interest to hold the session. In both instances you will only be charged for the makeup session.

If your circumstances change and the session time is no longer suitable, the counsellor will do their best to accommodate this and offer me an alternative time.

**The hours of contact, and what happens outside these hours, or if I can't reach them.**

The counsellor will be contactable only between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday, however may otherwise be busy or in another session when you try contacting. The counsellor will endeavour to return your contact as soon as they can within the above hours. For example, Friday evening contacts will be replied to Monday.

If for any reason you require to talk to the counsellor outside the above hours, a message can be left by either email, text, or phone, or if you need to talk to someone straight away you can call lifeline on 131114 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and if it is an emergency you can call 000. These numbers are readily available elsewhere and have been provided on your counselling agreement. **☑ If it is not safe for me to return your call let me know now, and we can organise other means of making contact that is safe.**

In the case that the above hours do not fall within a suitable time frame for your attendance, alternate arrangements can be made. These will be considered on a case by case basis with venue, time, safety and your temperament taken into consideration.

**The policy on physical touch and outside session contact.**

Any direct touch or other physical contact between you and the counsellor is to be avoided, including handshakes, but in particular, hugging, even if initiated by yourself.

The client counsellor relationship shall remain on a professional basis, and dual or multiple relationships, that is relationships outside this professional relationship, shall be avoided. It is recognised that out of hours contact between counsellor and yourself may inevitably occur, however this must not be seen in any way to compromise or interfere with the therapeutic function of the counsellor or the ongoing integrity and wellbeing of yourself, such contact will be kept as simple as a smile or "hello" initiated only by yourself.

**The complaints process, and recommendation for feedback.**

If you harm or abuse the counsellor in any way, or damage their property, the counsellor has the right to terminate future sessions and charge you for any and all medical expenses and/or the damage caused, and press charges if appropriate.

If you have a complaint about the counsellor or their work, this should be first directed to the counsellor, and then if the issue remains unresolved to the association responsible for issues of professional conduct, the contact details of which the counsellor will provided to you when you ask. You may also take your complaint to whatever other governing body that you deem is relevant.

Any false and unsubstantiated claims will be handled by the counsellor accordingly and charges will be laid appropriately.

At the end of the third session, the counsellor will ask you to complete a short feedback form to gain insight into how you feel about the idea of the counselling and the counsellor. This is so any issues you foresee can be nipped in the bud and counselling can be given the best chance of success. Another feedback form, named "review" on the therapy plan, will be provided at the halfway mark of the agreed number of sessions, in order for both counsellor and yourself to be made completely aware of how the counselling is progressing, and if any changes need to be made. A final feedback will be requested at the termination of the service, this is so the counsellor will be better able to use any feedback given to benefit future clientele.

**The termination of service process.**

If you feel that counselling is not helping you, you agree to discuss the difficulties with the counsellor, rather than abruptly ending the sessions. This discussion will include the aforementioned feedback form and is an opportunity for you to be understood and resolve any issues you have and may be scheduled outside the usual counselling times incurring no cost, of which there will be no pressure on you to continue with counselling if you then decide to terminate, and with no cost involved to do so, except any outstanding fees as discussed in "available session lengths, types and their pricing". It is important for you to know that it is you, the client, who has the deciding say over whether or not to continue, unless by court decision otherwise.

As the agreed sessions draw to a close, the counsellor will discuss with you scheduling sessions further apart to allow you to carry the things you have tried and learnt for a longer period of time between sessions. This has a two-fold effect outworking the skills you have to work things out better on your own and yet still have the support base behind you.