

Defining Solutions Inc.
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Calgary, AB T2P 2V7
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Informed Consent and Agreement to Counselling Services

This form provides you with information regarding what you can expect from the counselling process, fee information, confidentiality, and the shared responsibilities of both psychologist and client. Please read through the entire document and if you have any questions, concerns, or require more detailed information, don't hesitate to speak with your psychologist. Your psychologist will review this with you during your first meeting and if you've understood and consented to the information, you can sign this form at that time.

Competencies:

All of our team members are registered with the College of Alberta Psychologists, and have Master's and/or Ph.D.'s in counselling, as well as post-graduate training and other certifications. We follow the ethical and practice guidelines outlined by the College.

The counselling process:

Counselling is a collaborative endeavour where you bring expertise and knowledge about your unique situation and the psychologist brings her/his clinical experience and knowledge, which is combined to best address the concerns that you would like to work on. It can help to reflect on what changes you would like to make and work collaboratively with your psychologist to map out a plan to help create these changes.

The therapeutic relationship between you and your psychologist is an essential part of the process. It is important that you feel comfortable in working with him/her as the quality of the therapeutic relationship plays a role in predicting positive therapy outcomes. If you do not feel you fit with his/her style, or have concerns about their approach, please let your therapist know and s/he can respond to this and identify how best address this, or help refer you to another psychologist who may be a better fit.

Length of counselling:

Therapy can be both short-term and longer-term so the number of sessions you can expect may vary depending on your priorities and the concerns you would like to work on. As you first engage in counselling it can be useful to meet weekly or bi-weekly and then decide the frequency that works best for you.

Ending counselling:

You have the right to end counselling at any time. It can be useful however, to have a discussion with your psychologist about the reasons for this, and/or to have a conclusion session prior to ending. If you or the psychologist determines that counselling is not helping you reach your goals, you or your counsellor may initiate a discussion about other options; i.e. exploring other counselling treatment methods, referring you to another psychologist who may have more specialized skills, seeking a different type of support, taking a break, or stopping counselling.

Risks and benefits:

Counselling can have many benefits in terms of ways it can improve your quality of life and overall well-being. Sometimes in the process of change, things can be emotionally distressing before they improve, as it involves discussing, remembering and experiencing concerns that may be difficult. As you work through the counselling process and make changes, this can also impact the dynamics of your relationships with others. It's important for you to weigh the risks and benefits before you start this process.

Client records

A written summary of the counselling sessions are recorded after each appointment and stored in a locked file cabinet. Records are kept for a ten-year period, after which time they will be shredded.

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Fees
The standard rate for services with a psychologist is \$180 per hour (Both individual and couples counselling). The fee schedule is in accordance with the recommendations from the Psychologists' Association of Alberta. Some psychologists provide the option of longer or shorter sessions depending on your needs; the fees will be prorated in these cases. Fees are due at the end of each session by cash, cheque, credit or debit card.

If your employer offers extended health benefits, it is your responsibility to pay Defining Solutions directly and then submit your claims through your employer.

If you miss a session, it is your responsibility to pay for the session. This includes when a third party pays for the services.

Psychological services can also be claimed on your income taxes.

A charge for phone or email correspondence, or letter writing over 10 minutes is also applicable.

Cancellation policy
At least 24 hours notice is required should you need to cancel your appointment. Exceptions include unexpected illness, and extreme weather. If you miss an appointment and do not provide 24-hour notice, or cancel the appointment with less than 24 hours notice, the full fee is charged to the credit card you provided on the intake form.

Insurance/Extended Health Care Provider
If your extended health care provider contacts the psychologist to seek information regarding your claim including appointment attendance, dates and fees paid, the psychologist will not release this information unless otherwise expressed by you.

Security of emails/text/Zoom/cell phones:
It is important to be aware that communication via the above means may not be secure. No guarantee can be made that these forms of correspondence can be confidentially maintained so please consider this when using these methods.

Social Media
Please be advised that the psychologists at Defining Solutions do not accept contact requests from services such as Facebook or Linked-In.

Electronic Calendar and Storage
Defining Solutions uses an online scheduling and accounting system; as with our paper files, we do all we can to ensure the security of this information.

Confidentiality
What you disclose in counselling sessions is kept in strict confidence. The psychologist does not talk with anyone about the nature of your concerns, or whether you have or have not attended appointments, without your written permission. There are some ethical and legal exceptions to this that are important to be aware of; they are highlighted below.

Exceptions to Confidentiality:

- If you have seriously threatened suicide or pose serious harm to another.

- Abuse of, or serious risk of abuse to a child, or an adult Albertan who is receiving care or support services from a publically funded service providers (hospitals, seniors housing, mental health facilities). Abuse may include physical, emotion, sexual abuse, financial, and/or neglect.

- In the case of a court subpoena.

- If you are a minor or dependent adult, your guardian has the right to access your information. Exceptions will be made if an agreement is made in advance between you, the psychologist and your parent/guardian that outlines what information will not be disclosed.

Confidentiality for joint sessions (i.e. couple, two family members, or friends)

In joint sessions between two people, the relationship is considered the client (rather than each individual). Confidentiality is maintained for these sessions. As part of this process, it may be helpful to meet individually with the psychologist. (Note: these sessions are offered to both partners in the joint work to ensure fairness.)

The information shared outside of the joint sessions is generally kept confidential and is not disclosed in joint sessions. However, sometimes information emerges in an individual session that may affect the relationship therapy work such as an affair, or a substance-abuse problem. In these cases, this information may not be held in confidence, as it can be counter-productive to the joint therapy work. The psychologist will strongly encourage you to bring this forward in the joint sessions.

Typically if you see one psychologist for joint work, you work with another therapist for individual counselling.

Consultation

As part of the psychologist’s ethical and legal responsibilities, consultation with other registered psychologists about treatment issues occurs in order to best help you. Consultation conversations are subject to the same confidentiality limits previously outlined, and care will be taken not to include your name or other identifying information.

By signing this form you are indicating that you have read through, understood and agreed to the above information. If you have any questions or concerns about this information, please let your psychologist know.

Complaints Regarding Unethical Behavior

If you believe your psychologist has acted unethically, you can make a complaint to the College of Alberta Psychologists: www.cap.ab.ca

Client name

Client signature

Psychologist name

Psychologist signature

Date