



INFORMED CONSENT FOR COUNSELLING WITH NICOLE SETTLE

WHY?

You have taken the first brave step to gaining new insights about yourself and making some changes in your life. I want you to feel good about the choices you are making and to know what to expect from counselling and our relationship. I am responsible for making sure you know what your rights are and I need you to provide written permission for me to work with you.



Counselling can be an excellent way to get to know yourself better, get a different perspective and learn ways to change your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It can help improve your relationships, reduce stress, increase your well-being and help you take charge of what is bothering you. I will give you a good listening to without judgment! You are the most important person in the room and I support you unconditionally in the decisions you want to make.



You have the right to participate as much or as little as you want. This holds true for any questions I may ask or interventions I may suggest. You can say YES, NO, PASS, I DON'T KNOW or GOODBYE anytime.



The downside is that it can be hard work. You might feel angry, scared, worried, tired or frustrated. I might say things you do not like and challenge you to try things that make you feel uncomfortable. If the pace or depth is too much, or something we discuss does not fit for you, let's talk about that and address any issues. I know that is a big ask, but what if that gives you a chance to practice new skills while also getting you the kind of counselling relationship you want? Sometimes things get harder before they get easier. I may cry in sadness or joy with you. You do not have to worry about my feelings or coping skills.



Our relationship is very important to me and I will have the utmost respect for you, however this is not like a friendship. We will not be spending time together outside of the session. You might be sharing very personal information with me and I will be sharing very little about my personal life with you. I appreciate that gifts can be an important way of showing appreciation; however, I cannot except anything more than small tokens.



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I take your privacy and confidentiality very seriously, I have to. I will not talk about you with anyone without your written permission. This remains true even if we no longer see each other and for the rest of my life. You are free to talk about what happens in counselling to whomever you like. Let me know how you would like us to address the possibility of us seeing each other in the community. Should we ignore each other? Say hello?

Depending on the situation, I may pretend like I do not know you. That is not because I have forgotten you, though I must admit that I am much better with faces and stories than names! It's just better to leave it to you to decide how much you would like to share with others about how we know each other.



One of the most awkward situations we might find ourselves in is when you know that I know that we know the same person/people attend counselling with me. Unless I have permission to acknowledge their client status, I cannot confirm or deny my relationship with them. We'll need to discuss if those relationships are going to impact your counselling process, the trust between us, and my ethical obligations to the rights and wellbeing of all involved.

In rare cases, I might have to break your confidentiality. Your name and/or story might be shared:



- when a judge asks me to.
- when you tell me you are at imminent risk of hurting yourself or someone you know. I need to keep you and other people safe. This is very different from sharing about overwhelming pain, loss or freedom thereof.
- when you tell me someone is in immediate danger, particularly a child.



In the case of couples or family counselling, where the goal is to increase openness and honesty (amongst other things), it can also be appropriate to have occasional individual sessions. The purpose is not to be secretive, but to give one person the focus and time to explore or practice skills independently. When we come back together as a team, we will review what transpired.



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We might jot ideas or images on the whiteboard during session and I also write notes afterwards, which go into paper files. Their purpose is to track how we are working together and how these interventions are impacting you. They are not meant to record the details of your life. Nothing ever makes it online, ever. Not in Jane App, on the website...nowhere. You can request your file from Mindset Counselling at any time. If you are an adult over the age of 18, all records are securely destroyed 7 years after your file is closed. If you are under the age of 18, your file gets destroyed 7 years after your 18th birthday. A file is considered closed when you tell me it is, if we have been out of contact for a year, or we have made alternate arrangements.



Phones and email are invaluable tools in our everyday lives. They also require coming to an understanding of how we each use them differently. You can call/text me on the work cell #867-333-6463 (FED-MIND), email me at nicole@mindsetcounselling.ca or book/change an appointment through www.mindsetcounselling.ca. Please limit tech-based interactions to logistical or appointment-related information. The juicy stuff should be kept for in-person or encrypted video sessions. I strive to limit my work communications between the hours 10am to 7pm and to get back to you within 2-3 days tops, unless I have posted an out-of-office message during vacations or made alternate arrangements with you.



To make sure my skills are helpful and to support my professional development, I might ask to tape my sessions. I can only do this if you let me and sign the *Consent for Supervision and Recording Sessions* form. We do not have to decide that now and can come back to this at a later date. If and when I do ever record our session, the camera will be pointed only at me and record only my face and our voices. You can ask to have the recording stopped at any time. I might go over our session in order to help me think about how I can do better next time. I might take a small piece of the video to my supervisor to ask for advice on how I can improve. All recordings are destroyed within 30 days from their creation. I recommend online sessions to be held through encrypted platforms such as Jane App. No one, myself included has the ability to record those.



If you have any questions about any part of our work together, you can ask me now or at any time in person, by email or over the phone at 867-333-6463. I am bound by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association's *Code of Ethics* and would be happy to share more about what all that means if you ask or if we naturally come across an ethical issue over the course of our time together.



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- ☐ I have read (or have read to me) the *Informed Consent for Counselling with Nicole Settle* form, had enough time to consider it carefully, and asked any questions I had about it.
- ☐ I understand Nicole will keep our conversations private and confidential but there are times when she may need to talk to others about what I tell her if I threaten to harm myself, others, and when a child is in danger and in need of protection.
- ☐ I realize if Nicole is ordered by a judge, she must provide information to the courts.
- ☐ I know I can end therapy at any time I wish.
- ☐ I am aware of what will be in my counselling file and who will and will not have access to it.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to talk openly and honestly with Nicole, and will try to provide her with feedback about how I think counselling is working.
- ☐ I understand that messages/texts I leave for Nicole at 867-333-6463 are confidential and should focus on appointment-related information.
- ☐ I understand that email is not a secure method of sharing information.
- ☐ I understand that if I would like information about my counselling to be released to someone outside of the agency, that I need to sign a *Consent for the Release of Information* form.

Consent: Client Name (print)

Signature

Date

Assent: Client Name (print)

Signature

Date

(if client is between 12 and 18)

For Nicole to complete:

- ☐ I have discussed the issues within this consent form
- ☐ My observations of this individual's behaviour and responses indicate that they understand the rules and process of counselling as discussed above and is competent to give informed and willing consent/assent at this time.

Signature

Date