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It is important that you are as fully informed as possible about counselling and the counselling process prior to commencing therapy with me. For this reason, please read the following carefully and do not hesitate to ask any questions.

Informed consent

Agreement for counselling services

Some important facts about counselling

Professional counselling is a safe and confidential collaboration between qualified counsellors and clients to promote mental health and well-being, enhance self-understanding, and resolve concerns. Clients are active participants at every stage of the counselling process. (PACFA Scope of Practice for Registered Counsellors 2018, p.2). People seek counselling for a wide variety of reasons. I look forward to exploring your reasons for making your appointment with me and to navigating the counselling journey together.

We are all unique human beings with our own history, perceptions, and expectations, and as a result the outcomes of counselling can vary widely. This means as your counsellor I cannot promise any particular outcome from the counselling process, but I can assure you that I am committed to best practice with you in resolving your concerns. It's the very nature of counselling that these processes may deal with issues and aspects of your life that might spark or be a catalyst for triggering a wide range of feelings and reactions. It is important therefore to keep me informed of any such experiences should they arise, in order to ensure my support. To help you get the best out of the counselling process, the following guidelines are useful:

- aim to attend every scheduled session
- be prepared to share your thoughts and feelings openly with me
- complete any out-of-session tasks we agree to
- when unsure, ask for clarification about any of the counselling activities being undertaken, and discuss any doubts or concerns you have with me.

My professional background and counselling approach

Having completed a master's degree in counselling and psychotherapy I hold national registration as a Registered Clinical Counsellor with the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and am listed on the Australian Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (ARCAP). Being a PACFA

Informed consent (cont.)

member I am subject to a wide range of professional and ethical requirements, and practice within the framework of the PACFA Code of Ethics and my State Government's Code of Conduct for unregistered health professionals. I consider that the relationship established between the client and myself is central to the counselling process. I seek to provide an atmosphere that is respectful and non-judgemental in which each person can feel that their experience is understood and valued. I utilise an integrated and trauma informed approach to my counselling and draw on a range of theory to understand how to facilitate processes of change and growth including theory that addresses human development, personality and character, patterns of attachment, and contemporary psychodynamic theory.

Some practicalities

Session frequency

A typical counselling session is 60 minutes in length. Whilst the frequency and number of sessions depend on the client and the nature of the concern.

Scheduled sessions

Sessions are offered in person or via video (Zoom). Sessions via video conferencing are provided on the basis that we both:

- ensure that we have a confidential and uninterrupted space; this may or may not involve using a headset,
- will not record sessions, and
- as far as we are able, will aim to have reliable connectivity.

Please advise me not less than 24 hours in advance if you cannot attend an appointment. Failure to do so will incur a 50% charge.

Fees

The hourly charge for counselling sessions with individuals is \$170 and with couples is \$220 and is payable within 7 days of the appointment via direct deposit. Please discuss with me alternative payment options.

In an emergency

As I do not provide a crisis service, if there is an emergency please contact:

- your doctor, or the emergency section of your local hospital
- Lifeline on 13 11 14, or the Mental Health Triage Service on 13 14 65.

Privacy

Australian Government Privacy Legislation applies to personal information collected about an individual that could be used to identify them directly or indirectly. Please find attached my privacy policy which forms part of this agreement.

Confidentiality

Your right to privacy encompasses confidentiality. Information discussed during our sessions is confidential and may not be shared with anyone without your written permission except when I am legally obliged:

- to report a serious and imminent threat to the life, health or property of yourself or another
- to report any abuse or neglect experienced by a young person under the age of 18 years, and/or
- to release client records when required by court order.

Informed consent (cont.)

Confidential written records are maintained to reflect the issues and goals identified in counselling sessions and are kept securely for seven years.

My supervision

I have an ethical responsibility to reflect on my counselling practice. As part of this professional reflection, I may discuss my work with you with my clinical supervisor. In such situations, content presented is de-identified.

Acceptance by the client

I have read and understand this information, clarified my concerns, and agree to undertake counselling with New Hope Counselling. I understand that I can conclude my sessions at any time.

Client's name:

Client's signature:

Date:

Counsellor's name:

Counsellor's signature:

Date: