



K. Mascarenhas Psychotherapy Professional Corporation

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True You Disclosure and Informed Consent

This form constitutes the online portion of informed consent for your therapeutic treatment with your therapist. Your therapist will also review the items in this document with you in your first session. Please complete and electronically sign this document ahead of your first session with your therapist.

Introduction to True You Psychotherapy

Welcome to True You Psychotherapy. The following information is provided to empower you to make an informed decision about your participation in psychotherapy. You have the right to receive comprehensive information about the counselling process. Feel free to ask your counsellor any questions you may have about the information provided or any topic not covered in this document. Together, you and your counsellor will discuss counselling goals and a plan to achieve these goals. You are encouraged to ask your counsellor for clarification as needed.

Your Counsellor

Your counsellor wants to assist you in moving toward growth and healing in relation to the concerns that lead you to come to counselling. While working toward your goals is the focus of therapy, you have a right to know information about your counsellor that relates to their professional background, education, training, and perspectives on counselling. Feel free to ask them questions about these areas.

Counselling Approach

At True You Psychotherapy we are interested in the growth and healing of the whole person including emotional, spiritual, academic, relational, vocational, behavioural, physical and cognitive well-being. Your counsellor is not a medical doctor and therefore cannot prescribe any medication or give advice on medical procedures but is able to make a referral if needed. While counselling style varies with each counsellor, all counsellors will ask you for some information in order to gain an understanding of the concern(s) that you bring and will develop goals with you that will guide your time together. Goals are usually discussed together and revised every few sessions for as long as you remain in counselling. You may end therapy at any time. If possible, it would be best if you could discuss your decision with your counsellor, as closure is part of the therapy process.

Counselling is a collaborative venture with the counsellor and client each having a part to play. It is not a passive activity in which the counsellor attempts to solve the clients' issues for them. Openness, honesty and a commitment to change are important components in the counselling process. In couple and family counselling, secrets held between individuals are counterproductive and will not be colluded with. Therefore the counsellor will ask the client to consider the benefits of disclosing the secret. The exceptions would be information shared in individual counselling received before couple/family counselling was initiated or after it concluded or in situations where protection from harm is an issue.

Accessibility of Services

Ridgeline Counselling Services is compliant with the accessibility legislation (AODA). We have a commitment to address barriers in our services and processes. Therefore, we will provide accommodation for people with disabilities. If you require accommodation, please advise your counsellor.

Risks of Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is low in risk, however the process of change has an impact on our life as well as those we are in relationship with. Your counsellor will try to help you think through the implications and consequences of the changes that you are considering in your life. Changing old habits and ways of thinking, feeling and behaving often requires hard work and you may experience some feelings of discomfort along the way. While positive gains are the goal in counselling, outcomes cannot be guaranteed and it should be kept in mind that a person may change in ways that others may or may not approve of.

Fees and Payment Policy

The fee for counselling is \$150 per 50-minute session. In cases of financial hardship, clients may seek to negotiate a fee with their counsellor, taking their circumstances into consideration. Proof of income is typically required for clients seeking a reduced fee. Fee negotiations can occur during or before your initial session and are revisited every six counselling sessions.

Payment options include credit card, e-transfer. If you prefer an alternative payment method, please discuss it with your counsellor. Fees are due before your session. A receipt is usually issued within 24 business hours of payment, which can be submitted to your insurance for reimbursement. True You Psychotherapy can also bill some insurers directly with your consent.

Extended phone calls, consultations, reports, and letters may incur additional charges at your counsellor's hourly rate.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that my therapist has disclosed session and service rates, late cancellation, no-show policies, and any phone consultation fees. I agree to promptly pay these fees and understand that I am responsible for any outstanding balances not approved for reimbursement by my insurance provider.

Missed or Cancelled Sessions

If you need to cancel your appointment, please use the online portal or send a message to your counsellor. Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Please be aware that appointments canceled within 24 hours or missed sessions will incur the following fees:

- Late Cancellations: 30% of the session fee
- Missed Sessions: 70% of the session fee

We understand that extenuating circumstances may arise, such as sudden illness or a death in the family, which may necessitate cancellation with less than 24 hours' notice. In such cases, please discuss this with your counsellor.

If you wish to end the counselling sessions, you are encouraged to discuss this with your counsellor, as it is part of the counselling process.

Scheduling of Sessions

Clients can book sessions via the online portal, during a counselling session, or through messaging with their counsellor. Typically, counsellors meet with clients weekly or bi-weekly for 50-minute sessions. As counselling progresses, the frequency of sessions may vary. For couple and family issues, longer sessions may be necessary, and scheduling will be done in consultation with the involved parties. It is expected that, whenever possible, sessions will start and end promptly on time.

Therapist Absence

You have the right to expect that your scheduled appointments will be respected and protected from unnecessary interruptions. Your counsellor will inform you in advance of any planned absences, including vacations, and will provide the names of other counsellors or personnel that may be accessed during periods of absence upon request. In the rare event that a counsellor cannot make a session due to sudden illness or unforeseen circumstances, they will try to contact you if possible. The counsellor will then be in touch to set up another appointment.

Contacting your Counsellor

If you need to contact your counsellor, please use Owl's secure messaging platform, as this is the most secure way to interact. Counsellors regularly check their messages and will respond as soon as possible. For confidentiality reasons, your counsellor may be unable to send text messages (except in emergency situations). When returning your call, the counsellor's caller ID may appear as 'unknown' to protect the privacy of their personal cell phone number. Please be aware that email is generally not a secure or confidential medium. While we strive to keep your communication private, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of email messages, as they can be intercepted. For your privacy, avoid including sensitive or personal information in email or text communications. If you have any concerns about the privacy of your message, please consider alternative methods of reaching us. A copy of any messages received and sent is normally kept in the client's file.

We understand the potential risks to privacy with out-of-session contact. Clinicians at True You Psychotherapy will take precautions with your privacy when using these forms of communication but cannot guarantee absolute privacy. If you have preferences regarding certain forms of communication due to privacy concerns, please communicate this to the clinicians and admin staff involved in your care. True you Psychotherapy will maintain a record of all clinical or substantive contact (e.g., emails, texts, phone calls, faxes) in your health record.

Why do we collect personal information?

We collect personal information to contact you, issue invoices and receipts, assess your needs, develop a treatment plan, provide services, evaluate our services, respond in case of an emergency, or share your records/consultation with other parties (with your consent).

What information do we keep?

We are required to maintain records for all of our clients. Your records will encompass contact information, emergency details, consent forms, contracts, assessments, prior records, treatment plans, session notes and summaries, billing information, as well as all correspondence we send or receive from you related to your treatment.

Where do we keep your information?

We ensure the security of our physical files by supervising their use or storing them in locked filing cabinets within a secured room when not in use. Our electronic files are housed on a password- and firewall-protected server, accessible only to our clinic and regularly backed up. Additionally, we utilize a secure web-based practice management system that is encrypted, complies with PHI (Public Health Information) guidelines, and undergoes routine backups to safeguard sensitive client information.

All counselling-related material is securely maintained and kept confidential for ten years, unless the client is under 18, in which case the files are retained for ten years following the client's 18th birthday.

We employ shredding to destroy paper files and documents containing personal information, and electronic information is deleted. When discarding hardware, we ensure it is properly destroyed.

What is your access to your file?

When appropriate, you have the right to review your file. If you are a current or recent client, we will schedule a time to go through the file with you. If you believe there is a factual mistake, you can request a correction. However, please note that we will not alter information related to our professional opinions. If necessary, we may ask for documentation to support corrections. In the event that we do not agree with your request, you have the option to write a note explaining your proposed changes, which will be included in your file.

Confidentiality and Limits to

Under most circumstances, only you have the right to tell your own story, and what is shared in counselling is treated as confidential. Information will not be shared outside of our True You Psychotherapy team without your signed and informed consent. Individuals in couple or family counselling are responsible for handling their own confidences shared in the group.

However, in some circumstances, professionals are legally and ethically bound to disclose specific and relevant information to appropriate individuals or agencies. These circumstances include:

- Reason to believe that a client in counselling is a danger to themselves or others.
- Reason to believe that a minor is in danger of neglect or abuse, in response to a court order where the court subpoenas the clinical record.
- A client reporting reasonable suspicion or knowledge of harm or negligence in a Long-Term Care facility in Ontario.

Your counsellor may share specific and relevant information without your consent in the following circumstances:

- Reason to believe that another counsellor has caused or is likely to cause you harm.
- Medical emergency.
- Licensing or governing body inspection of records as part of their regulatory activities in the public interest.

Please note that it is our policy not to get involved in court action around divorce and/or child custody except in rare, exceptional circumstances.

Also note that if a third party is paying for your treatment, they will have access to information regarding your attendance (though not the content) of individual and/or group sessions. This information will be noted on the invoice through True You Psychotherapy billing system."

Additional limits to confidentiality which exist for all types of remote therapy are explained below in the following section.

Remote Therapy Considerations

Please be advised that remote sessions will not be the same as in person sessions as there are potential safety and privacy issues related to the technology we will be using. Potential risks and downsides to remote therapy to consider, include interruptions, technical difficulties, unauthorized access, and limitations regarding the types of techniques and activities that can be used remotely. You and your therapist can discontinue the voice/video therapy session at any

time if you perceive that the connections are not adequate for the situation. Whenever possible, we will switch to another platform (e.g. video to phone) to continue the session.

Your therapist will try to ensure your privacy while hosting the session (e.g. in a room with a closed door, using headphones) and you are expected to do your part in ensuring your own privacy within your environment. Your therapist is legally responsible to comply with the Ontario Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and thereby will only use PHIPA compliant platforms for any sort of remote therapy that they engage in.

Ensuring Your Privacy:

Private Environment: It's crucial to be in a private place during your therapy session.

Awareness of Surroundings: Be mindful of individuals nearby who might intrude on your privacy.

Avoiding Public Spaces: Public spaces offer easy internet access, but due to the emotional nature of therapy and potential strong reactions, it's advisable to avoid them.

Work Environment: Some employers monitor online activities via company internet connections, so consider this when choosing your therapy space.

Home Setting: Select a time and place at home where you won't be interrupted or overheard by family members, allowing for a more private session. If ensuring privacy is challenging, face-to-face therapy might be more suitable.

It's important to note that neither the therapist nor the client will record the session unless both parties have given their consent to do so.

Considerations Beyond the Scope of Telephone and Online Therapy:

- Clients residing outside Canada, where specific legislation governs psychotherapy, fall beyond the scope of this service.
- Children under 10 years old may or may not be suitable for this mode of therapy, depending on their temperament, attention span, and maturity. It's advisable to consult directly with the therapist to determine the suitability for your family.
- Individuals who have recently undergone severe trauma may not find online or telephone therapy the most effective mode of treatment.
- Other circumstances may arise. Following the therapist's assessment, they may conclude that online therapy isn't suitable, recommending in-person therapy instead.

What if I run into my therapist in public?

Counsellors and clients may encounter each other in various settings. We kindly request that you refrain from bringing up issues discussed in counselling with your counsellor outside of your regularly scheduled sessions. For ethical reasons, counsellors cannot 'friend' a current or recent client on Facebook, accept invitations on LinkedIn, or engage in similar social media interactions. Counsellors will not approach you in public to honour the confidentiality agreement, but you are welcome to approach them. Please note that this might limit their ability to protect your confidentiality to the same extent, and it is still advisable to avoid sharing sensitive information in public settings.

What is our inclusion of students at True You Psychotherapy?

We believe it is crucial to contribute to the training of future clinicians. As a result, True You Psychotherapy occasionally provides opportunities for psychotherapy students to contribute to our work, learn through observation, direct learning, supervision, and participation in various admin and clinical tasks. In some cases, they may also engage in clinical services. All students undergo screening and interviews, receive appropriate training and supervision, and must adhere to our standards of privacy and confidentiality.

Students in the early stages of their training may have limited responsibilities, while those with extensive training and experience in behavioural wellness professions can play a significant role in group facilitation or individual/family therapy. Counsellors at True You Psychotherapy may receive supervision to provide competent and responsible care, maintain high standards, and support ongoing professional development. Periodically, counsellors may request to video record sessions to facilitate supervision and counsellor development, ensuring we provide the best service possible.

Ethical Standards

True You Psychotherapy and its counsellors strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). If you believe that an ethical violation has occurred and you have experienced harm, you have the right to register a complaint. You may also contact the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario or the Privacy Commissioner.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the policies described in the Disclosure Information above.

I accept True You Psychotherapy's policies and I give informed consent to receive services with clinicians at True You Psychotherapy. I understand that I may ask questions at any time about the treatment plan, therapeutic procedures, possible risks and anticipated outcomes. I also understand that I am free to discontinue treatment for any reason at any time.

Please enter client's name

Please select the counselor with whom you agree to pursue a therapeutic relationship. (Select all that apply)

Kathryn (Katie) Mascarenhas

Please enter today's date (YYYY-MM-DD)