

Conditions of Counselling Services

Welcome to Georgian Bay Counselling Services. Therapy can be a very positive experience, but it takes commitment and perseverance. Improvement requires that you make therapy a priority by attending sessions and completing activities between sessions as well. We will discuss what you find to be helpful or unhelpful throughout the counselling process.

You may experience a range of emotions that you may not be used to expressing. It is not unusual to have some periods of confusion, disagreement and even a feeling of hopelessness about things changing. This is a normal part of the counselling process.

I use therapy approaches have been researched to demonstrate their effectiveness, such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Solution-focused Therapy and Emotion-focused Therapy. Due to the collaborative nature of our work, no therapy can guarantee results.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Everything discussed with your therapist will be held in strict confidence. I may consult with a clinical supervisor about your case, and this supervisor is also bound to maintain your privacy and confidentiality.

No information about you will be released to any third party without your prior consent. If you wish your information to be disclosed to a third party (e.g., insurance company, lawyer, etc.), I will ask for a "Consent to Disclosure" to be signed before I speak with them.

Confidentiality is not absolute. There are certain circumstances when I am obligated by law to break confidentiality:

- If I believe you or someone else is at risk of serious harm and information I have might prevent it;
- If a child under 16 is at risk of harm, I am required to notify the authorities;
- If I am subpoenaed by a court of law or presented with a search warrant.

A note about privacy in a small town...

We may see each other in the community. Because your privacy is important to me, I will not acknowledge you as my client in public. You are free to greet me or not, as you feel comfortable in the circumstances. Naturally we will discuss any clinical issues in the privacy of my office.

Fees

Fees are due at the beginning of each session. The current fee schedule is posted on my website. Fees for other services (such as report writing or online assessments) may be charged in advance. You will be informed of all fees before services are rendered.

I accept cash, cheques, credit cards or e-transfers (no debit/Interac). Non-payment of fees will result in the suspension of service until the outstanding balance is paid.

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Missed appointments

Appointments missed or cancelled with less than 24 hours advance notice will be billed at the regular rate. The time stamp on your chosen notification method (voicemail, email, text message) will be used to calculate the notice period. Your credit card pre-authorization will be used to settle your account, unless you make alternate arrangements.

Records

Records are the property of Georgian Bay Counselling Services. You may request a copy of your record at any time during or after service. **If multiple people attend a session, all attendees must consent before records can be released.** A nominal fee for copying may apply. Clinical reports and attendance letters are available at a fee of \$100.00 per hour of preparation, one hour minimum.

Your records will be retained for seven (7) years from the last date of service, or ten (10) years after a client's 18th birthday, if the client was less than 18 years old at the time of service. After this period your records will be securely destroyed.

I use a secure, web-based practice management system to store and manage client records. This system is encrypted, has servers exclusively located in Canada, and access to the system is granted only on an as-needed basis and governed by a strict confidentiality policy. Additionally, all practice data in the system is routinely backed up to insure the privacy and protection of sensitive client information and to assist us with privacy law compliance.

Complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of this service, please speak with me directly. In addition, I am a Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (member # 815568). Any member of the public may make a complaint to the College regarding professional misconduct.

Contact Information

My normal business hours are Monday through Friday 9am to 6pm. Feel free to contact me through email, text, or a confidential voicemail. I will return your message within one business day. Email and texting are not private or confidential, and should only be used for administrative matters such as scheduling. In accordance with the College of Social Workers policy, I do not engage with clients on social media.

After-hours service

As a solo practitioner I am not able to respond to crisis situations. If you require urgent assistance, please contact the mental health crisis line at 705.728.5044, or attend your nearest hospital emergency department.

I look forward to working with you. Please speak with me about any questions or concerns about these terms of service.