

**This document explains the *Terms of Service* for counselling.  
Once you have read it, please sign the *Acknowledgment Form* that will be kept in your file.  
Please talk with your counsellor if you have questions about anything in this document.**

**KW Counselling Services is a member of the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region.** With our partners at Carizon Family & Community Services, Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge & North Dumfries, Interfaith Community Counselling Centre, Shalom Counselling Services, and Woolwich Counselling Centre we offer individual, couple, family and group counselling to the people of Waterloo Region.

### **Getting Started**

Your counsellor will meet with you to talk about what to expect in counselling. We know that counselling is hard work. We know that working at making changes in our lives can bring up strong feelings which might feel challenging. We also know that successful counselling can be a rewarding experience.

With your counsellor, you will identify goals that you will work on together. If you have concerns about your counselling, talk this over with your counsellor or with a supervisor. If it is necessary, your case can be transferred to another counsellor. Your counsellor may also ask that your case be transferred if they feel that they are not the best counsellor for you.

### **Counsellor Qualifications**

All counsellors are members of an accredited professional counselling college with a minimum of a master's degree. Some counselling may be provided by an intern or extern who is supervised by accredited staff. Please feel free to ask about the qualifications of your counsellor.

### **Ending Counselling**

If we have not heard from you in 30 days we will assume you no longer want service and your file will be closed. If you have been required by a third party to attend counselling sessions, your counsellor has a responsibility to notify the third party that you have stopped.

### **Hours of Operation**

We are *not* available outside of our regular hours. If you are in crisis or feeling unsafe, contact Here 24/7 at 1.844.437.3247 or visit a hospital emergency room. For emergencies, call 911.

### **Professional Ethics**

Your counsellor is part of a professional association that has rules about how they can interact with clients. Your counsellor *cannot*:

- give or receive gifts from you (except tokens with personal meaning to the therapy process).
- attend your personal parties/events even if you invite them.
- advocate for you in a legal matter or prepare reports or other documents for reasons not disclosed in the initial request for counselling.
- have any relationship with you besides the therapy itself. This means that they cannot have a business relationship with you, give legal, medical, financial, or any other professional advice, be your supervisor, teacher, or evaluator, be related to you or be your friend, or have any kind of romantic/sexual relationship with you or any people close to you.

### **24 hour Cancellation Policy**

If you are unable to come for a scheduled appointment, please notify us at least 24 hours in advance so we can offer your time to another client. Without this notice, we will ask you to pay the full session fee unless there are extenuating circumstances. We request that outstanding balances be paid before booking future appointments.

### **File Security and Requests**

Your file is stored electronically, on a secure file management system. It will be permanently held in our system. Ask Reception or your counsellor to request an attendance letter, see your file, or get a copy of your file. You will be asked to sign a release form and an administrative fee will be charged. We may require four weeks to process your request.

## Limits of Confidentiality/Privacy

In order to provide the best service possible to our clients, we share a client management system with our partners in the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region. Staff from one agency will not have access to your records from another agency without your permission.

Anything discussed between you and your counsellor is confidential within KW Counselling Services. It may be shared with your counsellor's supervisor to get advice on how to be most useful to you. Our administration staff has access to your information in order to provide you with service. Without your permission we will not communicate with you via e-mail, text message or voicemail. Any e-mails or letters we receive from you will be added to your file.

KW Counselling Services is accredited by the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA). As part of ongoing quality control, your file may be audited by CCA staff who will respect your confidentiality.

We will not release any information about you without your informed written or verbal consent. There are circumstances when this does *not* apply:

- you disclose that a child has been neglected, sexually or physically abused, or that a child might be at serious risk of abuse (as determined by the counsellor). This includes when domestic violence is reported and there is a child in the home &/or if you disclose that you were abused in childhood and there is a possibility that the abuser may be a danger to other children now.
- disclosure is mandated by a court order.
- you are experiencing a medical emergency and responders need your name and contact information.
- there is disclosure of inappropriate behaviour by an allied health professional.
- we have reasonable grounds to believe a resident of a long-term care home or retirement home has experienced abuse or is at risk of harm.
- you demonstrate suicidal or homicidal intent. We encourage you to talk to your counsellor about these feelings. They will be held in confidence unless you have a plan to act on these feelings.

Non-identifying Information that you provide to us, via surveys or questionnaires, may be combined with other information and used in reports to our funders or to the community.

## Client Rights

You have all of the following rights:

- to be treated honestly, with respect and dignity, and without discrimination, at all times.
- to receive services in a professional manner from qualified personnel.
- to have your personal information kept private (except in cases where the law requires its release).
- to receive information about the fee schedule at the start of service.
- to a safe and secure service environment.
- to raise issues of concern about the Agency, services rendered, or counselling experience.
- to be made aware of all significant policies and procedures related to the service you receive from KW Counselling Services.
- to give informed consent for all services you receive.
- to know the contents of your case file(s) and to add to the record to correct inaccuracies.
- to have access to service regardless of your ability.

## Client Responsibilities

You have all of the following responsibilities:

- to participate to your fullest potential in the services provided.
- to treat all staff, interns, volunteers, other clients and property with respect.
- to attend as scheduled and to provide sufficient notice should you be unable to attend a session.
- to pay any fees for service as due.
- to hold in confidence any information you learn regarding other individuals while at KW Counselling Services.

## Client Feedback

We welcome and encourage your comments. If you have a comment or a complaint, you may ask to speak with your counsellor, their supervisor or the Executive Director. Or, you may complete a *Complaint or Appeal form* that you can get from Reception or from the *Contact Us* page on [www.kwcounselling.com](http://www.kwcounselling.com).

## **Terms of Service for TELECOUNSELLING and VIDEO COUNSELLING**

All telephone and video sessions will meet privacy requirements as outlined by privacy legislation. The modality of the session, as well as the fee or funding for the session will be determined with you during the Intake process. An email address will be required for video counselling.

### **Data/Telephone costs**

You are responsible for your own data usage and any other associated costs resulting from video or telephone counselling.

### **Cancellation Policy**

You are required to be available at the time designated for your session and to be in a private space. We ask that you give the agency 24 hours notice to cancel or reschedule a session. A full fee may be charged for sessions that cannot be conducted due to you being in an inappropriate location or if you are not available at the scheduled time or if the appointment is cancelled without sufficient notice.

### **What to expect at a video or telephone counselling session:**

- The counsellor will confirm your name and date of birth for identification purposes in the first session.
- The counsellor will confirm your location and that you are in a private space, and will confirm an alternate method of contacting you if the video or phone session is cut off midway for any reason.
- The counsellor will ask for an emergency contact person, in the event that you have a medical emergency during the session. By providing this information you understand that this represents consent for contact with this individual
- The counsellor will review the fee payment methods and confirm payment for the session. If your session is funded, then a review of the funder coverage will be discussed with you.

- The counsellor will review any changes in your mental health or in your circumstances that might impact safety while engaging in telephone or video counselling.
- The counsellor may determine that video or telephone counselling is not or no longer appropriate and will discuss other options with you.
- All telephone and video sessions must occur within the province of Ontario.

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