



This information package has been created to help you become more informed about proper conduct by a professional counsellor and develop realistic expectations regarding the services you will receive. Please read the relevant sections carefully and please discuss with me any questions or concerns you may have.

I am committed to supporting you in reaching your goals and will work together with you. I hope that we will create a positive relationship with one another and I commit to listening to you, respecting you, and giving you the space you need to explore your



thoughts and move towards discovering new skills and new solutions. My goal will always be to support you and to create an environment in which you feel comfortable. Although we may address some serious issues together I am confident that we may also share laughs along the way. Change takes courage and first steps are the hardest but I believe that “happiness is an inside job” and I commit to taking this journey with you.

Dawn Israel-Compton, MA
Certified Canadian Counsellor & Psychotherapist



How does counselling work?

Psychology, as a scientific discipline, has developed a body of knowledge regarding human behaviour and experience. Counselling is an application of this knowledge to help individuals in distress or with life functioning difficulties. Counselling and Psychotherapy are often described as a process of self-discovery... an opportunity for you to nurture your inner self and gain a deeper understanding of you and your life. In the counselling relationship both myself as the counsellor and you as the client play an equal role in the counselling process. There is no expert in the room in a counselling relationship, but you are the expert in your own life.



Often our past experiences shape our future actions. Behaviours and beliefs that may have seemed okay in childhood, may not be working for you now. Whether you want to look at what does not work anymore or move on from negative experiences counselling will help you look at what is preventing you from moving forward and guide you to move forward in positive and healthy ways. You may be surprised by the number of strengths, skills, and resiliency you possess inside already.

I will provide assistance that is uniquely tailored to your needs, I will gather comprehensive information about your difficulties and consider a wide range of treatment options. The choice of effective treatment arises out of an honest and open collaboration between you and me.

Many factors contribute to a successful outcome for you. The most important of these is the relationship between you and me. Your counselling work will have the best outcome if we have a relationship of trust, understanding, honesty, respect, and hope. It is my job to help create this type of environment and to assist you in doing the work and making changes to make your life better.



Fees and Financial Considerations

Each session will be 65 minutes. Although many counsellors and psychologists run 50 minute sessions I have found in my years of experience that this often is not enough time and feels quite rushed especially when working with children and their families. I want to ensure that you have the time you need without feeling the constraints of time as I feel this helps us to have a better relationship with one another. My fee per 65 minute session is \$170. Letter writing, phone calls, and face to face consults with third parties (as per your written request) also involve fees that are detailed in the informed consent documents.

Sessions can be face to face or over the telephone. The fees are the same for all types. The appointment you have booked is reserved exclusively for your use. If you find that you are unable to keep an appointment, please advise us as soon as possible as cancellations or rescheduling of appointments requires 24 hours notification. Canceling with less than 24 hours notice or no showing for your appointment the first time will result in being charged for half the session and subsequent late cancellation and no shows will be charged the session in full. There are a number of booking times that have waitlists. If an appointment is cancelled with more than 24 hours notice, then individuals on the waitlist will be able to access that appointment.

Blossom Counselling accepts all major credit cards including MasterCard, American Express, and Visa. E-transfers can also be completed. There is a link on BlossomEdmonton.com to [pay on-line](#) if you wish using STRIPE as a secure on-line payment server.

Questions

What about private insurance?

Private insurance companies will likely assist with your fee(s) if you have appropriate coverage. I am registered with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association as a Certified Member. This designation is recognized by many insurance companies including SunLife Insurance Company of Canada, Manulife Insurance Company, Green Shield, Equitable Life, Blue Cross, and Desjardins. It may be recognized by other insurance companies as well – please check with your provider. Each insurance policy and professionals covered under each policy vary. **It is your responsibility to explore your coverage through your individual health care plan for counselling services.** Clients also may choose to use Health Spending accounts or “Health Technologies Not Otherwise Specified” to cover sessions with me if available through your specific employer’s plan.

After your session you will be provided with a receipt that includes my designation and registration number (4198) with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. These can be kept for your records for income tax purposes.

If you would like to access my services but your plan does not cover Certified Canadian Counsellors and Psychotherapists please let me know as there are advocacy options we can explore with the support of my association or I can adjust the cost of sessions accordingly.

What if I cannot afford to pay?

If this is a concern, please discuss it with me right away. I will do my best to make fair and feasible arrangements for those experiencing financial difficulties.

Frequently Asked Questions

- What types of clients do you work with?

I work with children 5 years old and up; youth, and adults. I offer therapy tailored specific for each client's needs and also offer family counselling services. For a comprehensive list of issues I am skilled to address please visit my website:

blossomedmonton.com



- Do you think you can help me with my problem and how is therapy done?

Sessions will be held at my office and will be 65 minutes long. The specific type of therapy used will be matched to the presenting problem. Types of therapy I offer include: Play Therapy (supporting children in expressing themselves and learning skills using various play modalities), Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (changing thinking patterns to change feelings and subsequent behaviour); Interpersonal Therapy (changing how you interact with others); Humanistic therapy (learning more about yourself) and Solution Focused Therapy (building on strengths and exploring options for solving problems and moving forward in the here and now).

- How often are sessions held and how long are they?

For most problems, sessions are held weekly or bi-weekly until stabilization occurs.

- How long is therapy for my problem?

Therapy is as long as you feel it is necessary. If you feel that your problems are more manageable after a number of sessions, the therapy can be terminated or on going “check-in” sessions that can be arranged monthly, bi-monthly, etc for maintenance.

- Will you want to talk to anyone else regarding my problem?

The information we discuss within the session is confidential and will not be disclosed with anyone else unless you request it. The only exceptions to confidentiality are detailed in the informed consent document that we will review together.

- What are the differences between individual and family counselling?

Individual therapy is designed to help individuals to gain a better understanding of themselves and the changes they may need to make in order to live a better life. It can be done with children, youth, or adults. Rather than providing an ‘easy answer’ to a

problem, a counsellor assists the individual to come to their own realizations about how they can actively participate in transforming their own lives.

Topics that can be addressed through individual or family therapy can be wellness focused (stress reduction, work / life balance, family management, happiness) addressing minor problems before they become major problems or acute focused (addressing specific problems causing distress such as anxiety or depression). The length of time or number of sessions you participate in is completely up to you but I will make recommendations based on our discussions.

Sessions with children under 12 years of age will likely always include parental involvement to varying degrees as for children to make changes in their lives they require the support of their caregiver. Typically sessions for children will involve a check in with the parent / child at the beginning, some individual work with the child, and an activity plus a debrief with the child and parent. Special considerations for privacy will need to be discussed for children over the age of 12 so that they can have their own relationship with myself independent of their parents as this will allow them to open up more in counselling. I will always encourage children and youth to invite their parents into sessions when I feel it would be beneficial to enhance the relationship and will certainly let them know that parents needs to be informed if there are safety issues that develop such as suicide ideation, self-injury, and substance abuse.

- **What are the likely benefits of counselling?**

In general, individual and couples therapy can help to lessen extreme feelings (i.e. fear, anger), reduce or eliminate problem behaviours (i.e. self-harm, abusive response to others), and / or resolve relationship problems (i.e. marital, inter-family).

For wellness focused individual / family therapy addressing small ways to improve can prevent problems from becoming unmanageable and help an individual to live their lives to the fullest.

For acute focused therapy, addressing the problem, discovering the root of a problem and / or developing ways to address problems successfully in the future often helps individuals to alleviate their distress.

Not all problems will be totally eliminated but with commitment they can be managed at a tolerable level.

- **What are the potential risks of counselling?**

These risks are not experienced by everyone, and I encourage you to talk to me immediately should any of these occur. Participating in counselling can be hard work. Strong emotions may emerge and there may be feelings / thoughts in the hours / days after the session as you work through the problem. On a temporary basis, you may feel

worse before you feel better (but if you ever feel these are too strong, such as suicidal feelings, you should let me know immediately). There may be a temporary strain on your relationships with others and it is best to be open and straightforward (in a safe manner) with those around you.

We will work together to find solutions to help make any of these risks more manageable.

- What is play therapy?

A play therapy session uses lots of fun and engaging activities involving puppets, play-doh, games, art supplies, figurines, books, DVD's, and LEGO that are specifically selected to aid in the therapeutic process.



Through play children act out their past and present as well as their dreams for the future. A safe, caring environment is created so the child feels free to wonder, explore, discover, and problem solve.

I as the counsellor can then help parents understand what the child is experiencing and find more effective ways of coping. As children do not have the language skills to communicate the depths of their feelings and hurts the same way that adults can, play therapy can help children integrate and express their feelings.



Your Rights

When entering into a therapeutic relationship, you have a number of specific rights.

Your Right To Informed Consent To Participate

You have the right to be informed about what is occurring in the therapeutic relationship. You have the right to participate without feeling coerced into receiving specific treatment types. You have the right to know what rationale I have for the way I work with you, my credentials, any discomforts or risks to be expected as a result of my professional assistance, what alternative types of help you could pursue, and the information regarding the topics in this package.

Your Right To Withdraw From Treatment

You have the right to withdraw from my treatment any anytime. You have the right to withdraw consent for services.

Your Right To Privacy and Confidentiality

What happens in our sessions will be kept confidential. If I feel it is necessary to release information concerning my work with you to another professional, I will first seek your permission. If I am working with more than one family member, I will do my utmost to ensure that I do not violate the trust of the information shared with me and will instead work to open necessary lines of communication between family members.

When working with underage clients, the limits of confidentiality between the client and their guardians will be specifically set based on the age / capacity of the clients.

There are specific limits to confidentiality in therapy. I have no choice but to break confidentiality in the interest of ensuring the physical safety (i.e. imminent risk of suicide) or others (i.e. stated intention to do harm to another) or children / those unable to make decisions for themselves (i.e. firm reason to believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or the risk for abuse / neglect is imminent). Additionally, if subpoenaed in court or to submit my records for examination of the court, I have no choice but to comply and provide material requested.

Your Right To Freedom From Dual Relationships and Dual Roles

The term 'dual relationship' refers to a counsellor having an additional relationship with you other than the therapist / client relationship - and these are considered to be unethical by my professional association (and me personally). Dual relationships can include: friendship, business, employment, collegial, or sexual. My avoidance of these types of relationships with you ensures that the professional services that I provide do not become complicated by other contact between us. Should the possibility of a dual relationship arise, it will be addressed directly and prevented from continuing. If you feel that a dual relationship is occurring, please inform me of your concerns.

Your Right To Register A Complaint

You have the right to complain to me or my regulatory body. Knowing that you can take your complaint to an outside arbitrator if necessary, you may feel more secure in our relationship. I hope that you will never need to complain. If we can talk about your concerns together, as soon as you begin to feel uncomfortable, we will most likely be able to work together to find a solution.

Your Personal Privacy

Privacy of personal information is a cornerstone of professional counselling services.

When you see a counsellor you trust that your personal information will not be divulged except as professionally necessary. Counsellors are required to have policies protecting the privacy of information, advise their clients concerning the security of that private information, and obtain consent to collect and use private information as disclosed.

If you have children in therapy, what your child tells their counsellor will be treated as confidential unless the counsellor determines that there are risk factors which you as a parent need to know; or unless, your child and the counsellor have made other arrangements for questions to be asked and the information to be obtained.

For **identification and contact purposes** I will collect your name, address, phone numbers, and birth-date.

Additionally I will be **retaining information obtained and generated as a result of professional assessment and treatment**. I am required to collect sufficient information concerning client's presenting complaints, personal history, and current living conditions to form a professional opinion regarding required care. In the course of professional services counsellors also generate new information concerning you with respect to your attendance at sessions and professional opinions and observations regarding your specific problems.

As part of my **financial processes** billing information will be maintained including your identifying information, your session dates, the fees you are charged, and your payments. If you pay by credit card or debit card I will retain our copies of transactional slips.

Your personal information is securely stored in both electronic and paper files depending on the nature and use of the information.

Information is stored for a period of ten years following the final professional contact. File destruction of paper files is by shredding.

Access to your personal information is limited to only those who have professional need to know that information. Other counsellors may have access to your personal information under extreme circumstances i.e. if there is an audit of your counsellors professional practice or if another counsellor must take over the role of your counsellor when your counsellor is unable to continue to serve you due to illness or death. Accountants may have access to information pertaining to fees and outstanding accounts for auditing purposes.

You can access your own personal information or information concerning someone for whom you are the guardian at any time under the supervision of your counsellor. Your counsellor may restrict access if he /she has reason to believe that gaining access would cause you harm. Your counsellor must retain your record in case it needs to be produced in the future.

At times it is to your advantage that I may have communication with other professionals currently involved with you. I may communicate in several different ways. These will include letters or telephone contact regarding treatment and progress. I can only release information with your permission or under extreme conditions as previously outlined.

You have the right to be treated with respect and fairness.

The conditions under which confidential information may be revealed without your knowledge or consent are very specific, as follows:

- If you are of immediate danger to yourself or others
- If a child is being abused or at risk of being abused
- If your records are subpoenaed for court purposes, or if your therapist is called to testify in court.
- If records are requested in investigative or disciplinary procedures regarding the therapist's treatment of you.

