

Client Information and Consent

I/We, the undersigned, agree and acknowledge the following:

I/We are about to undertake Counselling/Therapy with a Counsellor under the auspices of The Cottage Counselling Centre Inc.

I/We have been informed that:

1. While the Counsellor is under an Agreement to work with The Cottage, it is important for clients to know that counsellors are practicing in a private capacity and (other than the Director) are not employees of The Cottage Counselling Centre, or of the church. As such they retain sole responsibility for their own financial accounts, client files and the clinical responsibility attached to their case load.
However, Counsellors are required to maintain professional membership, insurance and supervision at all times as part of their Agreement with The Cottage.
2. The Counsellor is appropriately trained, insured and supervised for the work she/he undertakes and she/he works under the professional code of conduct of her/his professional body.
3. The Counsellor observes strict confidentiality regarding all that is said and written during the course of counselling. This confidentiality is extended to the Counsellor's supervision where minimal identifying information is shared only and where the supervisor themselves must also observe strict professional confidentiality (excepting in situations mentioned in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 below).
4. The Counsellor may collect, record and store my personal information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles from the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. (A copy of our Privacy Policy is available on request)
5. There are times when counselling may come under the Family Law Act and as such has the protection of the admissibility of evidence provisions of S.19N of the Family Law Act. This means that confidentiality is protected even more strongly in Family Court matters but that significant child protection concerns still have to be reported.
6. Case records can be subpoenaed and may be given to a court of law as evidence. (However please note that The Cottage's general policy is to argue for client confidentiality whenever possible in the case of a court or lawyer requesting your information.)
7. The Counsellor is obliged to report to the proper authorities serious matters which come to her/his attention in the course of counselling. Reportable Categories include:
 - a. A current serious threat to the life or limb of any party

- b. The commission of a serious crime against a person (including sexual assault, assault/bodily harm, murder or child abuse)
8. The Counsellor is bound by the NSW Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and is a mandatory reporter for the protection of children. Reportable categories include:
 - a. Basic physical or psychological needs not being met
 - b. Physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment
 - c. Risk of serious physical or psychological harm from living in a domestic violence household
 - d. Risk of serious psychological harm resulting from the behaviour of a parent or caregiver
 9. Complaints regarding the service provided by, or conduct of, the Counsellor may be made in writing to

The Director or President of the Management Committee

The Cottage Counselling Centre

7 Clarke St Narrabeen NSW 2101.

Alternatively they may be made to the relevant professional associations:

Such as the the Association of Personal Counsellors, Australian Association of Social Workers or the Australian Psychological Society. Please see our website for their contact details.
 10. The Cottage Counselling Centre is a charity and relies on client fees to keep its doors open. Fees are charged on a sliding fee scale according to household income. Subsidy of these fees may be applied for in extenuating circumstances. Should you have difficulty meeting these fees please raise your concerns with your Counsellor. Services at The Cottage will not be denied due to affordability. Please see our Fees information sheet for the current fee scale. Your counsellor can give you a copy.
 11. Counselling can entail the experiencing of strong emotion and uncomfortable understandings. On entering counselling clients need to be aware of that this is part of the process. You may wish to explore this likelihood with your Counsellor.
 12. Cancelled appointments will incur a cancellation fee of half the expected counselling fee unless cancelled 48 hours prior to the appointment. If the appointment is cancelled the same day the full fee will be charged.

I/we the undersigned declare that I/we have read and understood the above,

Name (1) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Name (2) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Counsellor _____ Signature _____ Date _____