



Stephanie Clogg

Informed Consent to Counselling Services

Operating at Peak Resilience

Welcome to Counselling!

First, I would like to commend you on the sometimes difficult decision to come to counselling. Getting started can often be the toughest part. Before we start the counselling process, we will explore information that will help you understand the possible risks and benefits associated with counselling. The purpose of informed consent is to build safety and understanding within our therapeutic relationship, in order to get the best possible results.

We will continue to revisit informed consent throughout our therapeutic relationship, if we're trying a new therapeutic tool or if any of the circumstances in our therapy change. Informed consent is an ongoing, collaborative process.

I acknowledge with respect and gratitude that the land on which we work is on the unceded, stolen territory of the Coast Salish peoples - x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, whose ancient relationships with the land continue to this day.

What is Counselling? What are the Risks and Benefits?

Counselling provides an opportunity for you to explore behaviour, relationships, feelings, or thought patterns that trouble you and cause difficulty in your life. Counselling is also a legitimate source of support and is built through creating an empathic and non-judgemental space. This process will also help you challenge old ways of thinking or behaving that aren't serving you anymore. You may start to feel more self-compassion and create new ways of thinking and behaving. Counselling can also bring deeper personal insight and awareness, better ways of coping with problems, and improved relationships.

What you choose to discuss and explore in counselling is all up to you, this is your time! The counsellor's job is to truly understand your struggles and goals to help you fully utilise your existing strengths while also finding your own solutions and coping strategies. At various times in counselling, I might recommend various therapeutic activities or take home exercises, and you can always give or deny consent to this at any time in the counselling process.

Counselling can be quite different than talking to a friend or loved one. If this is your first time trying counselling, we will discuss a plan together and figure out what works best for you over time. If you've tried counselling before, I will probably ask you what was helpful and unhelpful about your experience to tailor my approach to your specific wants and needs.

While counselling treatment may provide significant benefits, it may also involve some potential risks which may include uncomfortable feelings and discussion or recall of unpleasant situations, memories, or aspects of your life. Counselling sometimes requires that you be willing to examine difficult topics or times in your life, to experience stronger than usual emotions, and to try out new and different behaviours. These changes in behaviours may result in changes in personal relationships, some of which can be positive, and some can be challenging. Finally, changes through counselling often require persistent effort in your life and typically take a bit of time. There are many alternatives to counselling including doing nothing, seeking other types of practitioners, and seeking medical assistance.

The Counselling Relationship

Multiple studies over the years have shown that the most important predictor of success in counselling is the relationship you have with your counsellor. At the beginning of counselling, you will just be getting to know me and how I work. The counselling relationship is different from other relationships in that it's relatively one sided. You will most likely be sharing quite a few details about yourself and your life, while the counsellor will share few details about their personal life. This ensures the focus can be kept on you. This is your time to feel cared for and explore your struggles, so I will maintain necessary boundaries to avoid overlapping or dual relationships. For example, I will not:

- Engage in any other business with you other than therapy
- Be your therapist if they are your friend or family member
- Engage in a friendship, romantic, or sexual relationship with current or former clients
- Give medical, legal or financial advice
- Receive gifts (other than small token gifts such as a thank you card)
- Be your teacher, supervisor or evaluator while engaged in counselling with you
- Be connected on social media (e.g.- cannot accept "friend requests")
- As Vancouver is a small city, outside of the clinical setting, I will not acknowledge clients unless they initiate first.

If for some reason you don't feel like I am the right counsellor for you, I would be happy to refer you to someone else. In rare cases, I may recommend you to see another counsellor if I feel there is a conflict of interest or if I am not the best counsellor for your needs.

In order to maintain the safety of your therapy, please don't attend sessions under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This will ensure that your participation in counselling is voluntary and intentional. If you seem as though you're under the influence of alcohol or drugs, I may recommend ending the session and returning another day. If this is the case, the fee for the session would still apply. If attending counselling substance free is going to be difficult, please talk to me to discuss a safe-enough solution.

Counsellor Qualifications

- Bachelor of Science in Biopsychology from University of British Columbia
- Master of Counselling Psychology from City University of Canada
- Post-graduate trainings in order to provide up-to-date and ethical client care
- Registered Clinical Counsellor with the BCACC (RCC #: 20828)

Theoretical Approach

I use a variety of personalised therapeutic approaches to empower clients to lead meaningful and self-aware lives. The heart of all of my work focuses on building a safe relationship where you can feel seen, heard, valued and supported. The primary theoretical foundations include relational/experiential approaches with elements of cognitive-behavioural models, while incorporating an emphasis on emotional processing and nervous system regulation. I approach clients with an active, client-centred, and collaborative approach that celebrates our unique differences and strengths. I look forward to working with you towards achieving your therapeutic goals! Below are some approaches used:

Somatic/experiential approaches	Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
Emotionally Focused therapy (EFT)	Internal family systems (IFS) - 'Parts work'
Attachment-informed therapy	Feminist informed approaches
Polyvagal theory	Solution-focused therapy
Narrative Therapy	Trauma-informed
Mindful Self-Compassion	Strength-based

Consent and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a necessary condition of counselling, often because the things that people need to share are what they don't want other people to know about. Confidentiality continues after the end of the counselling relationship.

In order to provide the best service possible, I may seek professional consultation and/or supervision regarding our work together. The benefits of this are gaining multiple perspectives and additional clinical expertise, and for all counsellors' continued development. In this case, your identity will remain confidential, and any identifying information or details will not be revealed. Clinical supervisors or colleagues are bound by the same confidentiality as your counsellor. As part of the supervision and clinical development process, I may ask your consent to record one or more of your sessions. I will review the "Consent to record form" with you prior to recording anything, and of course you can choose to deny consent to this with no penalty to you or your counselling relationship.

If you would like me to share information with anyone else outside of our sessions, we will discuss the risks and benefits of this, and you can sign a release of information form stating what information you'd like released, to whom, over what period of time. You have the right to revoke this permission at any time. An example of a benefit of getting a release to contact another person would be to coordinate care with a doctor or psychiatrist.

Limitations to Confidentiality

Counselling sessions are *private and confidential* with the following legal exceptions, and the counsellor will inform you if they think these may need to be put into effect.

There are three important limits to maintaining confidentiality all counsellors must follow. These primarily concern risks of harm:

- If the counsellor believes there is imminent risk of serious harm to yourself or others, the therapist must attempt to notify your family, emergency contact, and legal authorities.
- If you disclose, or it is suspected, that there is abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, the counsellor must report this to the appropriate authorities.
- If your records are subpoenaed or ordered by a court of law (e.g. ICBC, WorkSafeBC).

Communication

We want communication to be as convenient and confidential as possible. If you need to contact me, please email me directly at stephanie@arc-counselling.com. In general, feel free to email if you have relatively simple inquiries. If you have more complex issues to discuss, those are best left for your therapy sessions (unless you have discussed an email counselling arrangement with your counsellor directly).

Emails will be answered within business hours (Monday-Friday, 9 am – 5 pm PST) and response times may vary from 24-48 hours.

When you call Peak Resilience or email the general connect@peak-resilience.com email, the reception or administration staff can access your information on our system. We will only access the information that is necessary to help you at that time (such as your name, contact information and appointment time). All of Peak's staff are bound by an oath of confidentiality and will not release any of your information at any time. Reception staff only have access to your profile information (name, address etc) and are unable to access your clinical notes.

Please do not email or call if you are currently in crisis, as the counsellor cannot guarantee an immediate response. If you are in crisis, please call the crisis centre at 1-800-784-2433 or emergency services at 9-1-1.

Your Personal Information and Client Records

Your personal information is only collected to be utilised by your counsellor in the delivery of counselling services to you. Your personal information will not be disclosed to any third party without expressed, written consent by you or in the case of the above limits to confidentiality.

As a part of counselling, records and brief notes are kept of your therapy sessions. These records include minimal information that is important for me to remember when providing ethical and effective care. Minimal information as possible will be included in your notes to decrease possible harm that may occur on the very low chance your file is legally requested by outside parties. Our files are electronic and we use a Vancouver-based company called "JaneApp" to manage our clinic information, scheduling and credit card payments. The data in our system is encrypted using 256-bit encryption when sent between your counsellor's device and the Jane servers.

Length, Frequency, and Termination of Sessions

While appointments are typically scheduled in one hour blocks, you will actually receive 50 minutes of direct time each session. This allows for 50 minutes of clinical expertise, then 10 minutes to record notes from your session. The frequency of sessions will be determined and negotiated during our time together, based on your struggles and goals.

You are free to terminate counselling at any time and there is no pressure to continue to attend counselling. If I haven't heard from you in a while, I may email or call you to follow up.

Feedback Process

During each session (most likely close to the end of the session), I will ask for your feedback regarding how you felt the session went. This is a great time for you to reflect on the session and express what stood out to you, what you found helpful and what wasn't as helpful.

If the feedback process with me does not satisfy your concerns, you can contact the BCACC and voice your concerns. Should you decide to pursue legal action against ARC Counselling, you agree that the courts of the province of British Columbia shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear any complaint, demand, claim, or cause of action that arises from our relationship.

Counselling Rates

Session fees are set at \$169+GST per 50 minutes for individuals. [Here's a chart of various rates](#) (if you're reading a paper copy, please ask me to print the chart out) at Peak Resilience, and I reserve the right to increase my rates by up to 5% per year to cover costs such as inflation (on an as-needed basis). If rates will increase by up to 5%, we'll communicate this information to our clients and community three months in advance of the change. We believe the quality of the services we provide are commensurate with our rates.

Session rates are paid by credit card automatically after each session. Emailed receipts will be issued for each paid session and will include your counsellor's name and professional association ID number for insurance claims. Receipts can only be provided for services that have been rendered.

Receipts can be submitted to your extended health care benefits provider after each session. Please confirm with your health care provider to ensure that Registered Clinical Counsellors are covered in your plan. Please also confirm what types of counselling (individual, relationship, group) are covered.

Cancellation Policy

Clients will be charged their full session fee for all missed sessions or sessions cancelled with less than 48 hours notice.

Clients arriving late for appointments are entitled to receive the remainder of the scheduled appointment for the full appointment fee. If you are unable to pay the fee for your session, I will be unable to provide counselling services until the balance is paid.

No Symptom Policy at Peak Resilience

We've learned a LOT from the pandemic- including wiping out colds and flus because we were isolating when we had symptoms! So, moving forward (pandemic or *hopefully* no pandemic), our cancellation policy now includes a no-symptoms policy. We expect that switching from in-person to virtual sessions will be relatively common throughout the cold and flu season, and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

For in-office clients: Please email me or call Peak Resilience to request that your appointment be changed from "in person" to "virtual" if you (or anyone you have been in close contact with) has communicable disease symptoms and/or a confirmed case of COVID-19. If you come into our physical office with communicable disease symptoms, your appointment will be cancelled and you will be charged the full fee. When in doubt, stay home and take advantage of virtual sessions so we can keep the most vulnerable members of our community safe.

Communicable disease symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- Fever
- Runny nose/nasal congestion
- Cough, sore throat and/or difficulty swallowing
- New loss or decrease in sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Chills
- Hoarse voice
- Unexplained fatigue or aches and pains
- Nausea/Vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain

What about if my counsellor is sick? Our no-symptom policy extends to our staff. We reserve the right to change your in-person session to a virtual session if I am experiencing communicable disease symptoms and cannot access the office. If this should happen, we will notify you as soon as possible and point you to your recurring zoom link for your session time.

Virtual Therapy & Telecounselling

For clients who access virtual services, I will email you a unique recurring Zoom link to access your counselling sessions. Please 'flag' or 'star' this email to keep it easily accessible or you can find it in your document sharing centre on your Jane profile.

- If either counsellor or client are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the session will be switched to virtual until symptoms have cleared.
- *Virtual sessions can be utilised at the request of the client or counsellor when in-office sessions are not convenient or possible due to health or non-health related reasons. If the counsellor is outside of the greater Vancouver area at any time, sessions will be requested to switch to virtual.*

Zoom software is available on any computer or smartphone/tablet. Ensure that your device is password protected and only you have access to the password. In addition, use a password protected private Internet connection when on a Zoom call.

The client is responsible for ensuring confidentiality by closing other programs on my computer while in a video session, planning ahead to minimise distractions, and not answering calls or text messages during the Zoom session. It is recommended that clients are in a private quiet space for virtual sessions (preferably alone with the door closed) and headphones may be used to increase privacy of sessions. In receiving counselling via telephone or video online, the counsellor has taken all measures in keeping with professional standards to maximise security.

The client acknowledges that they are taking responsibility for the degree of security on their own device(s). If doing virtual counselling, the client agrees to take responsibility for the level of security and connectivity of their internet platform, equipment and service.

For more information on how Zoom keeps its client's information private and the government of Canada's PIPEDA guidelines, please visit and review the information at the links below.

- https://zoom.us/docs/doc/PIPEDA_PHIPA%20Canadian%20Public%20Information%20Compliance%20Guide.pdf
- <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>

Technical Difficulties: Technical problems may occur. If a session is disrupted, the counsellor will call back or restart the zoom meeting unless technical difficulties persist. In such cases, the session can be continued via phone or rescheduled via phone or email, depending on the client's preferences.

- If technical problems persist and the client does not want to continue the counselling session over the phone, the price of the session will be prorated based on the amount of time that has elapsed. For example, if half the session time has elapsed before the technical problems begin, the client will be charged for half the session. Alternatively, we may agree to add the unused session time to the following appointment.

The client agrees that they will not use Zoom in an emergency situation that needs immediate attention, whereby they are considering harming themselves or someone else. If a life threatening crisis should occur, the client agrees to contact 911 or the 24 hour suicide hotline at 1-800-SUICIDE, or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Acknowledgement of Informed Consent

My client signature below indicates I understand and accept the preceding statements. I have had an opportunity to discuss the contents of this informed consent with my counsellor, had my questions answered to my satisfaction, and am fully prepared to enter into a counselling agreement with my counsellor.

Name of Client	Signature	Date
Stephanie Clogg		

Registered Clinical Counsellor #: 20828

The information provided in the informed consent process was adapted from various sources including:

The BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Standard for Informed Consent to Clinical Counselling and the Collection, use and Disclosure of Personal Information
<http://bc-counsellors.org/app/uploads/2015/09/1BCACC-Standards-Informed-Consent-2010.pdf>

Informed Consent for Counselling at the University of Lethbridge Counselling Services
http://www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/informed_consent_U_of_L_sept_9_2010.pdf

BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Personal Information Protection Act: A Counsellor's Guide for Developing Client Personal Information Protection Policies and Procedures
<http://bc-counsellors.org/app/uploads/2015/10/PIPA-ACounsellorsGuideOctober2004.pdf>

BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Payment for Clinical Counselling Practice Standards
<http://bc-counsellors.org/app/uploads/2015/09/2BCACC-Standard-Payment-Clinical-Counselling-Services-2010.pdf>

BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Standard for the use of Technology in Counselling
<http://bc-counsellors.org/app/uploads/2015/09/7BCACC-Standard-Use-of-Technology-2011.pdf>

G-Suite Email Service Provider Security FAQ
<https://gsuite.google.com/faq/security>

Jane App Guide: Basics- Security-FAQ
<https://janeapp.com/guide/basics/security-faq>

Jane App: Privacy
<https://janeapp.com/privacy>