

Harroop Sandhu Counselling

Informed Consent

Welcome to Harroop Sandhu 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.

I 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.

Harroop Sandhu Counselling acknowledges with respect and gratitude that the land on which I work on is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples - xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsilil-Waututh) Nations, whose ancient relationships with the land continue to this day.

What is Counselling? What are the Risks and Benefits?

Counselling can be quite different than talking to a friend or loved one. Counselling provides a space and opportunity for you to explore behaviour, relationships, feelings, or thoughts that trouble you and cause difficulty in your life. Counselling is also a legitimate source of support in a crisis or during a difficult time. As a counsellor I will provide empathic support and will help you challenge old ways of thinking or behaving that aren't serving you anymore. If you've tried counselling before, I will probably ask you what was helpful and unhelpful about the counselling you've had. This is so I can tailor my services to your specific wants and needs. If this is your first time trying counselling, together we will figure out what works best for you over time.

The benefits of empathic support and changing unhelpful ways of thinking can be drastic. You may start to feel more self-compassion, understand unhealthy habits, and create new ways of thinking and behaving. Counselling can also bring deeper personal insight and awareness, better ways of understanding and coping with problems, and improved relationships.

You should know however, 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, some can be challenging. Finally, changes through counselling often require persistent effort in your life and typically take a bit of time.

What's an example of a risk and benefit? Let's say a woman comes to counselling because she has extremely low self-worth and is sick of hating herself. Through an empathic, supportive relationship with her therapist, she starts to love herself more. However, through therapy she also realises the reason she has low self-worth is because her family was never very supportive to her, and often cut her down verbally. She starts to distance herself from the hurtful family members, resulting in more tension. Although the woman feels drastically better overall, she is now trying to figure out how to set strong boundaries with family and some hurtful friends too.

Consent in Counselling

What you choose to discuss and explore in counselling is all up to you. You are the boss! As a counsellor it is my job to truly understand your struggles and goals, so they can help you fully utilise your existing strengths and find your own solutions. At various times in counselling, I might recommend various therapeutic activities or "homework", and you can always give or deny consent at any time in the counselling process.

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")

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, your counsellor may recommend you to end the session and return 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

I possess a Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology, and I have also engaged in various post graduate training in order to provide effective, ethical counselling services. I am a Registered Clinical Counsellor (#11994) and a member of the BCACC—the British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors.

As a counsellor I use many modes of therapy including but not limited to: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, Emotion Focused Therapy, EMDR, Attachment and Family Systems Theory, and Strength Based Therapy. I will discuss the best approach that will help you reach your goals.

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 counselling possible and for the counsellor's continued clinical development, I will occasionally talk with a clinical supervisor or colleague about some of the issues you are dealing with. Clinical supervisors or colleagues will be bound by the same confidentiality. 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 "recorded sessions informed consent 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

There are three important limits to maintaining confidentiality all counsellors must follow.

These primarily concern risks of harm:

- There is risk of harm or neglect to a child or vulnerable/dependent adult
- If a counsellor believes you are at risk of harming yourself or another person;
- For the purposes of complying with a legal requirement such as requests from ICBC or WorkSafeBC.

Communication

We want communication to be as convenient and confidential as possible. If you need to contact me, please email me directly.

Please do not email or call if you are currently in crisis– please call the crisis centre at 1-800-784-2433 or emergency services at 9-1-1.

Your Personal Information

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 are kept of your therapy sessions. These records include minimal information that is important for your counsellor to remember when providing ethical and effective care. We aim to include the most minimal information possible 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 your BCACC and voice your concerns.

Should you decide to pursue legal action against me, 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** 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.

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.

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, we will be unable to provide counselling services until the balance is paid.

Session rates may be paid by credit card, interac E-transfer to: admin@peak-resilience.com

No Symptom Policy

For our in-office clients:

Please email your counsellor and admin@peak-resilience.com 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. We love you, we just don't love your cold!

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

For clients who access in-office services (in addition to clients who access us virtually), we'll email you a unique recurring Zoom link to access your virtual counselling sessions.

How to find your recurring zoom link:

- Save the email you received with your Zoom link or
- Find it in your document sharing centre at peakresilience.janeapp.com

When in doubt, stay home and take advantage of virtual sessions so we can keep the most vulnerable members of our community safe.

What about if my counsellor is sick?

I 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, I will notify you as soon as possible and point you to your recurring zoom link for your session time.

I expect that switching from in-person to virtual sessions will be relatively common throughout the cold and flu season, and I appreciate your patience and understanding.

Acknowledgement of Informed Consent

My 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	
Harroop Sandhu	<i>harroop sandhu</i>	
Name of Counsellor	Signature	Date
BCACC	11994	
Counsellor's Professional Association	ID Number	

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>