

## **Mental Health Services Counselling Agreement and Consent**

We want you to have the most positive and helpful experience possible, as you participate in counselling at the Georgian Bay Family Health Team (GBFHT). This agreement contains information about what to expect, and what will be expected of you.

### **Structure of Sessions**

A Just in Time appointment is the entry point to our service. We have learned that a single meeting with a therapist at the time that it is most needed is a highly effective way of providing the right amount and right kind of support to people experiencing a full range of wellbeing and mental health concerns. We have also learned that people who need counselling support do better when they have more control over when it happens and the pace at which it happens. This is what the Just-in-Time approach is about.

You may choose to have just one meeting with a therapist, or you may choose to have up to 3 meetings. After completion of the 3 sessions, if more than Just-in-Time Counselling is needed, our team will help you get connected with the next level of support, at GBFHT or with another more appropriate agency. You can choose to access another Just-in-Time appointment within 12 months of your last appointment, without another referral from your physician or nurse practitioner. If more than 12 months has lapsed, and because your situation or circumstances might have changed, we ask you to check in with your NP or physician, to get another referral for Just-in-Time.

You may be asked to complete a questionnaire, to track your symptoms and general functioning, and this will help your therapist assess whether you are benefiting from treatment. Sessions typically last 50-60 minutes and usually the therapist cannot go over time because of their responsibility to other patients. If the session is scheduled by phone the counsellor will contact you at the scheduled time. You are expected to be by yourself in a safe and private space where you are able to engage in the counselling process. Please be aware that the counsellor cannot proceed with counselling if you are driving, in a public area/space, or are with other people that have not previously been arranged to be part of the session.

### **To Cancel a Scheduled Appointment**

We ask that you call at least 24 hours in advance and calling early in the day is appreciated. Appointments are in high demand, and your early cancellation will give another person the opportunity to take that appointment slot.

In the case of more than TWO missed appointments (or same day cancellations), or if you continue to miss appointments throughout therapy, you may be asked to wait a period of six months before you access counselling again. A new referral from your family doctor or NP is required, in this instance.

You will receive an email message reminder 2 days before your appointment, please call to cancel if you are unable to make it; (705) 444-5885. If you do not reach the receptionist, you may leave a message on our voicemail.

### **Our scope of practice includes:**

- Depression
- Anxiety and fears
- Bereavement issues
- Relationship issues
- School phobia/refusal
- Couple/family concerns
- Addiction issues
- Poor self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Anger issues

- Stress management
- Abuse self/others
- Sexual concerns
- Loneliness

**Our counsellors are not available to:**

- Testify on behalf of someone
- Complete court ordered counselling or assessments
- Complete custody/parenting capacity assessments
- Diagnose behavioural or mental health issues
- Provide assessments or opinions about parents' separation or divorce, or custody, access, capacity issues or visitation rights.

Counsellors at the Georgian Bay Family Health Team are mandated to provide short term counselling services. Your healthcare professional is regulated by, and responsible to, a professional College that ensures public safety through adherence to professional standards. Our regulated staff members are licensed to provide care within the province of Ontario. For this reason, we are unable to provide counselling, education or advice if you are located out of Ontario for a temporary period of time, i.e. for vacation or school purposes. We will do our best to connect you with appropriate services in that event, or to see you in a timely manner when you return home.

The Georgian Bay Family Health Team, its staff and physicians are compliant with Provincial Privacy Legislation, specifically Bill 31: The Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), protecting you and your personal information.

All counselling provided by the GBFHT, including the Counsellor's notes, documentation from intake/screening that occurred before this agreement was signed, and any information disclosed before, during or after counselling, shall be private and confidential, and remain in your permanent electronic medical record, which is the property of the referring physician, and not the GBFHT. For release of any personal information or letters about your counselling, please contact your Physician's office.

The Counsellor's legal obligations to disclose otherwise confidential information may include:

- disclosing information or records in response to a court order.
- reporting a child in need of protection; or
- where the Counsellor believes, upon reasonable grounds, that there is risk to a person or group, of death, serious bodily or psychological harm, disclosing such confidential information that is required in the circumstances to prevent such death or harm.

**Counselling of a Child**

- Consent is required from parent/legal guardian of a child under 12 years. The counsellor may ask for signed consent from both legal guardians prior to starting counselling sessions.
- Children 12 years and older can provide their own consent to treatment. A parent/legal guardian may be required to provide consent for a child 12 to 16 years, as determined by GBFHT counsellor and/or physician or NP.
- Written consent from a child 12 years and above must be provided before personal health information can be released to a parent/legal guardian by a physician. GBFHT shall not release any written information directly to a parent or guardian.
- The counsellor may, at their discretion, meet privately and confidentially with each guardian prior to and during counselling. The guardians agree that any information disclosed, or records created as a result of

such a meeting, will be treated in the same private and confidential manner as the Confidential Information.

- The counsellor may, at their discretion, meet or consult with the child, with or without a guardian present.
- The counsellor may, at their discretion, disclose information obtained from the child with or without the child's consent.
- The counsellor may, at their discretion, disclose information obtained from the child to one or both guardians.

### **Crisis Services**

GBFHT is not an emergency service and cannot respond to telephone calls outside of regular business hours. If you feel as though you are in crisis, please call your family physician or attend the local emergency department. You can also call the Mental Health Crisis Line, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their toll-free number is 1-888-893-8333.

### **Complaints Process**

While we hope that you will have a positive experience as you work with the members of our counselling team, please contact us if you have comments, concerns, or a complaint. Contact our Clinical Director at [gedwards@gbfht.ca](mailto:gedwards@gbfht.ca) or by phone 705-444-5885 Ext 6251 during normal working hours. Your feedback is important to us and to the ongoing development of our program, and we will do our utmost to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction.

### **Consent to treatment with GBFHT**

Date:

I understand and agree to all the terms and conditions listed above:

No Yes

