

Family Counselling Agreement

As the client, you understand that:

- » The counselling process will involve learning to understand yourself and assist in clarifying problems, goals and objectives. The process of self-awareness, problem-solving and cognitive restructuring take time to achieve. Some clients need only a couple of counselling sessions to achieve their goals, while others may require sessions over an extended period – every individual experience is different.
- » If counselling is successful, you should feel that you are able to face life's challenges in the future without continued support or intervention. Although the sessions may be very emotionally and psychologically intimate, it is important to realise that the counselling relationship is strictly professional in nature. If at any time you are dissatisfied with the services, you can discuss this with your counsellor. You may end the counselling relationship at any point. CatholicCare will be supportive of your decision and will happily refer you to another professional, should you wish.

CHILDREN

- » Due to the nature of the counselling process, it would be inappropriate for children over the age of 12 months to be present during a session unless they are the subject or focus of the session, at the invitation of the practitioner.
- » CatholicCare's waiting area is not a safe area for unsupervised children and in accordance with CatholicCare's policy to protect vulnerable children, we do not allow children to sit in our waiting area without an adult carer.
- » Should you arrive with children without appropriate supervision, the session will not be able to proceed and will be rescheduled.

FEES

- » CatholicCare is a partially funded organisation and is able to subsidise fees making sure that the service can be provided at a cost that does not exclude anyone from accessing help.
- » On arrival at the session, the receptionist will help with

payment of the appropriate fee. EFTPOS and credit card facilities are available.

- » NB – If our Fees are prohibitive, please speak to Reception or your Counsellor about this as fees can be waived under our Hardship Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All Counsellors at CatholicCare are accredited Family Counsellors, conducting family counselling as set out in sections 10B and 10C(1) of the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) ("the Act"). Therefore, all communications with your Family Counsellor are confidential and not admissible (some exceptions apply as per sections 10D and 10E of the Act).

During the counselling process, confidentiality is maintained for clients. This is standard procedure and practice is for all clients, regardless of age or background, except in the following circumstances:

- » When you provide written consent, we may share information outlining the times/dates of the sessions you have attended;
- » The Counsellor determines that you are a danger to yourself (e.g. self-harm or suicide), to others or someone is a danger to you or property;
- » If a lawyer represents a child's interest under section 68L of the Act;
- » For research purposes (with your consent and then only information other than your personal information);
- » For supervision and education purposes within CatholicCare;
- » The Court orders that the information is disclosed;
- » And in a situation in which harm/risk of harm to children is disclosed – our counsellors have a duty of care to report this harm to the appropriate authorities.

Evidence of anything said in family counselling and in referrals from family counselling is not admissible unless an admission or disclosure indicates that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

We're with you.

Please note: It is CatholicCare policy that we do not write client reports.

We are required to provide regular reports to our funding bodies for accountability purposes. The reported information is only accessible to our funding bodies in a de-identified format.

We respect your right to keep personal information private. All information is stored securely to ensure your privacy is maintained.

- » Personal information is used to assist us in providing a service that best meets your circumstances.
- » At times we may require information from other professionals or agencies to meet your particular needs. There may also be times that other professionals or agencies require information that we hold about you to meet your service provision needs. In these circumstances, we will seek your permission to obtain or release information in accordance with CatholicCare's formal policies and procedures.

» CatholicCare is committed to the Australian Privacy Principles 2014.

From time to time, CatholicCare has student Counsellors engaged. Should you not wish to have a student in your session, please let reception know on arrival. Students are bound by the terms of this agreement.

CLIENT'S RIGHTS

As a person using CatholicCare services, you have a number of rights. CatholicCare recognises your right to:

- » Receive good quality services
- » Be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
- » Participate in making informed choices about your care
- » Be informed and consulted about the services you receive
- » Expect privacy, confidentiality, and access to personal information kept about you by CatholicCare
- » Have another person of your choice support you and advocate on your behalf
- » Have your comments valued

- » Make a confidential complaint if you are not happy with the services you receive
- » Refuse a service

CATHOLICARE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

While you have a number of rights as a client, you also have some responsibilities to the people providing care to you. As a client of CatholicCare, we ask that you:

- » Provide staff with information so we can provide a service that recognises your strengths and the areas in which you need support
- » Treat staff with respect and courtesy; for example, by letting them know as soon as possible if you cannot keep an appointment or to advise if there is a change to your personal details
- » Seek clarification if you need more information about your participation in our programs
- » Take responsibility for the results of any decisions which you make with staff about your care
- » Share responsibility with our staff for ensuring that harassment, abuse or discrimination does not occur
- » We will keep an up-to-date knowledge of policies and procedures in providing our services to you.
- » We will ensure our services are accessible and affordable, especially to those who are disadvantaged, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, beliefs or disability.

We will support you in ensuring you are well informed before you are asked to give either written or verbal consent.

We will support you in ensuring that our expectations of you are clear.

- » We will ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is acknowledged and valued in the way we provide our service to you.
- » We will use feedback from comments and complaints to improve our services where you have given us permission to do so.
- » We will advise you of workplace health and safety issues relating to our premises, for example, emergency assembly points, smoking areas etc.

We're with you.

Client Feedback and Complaints

We aim to provide an equitable, respectful and professional service so your feedback is important to us. If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received, there are a steps you can take to have your concerns heard and resolved.

HOW DO I GIVE FEEDBACK?

CatholicCare management and staff welcome feedback on the quality of our services and/or ideas for how we could improve. You can provide your feedback to us in person, by phone or in writing.

HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

CatholicCare seeks to resolve all complaints in a supportive and timely manner. You/ your service will not be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint. There are three options for you to consider utilising to have your complaint addressed by CatholicCare:

OPTION 1 Talk to the relevant staff member

If you feel comfortable to do so, please discuss your concerns with the relevant staff member so they may have the opportunity to resolve the issue with you in a timely and constructive way. Our staff members can also advise you about the process for lodging a formal complaint (if this is required).

OPTION 2 Contact our Program Manager

If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the staff member directly, you can ask to speak to the staff member's manager about the problem. You can do this by phoning 1300 477 433 or sending a letter to CatholicCare, PO Box 1733, QLD 4350.

The manager will calmly discuss your concern with you and will aim to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, with a view to reaching an agreement on what action may or may not need to be taken.

We will keep you informed about the progress of your complaint. You can expect that the matter will be dealt with promptly with a response from the Program Manager or a delegated staff member within 7 days of receiving your complaint.

OPTION 3 Contact our Complaints Manager

If your concern is not able to be resolved through Options One or Two, you may contact the CatholicCare Complaints Manager on:

Phone: 1300 477 433

Email: hello@catholiccare.services

Mail: Private and Confidential, Complaints Manager,
PO Box 1733, QLD 4350

SUPPORT

You have the right to have a support person, carer, and/ or interpreter assist you when making a complaint and during the complaints resolution process.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A COMPLAINT

When making a complaint, you should explain your concern in your own words. You should include enough information so we have a clear picture of the problem. This will allow us to assess your complaint and determine the most appropriate response.

Please note *If your complaint has not been resolved through the above three options, you have the right to contact the relevant funding body, including the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)*

We're with you.