

Your Rights in Counselling

I provide counselling which is both voluntary and collaborative. I am not the boss, deciding what is true or not true, and telling you what to do about it. We will work together to develop shared understandings and plans. All decisions are made cooperatively.

You are never obligated to participate. You have the right to feel safe and secure. If for any reason you do not wish to answer questions or otherwise participate, that is always fair. You have the right to discontinue or take a break from counselling any time you wish.

If you decide to discontinue, I do ask that you inform me at your earliest convenience. This allows opportunity to plan your next steps together (if you wish); and a chance for me to offer any appointments you no longer need to others.

You have the right to access your information. If for any reason you would like to review your file, you may request to do so verbally and/or in writing. Reviewing your file usually does not happen immediately, but should generally be possible within two weeks, and no more than 30 days.

Your Responsibilities in Counselling

Making use of counselling is a good way to summarize your responsibility. A simple example of this is arriving on time. I do not criticize or hand-out a penalty if you arrive late. Your appointment is yours to make use of as you see fit. It does mean that you will have a shorter session, and may accomplish less; but that is your choice.

A similar example involves “between-session tasks” (or homework). I don't give out demerit points or wag my finger at you, if you did not do the tasks we agreed upon in the last session. Practicing between-session tasks is usually beneficial, and can promote change and improvement better and faster than not practicing. I will probably remind you of the benefits of practice; but not in an angry, lecturing way.

It may appear as if this responsibility seems to contradict your right to not participate, outlined above. I will suggest that it is a balance, rather than a contradiction. The right not to participate exists to promote a sense of comfort and safety; and the responsibility to participate exists to enhance the benefits of counselling, and achieve goals more efficiently.

Please refer to the link entitled, [Getting the Most Out of Counselling](#) for further information.