

Carmen Richardson Counselling Informed Consent for Counselling/Therapy

A few things to know about before we get started...

Risks and Benefits

People attend counselling for a variety of reasons, but mainly to make change in some part of their life that isn't going so well. You may be coming because you are ready for something to be different in your life and want to work with a professional who may have the skills to guide this process of discovery/change. You may be coming because some external event has happened that required you to make change. Perhaps someone has encouraged you to attend. Others attend to deal with grief and loss issues that need to be supported and witnessed. I will offer the best assistance I can. If I do not believe I am the right person for you I will do my best to refer you in the right direction.

Therapy is not about encouraging dependence on the therapist, but for the therapist to support you with discovering your own internal and external resources in order to make sustained change in the areas you have identified. Change is not always easy and while counselling is a supportive process, you may also be challenged to look at things differently. There may be times when you leave feeling exhausted, irritated or upset. I will do my best to ensure that we end the sessions in a more grounded place however, there may be times when that is not the case. As we make change, it is not unusual for the relationships around us to be impacted as well. You may make changes in these relationships (i.e. let go of some, create new ones) which may be difficult in the moment, but helpful to you in the long term.

There are many approaches to dealing with specific concerns. I have been trained in a variety of specific counselling methods (i.e. art therapy, expressive arts therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, body-focused psychotherapy, EMDR, etc). You may be invited to try a variety of interventions/techniques. Please know that you do not have to try any that are suggested or if you do try one, that you can stop it at any time. Please ask any questions you may have of any approach that is used. You have a right to ask as many questions as needed throughout the therapeutic process. Please note that there are many other treatment approaches to life's problems, including physical activity, medications, support groups, spiritual guidance etc.

Art Therapy

I authorize Carmen Richardson to maintain a digital and/or hard copy of my art work and/or creative writing in my counselling file. However, any art work that is too large for the file, and is left with Carmen Richardson after services have terminated, will be confidentially disposed of within 6 months.

Termination of Therapy

You are free to stop therapy at any time. Should you feel that you are not making the progress you had hoped, please address this with me as soon as possible. If I feel that we are not making progress, I will also address this with you as soon as possible. We will re-evaluate our treatment plan/goals and decide if a change in therapeutic direction is required or if referral to another professional or some other alternative is necessary.

Limits of Confidentiality

What we discuss in our sessions is private. Your file is private. I keep your file locked in a filing cabinet in my locked office. Should we decide that I need to speak to someone with respect to your treatment with me, I will only do so with a Release of Information form signed by you.

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep record of our work together and that this record is kept for 10 years in a secure location. After this time period, the file is shredded. When couples, families and groups receive counselling services, separate files for each individual are often kept.

Legally, should any of the following happen, I am obligated to report to the proper authorities:

-if you are at imminent risk of harming yourself or another person (I am required to protect the threatened person by possibly arranging for hospitalization, notifying family or other supports, alerting law enforcement, informing the intended victim.)

-if an elder person, dependent adult, or child between the ages of 0 - 18 years is being or is suspected of being abused, neglected or is a witness of abuse

-if your file is subpoenaed or I am ordered by a court order to testify

Complaint Procedure

Should you have concerns about any aspect of the therapeutic process I would ask you to bring these concerns directly to me so that we can determine if we can find a solution together. If we are unable to resolve these things, or you do not feel you can address your concern with me directly, you have the right to contact my professional association to file a complaint. My professional association is the Alberta College of Social Workers and their number is 1-780-421-1167.

Consent for Therapy

I have read, understood, and agree to the terms of this informed consent form. *If you have any questions please ask **before you sign**.* By signing this form, I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in therapy with Carmen Richardson.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PART II: CONSENT FOR ART THERAPY RESEARCH AND TRAINING

I further authorize that my art work and creative writing may be used for Educational and/or Research purposes, for unlimited duration, providing that I remove all identifying information. Specifically, I understand that my creative work will be kept anonymous; I will not be identified by name, address, or other specific information which may disclose my identity to the public.

I understand that the ownership of the original art work, for research and writing purposes, remains with me. The risk to giving consent is relatively low. The art work is part of the therapy process, so further work is not required of myself, my identity is protected, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. The benefit of giving consent is that I will be contributing my therapy work to further the development of knowledge in the field of art therapy.

If I have any concerns with how the research is being conducted, I can register my concerns with Carmen Richardson or with the Canadian Art Therapy Association.

I understand that I am free to withdraw consent for the work to be used for training/research purposes at any time up to 1 year after the last recorded treatment session. However, I recognize that any of my art or creative work that is in published form might not be able to be recalled.

I further give permission for videotapes of my therapy session to be used for educational, research, and/or supervision/consultation purposes, with the understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any times and that this is completely voluntary.

Client: _____

Date: _____