

Family Life Centre

DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

Introduction to Counselling Services

The *Family Life Centre* at Tyndale University College & Seminary is an initiative of Tyndale's Open Learning Centre with a mandate to offer professional counselling support to individuals, couples and families in the communities of Toronto and beyond, providing care in a variety of languages to people of all religious and cultural backgrounds, at affordable fees and available through extended week day hours and Saturdays. The counselling for the *Family Life Centre* is provided by *Tyndale Counselling Services*, whose staff have facilitated growth and healing in the lives of Tyndale students and their families for over twenty years. The following specific information is provided for you so that you can make an informed decision about counselling. If you have any questions about this information or anything that is not addressed below, please ask your therapist, or Wilma Nevers (ext. 2740), Manager of *Tyndale Counselling Services*.

The *Family Life Centre* offers seminars and helpful learning opportunities on such topics as parenting, communication, conflict resolution and marriage enrichment. These workshops will be developed as the need is identified and the interest determined. General information on the services offered may be found on our website (www.tyndaleflc.ca).

About Psychotherapy

Your Therapist. Your therapist wants to assist you in growth and healing in the areas that lead you to come to counselling and will help you work toward your therapy goals. Feel free to ask your therapist about their professional background, education and training, and perspectives on therapy, as you have a right to this information.

Christian Commitment. All staff members are committed to the Christian faith and agree with the Tyndale University College and Seminary "Statement of Faith." Each one is also committed to the Tyndale "Mission Statement": "Tyndale is dedicated to the pursuit of truth, to excellence in teaching, learning and research, for the enriching of mind, heart and character, to serve the church and the world for the glory of God."

Therapeutic Approach. We have a holistic approach to therapy: growth and healing of the whole person including emotional, spiritual, relational, vocational, behavioural, and cognitive well-being. Your therapist is not a medical doctor and therefore cannot prescribe medication or give medical advice but can make a referral, if needed. While therapy style varies, all therapists will need some information to gain an understanding of your concern(s) and will develop therapeutic goals with you. You may end therapy at any time. If possible, discuss your decision with your therapist, as closure is part of the therapy process.

Outcome Rating Scales & Session Rating Scales. At the beginning and end of each therapy session your therapist will usually ask you to fill out a short survey regarding the past week (Outcome Rating Scale) and the current session (Session Rating Scale). Together you will use this information to monitor how you are doing and how your therapist is doing in helping you meet your therapy goals. Please be as honest as possible in your scoring.

Accessibility Services. *Tyndale Counselling Services* is compliant with the accessibility legislation (AODA). We have a commitment to address barriers in our services and processes, therefore we will provide accommodation for people with disabilities. If you require accommodation, please advise Wilma Nevers, Manager, at wnevers@tyndale.ca or by calling 416-226-6620 ext. 2740.

Risks of Therapy. The process of change has an impact on our lives and our relationships. Your therapist will help you think through the implications and consequences of the life changes that you are considering. Changing old habits and ways of thinking, feeling and behaving often requires hard work and you may experience some feelings of discomfort along the way. While positive gains are the goal in therapy, outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Additionally, a person may change in ways that others may or may not approve.

Supervision of Therapy. All our therapists receive supervision to provide competent and responsible care for clients, maintain high standards, and facilitate the therapist's ongoing professional development. All supervisors (Sheila Stevens, Wilma Nevers, Winnie Lai, Purple Yip, Grace Kuipers and Katharine Kim) are Registered Psychotherapists (CRPO) and are either Approved Supervisors with AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy) or working toward that professional designation. Therapists usually video record sessions to facilitate adequate supervision. You have a right to a scheduled consultation with our Director or Manager and/or your therapist's supervisor if you have any questions about the therapeutic process or supervision.

Your Rights as a Client

Confidentiality. Under normal circumstances only you have the right to tell your own story and what is shared in therapy is treated as confidential and will not be shared with any office or individual outside of our *Tyndale Counselling Services* team and Marion Goertz, Director of Family Life Centre, without your signed and informed consent. All staff members do their utmost to protect confidentiality within the team when it is suspected that a client may be known by a therapist or supervisor. Individuals in couple, family or group therapy are responsible for their own handling of confidences shared in the group.

Under some circumstances, all professionals are legally and ethically bound and free to disclose certain specific and relevant information to appropriate individuals or agencies. These circumstances include: if there is reason to believe that a client in therapy is a danger to themselves or may do harm to another person, there is reason to believe that a minor has been, is, or may be in danger of neglect or abuse, in response to a court order, a client reports reasonable suspicion or knowledge that a resident in a Long Term Care facility or Retirement Home in Ontario is suffering or has suffered harm as a result of abuse or negligence by staff in the home, or the therapist has reasonable grounds to believe another regulated health professional has sexually abused a client or patient.

In other cases, your therapist may share specific and relevant information with appropriate organizations without your consent. These circumstances include: if your therapist has reason to believe that another therapist has caused or is likely to cause you harm, in a medical emergency or the court subpoenas your records. Note that it is our policy not to get involved in court action around divorce and/or custody except in rare, exceptional circumstances.

Privacy. You have a right to expect as much visual and auditory privacy as may be reasonably provided given our current facilities. Our offices are in the A500 and B500 wings. White noise is used to enhance privacy. There is a Waiting Room (B505) beside the Reception Office. If you would like, please help yourself to a beverage in the Waiting Room before your session. If you have concerns about privacy, please speak to your therapist. For details of our Privacy Policy, visit our website at <http://www.tyndale.ca/counselling> and <https://www.tyndale.ca/privacy>.

Ethical Standards. Our staff adhere to the Code of Ethics of their respective professional college and associations (e.g. the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), or the College of Physicians and Surgeons). Should you feel that an ethical violation has occurred through which you have experienced some measure of harm, you have a right to register a complaint. Please speak to Wilma Nevers, Manager, regarding procedure. You may also contact the Privacy Commissioner or the professional college to which the staff member belongs (e.g. CRPO: 163 Queen Street East, Fourth Floor, Toronto, ON, M5A 1S1, 1-888-661-4801 or 416-862-4801).

Client Records. All therapy-related material is the property of *Tyndale Counselling Services* and is securely and confidentially maintained for a minimum of ten years following the completion of the last therapy session, after which time, under normal circumstances, it will be destroyed in a complete, responsible and professional manner. You have a right to review or have a copy of any information that is contained in your client file except if this would result in a health or safety risk to you or another person. To access your file, provide a written request to your therapist or if you are not a current client, to the Manager. Access will be provided in the presence of your therapist or the Manager or Director and done at a time agreed upon and incurs the usual hourly fee for therapy. Video recordings are not available for review, as your therapist will continually/periodically record over and delete them.

Informed Consent. You have a right to be meaningfully informed about the therapy process. Together you and your therapist will discuss therapy goals and a plan to achieve them. Ask your therapist for clarification as needed. Your therapist will typically request feedback using the Outcome Rating Scale and Session Rating Scale mentioned above as well as permission for taping. Your written permission is required for personal information to be sent to or received from another person or institution to assist in therapy or other matters. In an emergency a therapist might not receive your informed consent before accessing additional professional care for you, if a delay could reasonably result in suffering or serious bodily harm to you.

Research. As part of an academic institution, *Tyndale Counselling Services* is committed to providing ongoing quality care for its clients and improved professional development of its therapists. One method we use to meet this commitment is involvement in research. Our application to be part of an international research study that focuses on the integration of faith and therapy has been accepted! This research will involve both therapists and clients and is scheduled to begin early in the fall 2018. For those that are interested in participating, if your therapist is in the study, then your permission will be requested to give your contact information to a Research Assistant who will contact you directly with further details. Your participation is totally voluntary. Please be assured that your willingness to participate will be greatly appreciated, but if you choose not to participate, this will in no way negatively affect our service to you. This research meets the legal and ethical guidelines of the CRPO, AAMFT, and the governing body that sponsors the study as well as the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale and the University of Toronto.

Referral. A client may need to be referred to another professional at the request of the client or the therapist. Reasons for referral or consultation include: signs that the client may need medical treatment or medication, a second opinion, or areas outside the therapist's scope of practice. If therapy is not proceeding in a satisfactory manner, the client is encouraged to speak with their therapist, the therapist's supervisor or the Manager. You have a right to a referral to another appropriate professional(s) within or outside *Tyndale Counselling Services*.

Psychiatrists. *Tyndale Counselling Services* has psychiatrists on our team. Psychiatrists will provide a psychiatric consultation to clients upon the recommendation of their Tyndale therapist and with a physician's referral. All consultations are booked well in advance and the therapist is normally present.

Therapist Absence. You have a right to expect that your regularly scheduled appointments will be respected and protected from unnecessary interruptions. Your therapist will inform you in advance of any absences including vacations and will provide the names of other therapists or personnel that may be accessed during periods of absence. Occasionally a therapist may not be able to make a session due to sudden illness or an unforeseen circumstance. They will try to contact you if possible. Also, the therapist will contact you to set up another appointment.

Your Responsibilities as a Client

Active Participation. Therapy is a collaborative venture between the therapist and client. Openness, honesty and a commitment to change are important contributions from the client as the therapist cannot solve the clients' issues for them. In couple and family counselling, secrets held between individuals are usually counterproductive and will not be colluded with. The therapist will ask the client to consider the benefits of disclosing the secret. The exceptions to this rule would be information shared in individual counselling received before couple/family/group counselling was initiated or after it concluded or in situations where protection from harm is an issue.

Scheduling of Sessions. The initial intake session and subsequent sessions are booked directly between client and therapist. Therapists usually meet with clients weekly or biweekly, on the same day and time, for a 50-minute session. As therapy progresses, sometimes sessions may be less frequent. Couple and family issues sometimes require longer sessions and will be scheduled accordingly in consultation with the couple or family. It is expected that, as much as possible, sessions will begin and end on time.

Fees Charged. The fee for counselling is \$120 plus HST (\$135.60) per 50 minute session. In situations of significant financial hardships, a sliding scale will be used to determine fees. Proof of income will normally be required for clients to

benefit from the sliding scale. For clients paying reduced fees, the fees are renegotiated after 6 therapy session intervals.

Fees are to be paid by exact cash or cheque at each session. We hope to have other options for payment in the future. A receipt will be issued to the client when payment is made. Cheques are payable to Tyndale University College & Seminary. The client will assume bank charges for NSF cheques. Fees for extended phone calls, consultations, file review, reports and letters are usually charged to clients at your usual hourly fee for therapy, and will be arranged beforehand by your therapist. There is a materials charge for most personality and vocational inventories requested by the client.

Missed or Cancelled Sessions. To cancel your appointment, please leave a message for your therapist on their voicemail or email at least 24 hours in advance. Clients will be charged their regular fee for all sessions that are missed or cancelled with less than 24-hour notice. It is understood that occasionally an emergency may arise such as a sudden illness or death in the family that may necessitate cancellation with less than 24 hours' notice. Please discuss this with your therapist. To end the therapy sessions, please discuss with your therapist, as this is part of the therapeutic process.

Collection of outstanding fees. Clients are required to pay all outstanding fees for sessions attended, missed or cancelled with less than 24-hour notice on a timely basis and, at the latest, on the last day of therapy. *Tyndale Counselling Services* will attempt to recover all fees that remain outstanding at the end of therapy. This may include: letters/emails/telephone calls to the client or with the help of legal and collections services.

Contacting Your Therapist. To contact your therapist, please leave a message on their *Tyndale Counselling Services* voicemail or email. Their contact information may be found on the *Family Life Centre* website, www.tyndaleflc.ca. Therapists check their messages regularly and will respond to your message as soon as possible. They will be discreet in contacting you as per your instructions. Unfortunately, your therapist is unable to send text messages (except in emergency situations) in order to protect confidentiality.

Please note regarding email: Because email is generally not a secure or confidential medium, for your privacy, do not include any sensitive or personal information in email communications. If you are concerned in any way about your email being read by someone other than the person you are contacting, please consider other methods of reaching us. A copy of emails received or sent is normally kept in the client's file.

Boundary Issues. Therapists and clients may come in contact with each other in other settings. We kindly ask you to refrain from bringing up with your therapist issues discussed in counselling at times other than during your regularly scheduled session. For ethical reasons, a therapist would not be able to connect with a current or recent client on Facebook or any other form of social media.

Emergencies. In case of an emergency, contact 911, an appropriate crisis number either found online or at the front of your phone directory, or go to the emergency department of a local hospital. Please inform your therapist as soon as possible after seeking appropriate care.

Feedback. Your opinion is important to us and will help us continually improve our client care. You may contact Wilma Nevers, Manager of *Tyndale Counselling Services* (ext. 2740 or wnevers@tyndale.ca) or Marion Goertz, Director of the *Family Life Centre* (mgoertz@tyndale.ca) if you would like to give feedback or suggestions about any aspect of our services.

Location. We are located at 3377 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M2M 3S4 on the east side of Bayview, south of Steeles and north of Finch. Enter the building through the south entrance or the main entrance at Reception. See more details on the TCS-FLC Information Sheet 2018.