

MPSSAS Consent to Online/Phone

Supportive Services

We ask service users to review our **Consent to Online/Phone Services** and agree to the following conditions. By email reply to the consent forwarded to you or verbal consent to the form read to you by phone, you indicate that you ***understand and agree to the terms and conditions stated below***:

- You understand that your counselor practices in the province of Ontario Canada and is governed by the laws of ***this province***.
- You agree that you are a person who is at least 16 years old.
- You understand that our 24/7 helpline is 1 800 461-2929 and that our staff counsellors are not available outside of business hours of Monday to Friday 9-5 pm. Call 911 or your health centre in an emergency.
- You can access our online chat service at www.mpssas.com The chat is available at variable times during days and evenings, when staffed by volunteers.
- You agree to supply your true full name, address, phone number and e-mail address in the intake interview. You understand that if any of this information is inaccurate, this may be a major limitation in our ability to help you.
- MPSSAS counsellors are generally able to work with you via phone/online sessions. If, during your work together, your counsellor discovers that you are not, in fact, someone who can benefit from phone or online support, your counsellor will discuss this with you and alternative ideas/referrals will be explored. If in person work is happening, this can be offered.
- If access to technology is a barrier, we will attempt to assist you to obtain a device to enable your support.
- With all trauma based work it is possible that the pain you feel may increase for a time, as you focus on troubling times in your life. This is common for many people and as part of our work together, we will help you with strategies to manage the impacts of trauma in your life.
- **Phone/online counselling is not the same as in person counselling.** We will focus on assisting you with methods adapted for the online environment.
- MPSSAS cannot be held responsible for phone/online services that are temporarily out of service.
- **Confidentiality In General:** As counselors in Ontario we protect the confidentiality of the communications and contacts with all clients, including phone/online clients. Your counsellor will only release information about your work to others with your ***written permission***, or if they are required to do so by a court order or legal subpoena.

- **Confidentiality Exceptions:** According to Ontario law there are three situations where your counsellor may be required to break the confidentiality that we work so hard to retain and call local law enforcement or social authorities.
 - If during your sessions you give any information that would lead your counsellor to believe that you may imminently seriously harm yourself or someone else, or you ask for assistance regarding someone hurting you, your counsellor will notify the appropriate authorities to prevent this from taking place.
 - If during your sessions you give any information that would lead your counsellor to believe that there is current neglect or abuse of a minor child under 16, your counsellor will notify the appropriate authorities.
 - If during your sessions you give any information that would lead your counsellor to believe that a regulated health professional has been involved with sexual abuse, your counsellor may be required to notify the appropriate authorities to prevent such actions from taking place.
- **Phone Confidentiality:** Your counsellor will do everything possible to protect your identity and keep all confidences. It is at times not possible, however, to guarantee 100% protection of the confidentiality of phone calls or text if there is use of a cordless or cell phone during a phone session. At times it is possible for someone with a scanner to possibly hear the conversation. The goal of phone counselling is to help you but please advise us if you are concerned about phone confidentiality.
- **Online Confidentiality:** We are using an **online Pro Zoom platform** for online counselling in groups or individually. Our **pro account** indicates PHIPA compliance (privacy legislation) however technology can change rapidly. You also have steps to ensure confidentiality and so for both reasons, we cannot guarantee 100% protection of confidentiality using an online platform. You need to create a basic Zoom account using your own **personal, password protected email**. You must not share the password with anyone else. Our platform enables us to bring people wishing to join the group into a waiting room, and no one will be admitted who is not already known to the counsellor, who will host the online group. You are free to leave the online group if you wish at any time, or if there is a situation deemed to be triggering or harmful to the group, the facilitator will immediately end the meeting and follow up individually with you.
- **Please ensure that you provide privacy to others in your group by accessing the group without interruptions from your household.**
- There are no other commitments to the therapeutic relationship, whether it is in person or by phone/online. We are here as a supportive service for sexual assault survivors.

