

Client Information for Telephone Counselling

What is Telephone Counselling?

Telephone counselling refers to any type of counselling service which is delivered over the telephone. The counsellor provides a similar level service over the phone, to what is provided in a face-to-face consultation.

Why Telephone Counselling?

In the current context of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, as declared by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020, and the ensuing global public health crisis, it was essential that Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) adapted our face-to-face services, to prioritise the safety of our counsellors and our clients. As such, we have transitioned to the provision of a telephone-based counselling service as of 17 March 2020.

Telephone counselling is a powerful tool that we can offer to support our community throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and the associated restrictions that come with it.

Our aim is to provide a confidential counselling service to you that is accessible, can address your needs at this difficult time and offer you support and strategies to help you to cope with the challenges you face in your life right now.

How it works?

At the beginning of your telephone counselling appointment, you will be asked to identify yourself, to ensure the counsellor is talking to the intended person.

You will be asked for your:

- Full name
- Address
- Current location - where are you right now?
- Mobile phone number
- Home phone number
- Verbal Consent – explaining confidentiality and privacy
- Verbal consent that the phone call is not being recorded
- GP's contact details

What will the session involve?

1. The telephone counselling session needs to take place in a private, quiet space. Please be mindful of others, (especially young people/children) who may hear the call, and ensure you will not be disturbed.
2. Please ensure you are in a safe place such as your home, workplace, or car (but not driving)
3. The telephone session will be 50 minutes in duration. Please make sure your mobile phone is charged and ready for the appointment.

4. Telephone counselling is different to face-to-face counselling, for example you won't receive visual cues from your counsellor. We recommend using telephone headphones, if possible, as this can help to block out external distractions and make it easier for your voice to be heard.
5. If the telephone line is not clear, please tell the counsellor and they will attempt to call you back.
6. During your session, you will be asked to describe the issues of concern, and the counsellor will repeat back to you what they have heard, so that it is very clear.
7. The counsellor will ask lots of questions so that you have an opportunity to be heard.
8. If you are currently experiencing family or domestic violence or are unsafe, you can terminate the call at any time and arrange another session time. Your safety and your children's is the most important thing.
9. If unexpected interruptions occur during the session, please explain this to the counsellor so that they are aware of what is currently happening.
10. Be patient and ask questions so that you and the counsellor are clear with each other.
11. You and the counsellor will plan how you will move forward by identifying goals and strategies.
12. Discuss with the counsellor if another appointment is to be made and the counsellor will make arrangements for this.
13. At the end of the session you will be sent a link to a short survey about the impact of our service.

We hope that you and your family stay well and safe. Our team of committed counsellors are on board to listen and to provide help through the telephone service, for any personal or family issues you are managing in your life right now.