

Welcome to CCASA

We are looking forward to working with you. This information is meant to help you understand the services we offer and what to expect in your counselling. If you have any questions or concerns after reading this, please let us know.

CCASA offers free and confidential services, including:

- Counseling (Individual and Group)
- Support and Information Line
- Sexual Assault Response Team (24 Hour Hospital Accompaniment)
- Public Education and Training
- Police and Court Support

Information about Counselling

- You are able to attend up to 14 sessions as a person who has experienced sexual assault/abuse/harassment (sexual violence).
- You are able to attend up to 6 sessions as a support person to someone who has experienced sexual violence.
- Individual counselling sessions are typically 50 – 60 minutes long. Most sessions are offered during the day Monday to Friday, with some sessions also being offered in the evenings.
- There is no fee for individual counselling.
- Currently, groups are available free of cost. In the future, some groups may be offered on a sliding scale. Fees for group counselling are based on your income and your needs but no one will be turned away if they can't afford the fee.

What to Expect from Counselling Sessions

- To be believed and treated with respect and dignity
- To decide with your therapist your goals for counselling and ways to work on these goals
- To learn more about the impacts of sexual violence
- To learn coping strategies suited to your needs
- To be supported in sharing only as much information about the sexual violence you have experienced as you feel comfortable sharing. It isn't required for you to share specific details of the sexual violence in order to heal.

FAQ

How can I get the most out of my counselling?

- Arrive to sessions on time, and attend sessions consistently.
- Work with your therapist to set goals for counselling.
- Ask for what you need from your therapist and provide feedback about what is helpful and not helpful in sessions.
- Use tools and information learned in sessions in your daily life and reflect on the work done in sessions.
- Seek support for other issues (e.g. mental health, addictions, eating disorders) that might become barriers to your work in therapy at CCASA. Your therapist may ask that you access services specific to those issues, either while you are attending counselling at CCASA, or before continuing with counselling at CCASA.
- Clients have the right to take a break from counseling for up to 6 months and can resume counseling with their current counsellor upon return. However, if the break exceeds 6 months, clients will have to wait a year to do an intake and restart counselling.

Is counseling private and confidential?

- Your privacy is important to CCASA. Your personal information won't be shared with anyone outside of CCASA unless you give written permission to do so. We will discuss with you the type of information to be shared, who it can be shared with, and why it's being shared. CCASA will give you a form to fill out and sign before your information can be released.
- All CCASA therapists are expected to access supervision and may discuss your counselling with their supervisor and/or other counselling team members to make sure they are providing you with the best service possible.
- If you access more than one program at CCASA, there is a possibility that information may be shared between CCASA staff. In order to provide you with the best service possible, it's sometimes necessary for staff to consult with each other.
- Your therapist may ask your permission to record your session for supervision reasons. Your therapist may ask also for your permission for a second counsellor to shadow a session for learning purposes. This will be discussed with you at the time and will **only** be done with your consent.

Will my information be stored at CCASA?

- A paper file for each client is kept locked in a secure location. Your file will be stored for 10 years after your last contact with CCASA, at which point it will be securely shredded.
- Some of your information will be entered into a secure database, however this **does not** include any identifying information (i.e. name, address, phone number).
- You have the right to review your file and can do so at CCASA with your therapist.
- We do no release or provide copies of files unless we are legally obligated to do so.
- Future file access may not be possible for clients who do not give a full first and last name or who use another name to guard their privacy at the time of counselling.

Are there limits to confidentiality?

There are certain instances where your confidentiality can't be guaranteed and we may be required to release information. These include the following:

- We become aware that a child (person under 18 years) or a dependent adult has been or may be emotionally, physically, or sexually abused, or is being neglected. We are legally and ethically bound to report this information to the appropriate authorities.
- We become aware that someone's life is in immediate danger. We may need to call the appropriate authorities (ex: police, EMS) or warn the person whose life is in danger.
- We become aware that someone has experienced sexual violence by a professional who is regulated under the Health Professions Act (ex: Physician, Physiotherapist, Social Worker, Psychologist, Dentist). We are required to report this to the professional's regulatory body.
- We receive a subpoena for your file from the legal system. Should that happen, we will protect the file and your privacy to the best of our ability. We will try to inform you of the subpoena, and refer you to legal counsel.
- If you are attending counselling by order of a court of law with a requirement to release information to the court.

Does CCASA see anyone under the age of 18 or adults with a guardian?

- CCASA sees clients ages 12 and over.
- Your therapist will ask if your parent or guardian knows you are attending CCASA. If your parent or guardian is aware, your therapist will ask to meet with you and your parent or guardian to obtain consent for services and make certain everyone understands your privacy needs and the limits to confidentiality.
- If you are under the age of 18 and your parent or guardian isn't aware of your attendance, you and your therapist will discuss the reason you have chosen not to inform them and your therapist will explore

Your Rights at CCASA

- You have the right to ask about the qualifications, education, and experience of your therapist, as well as their approaches to counselling.
- You have the right to not be discriminated against based on race, religious beliefs, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, relationship status, size, or age.
- You have the right to have a support person present during counselling sessions if you choose.
- You have the right to stop accessing CCASA services at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Engaging in CCASA Services

People often access CCASA counselling hoping to feel better, to learn about themselves and understand how they have been affected by their experiences of sexual violence, and/or to create healthy changes in their lives. We know that all of this is possible and that healing can happen.

We also know that healing takes time and looks different for each person. Sometimes counselling can bring up strong feelings and reactions, which can feel overwhelming and difficult to manage. These reactions can come up before, during, or after sessions. It isn't uncommon for this to happen and we encourage you to talk to your therapist if you experience this. Together you and your therapist can make a plan that will support you in feeling safe.

We know that healing takes time and looks different for each person.

Concerns about Your Counselling

- If you have any concerns about your counselling service at CCASA, we invite you to talk about them with your therapist first.
- If you are uncomfortable talking about your concerns directly with your therapist, you are welcome to speak to a supervisor.
- To speak with a supervisor, please phone the Support and Information Line Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and ask for them directly.
- You can also be provided with the contact information for the regulatory body under which your therapist is registered.

Changing Therapists

- The client-therapist relationship is an important part of the counselling process and we want you to have a therapist that is a good fit for you.
- You have the right to ask for another therapist if you do not feel comfortable with your current therapist. You can do this by speaking with your current therapist who can add you to the transfer waitlist. There may be a wait before another therapist is available.
- If you are uncomfortable asking your therapist for a transfer, you can phone the Support and Information Line Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm to ask for a transfer or speak with a supervisor.

Client/Therapist Relationship and Contact Outside of CCASA

- Therapists can't have relationships with clients outside of their role at CCASA.
- If you see each other in the community your therapist will protect your privacy and confidentiality by allowing you to choose whether or not you make contact. Your therapist will discuss this further with you in session.
- If you choose to make contact, the conversation won't be about CCASA or counselling so that safe and healthy boundaries are maintained.

Getting Support between Sessions

- We understand that you may need some support between sessions as coming to CCASA can sometimes bring up difficult feelings. If you need support, you can access CCASA's Support and Information Line at 403-237-5888, Monday to Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, and Friday to Sunday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- You can also access Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence via phone or text at 1-866-403-8000 or chat at www.aasas.ca, 7 days a week from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.
- You can also contact the Distress Centre 24 Hour Crisis Line at 403-266-HELP (4357).

Cancelling and Missing Appointments

- We understand that sometimes people can't keep their appointments.
- If you are unable to attend your appointment, we ask that you let us know with at least 48 hours' notice. This allows us to offer the appointment time to another client or someone on our waitlist.
- Please note that the following may be counted towards the total number of counselling sessions offered:
 - Appointments cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice
 - Appointments not attended
 - Late arrivals to sessions.

Limits to Services

- We ask that you do not attend sessions while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you do come for counselling while under the influence, your session will need to be rescheduled.
- We would like clients to express feelings and thoughts in a way that is respectful to themselves, their therapist, agency staff, and other clients. Abusive behaviours won't be tolerated and staff have the right to end a session or telephone call if they do not feel respected or safe. If abusive behaviours are displayed, services may be discontinued.

What can I expect from my therapist?

- To follow laws governing information and privacy, confidentiality, and the regulations of any professional associations they belong to
- To create a safe, compassionate, non-judgmental environment
- To maintain safe and healthy boundaries
- To offer resources and referrals as needed/requested
- To use activities and approaches to therapy that meet your specific needs
- To be willing to receive feedback about the counselling process.

CCASA Contact Information

CCASA Support & Information Line
9am-9pm – 7 days a week
403-237-5888

Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence
9am-9pm – 7 days a week
Phone/Text | 1-866-403-8000
Chat | calgarycasa.com
TTY Line 403-508-7888

For more information on our programs and services:

Email | info@calgarycasa.com
Business | 403-237-6905

Suite 700, 910 7th Avenue SW Calgary, Alberta T2P 3N8