

What to Expect from Red Deer Primary Care Network Counselling Services

Congratulations, on making your first counselling appointment. This is a huge step in the right direction when it comes to your mental health.

You may be a little nervous the first time you meet with a mental health counsellor, but there is really nothing to worry about.

Your first session with the mental health counsellor will be different from future visits. The initial visit is a time for you to get to know each other and get an idea of how to proceed.

Typically, the first appointment will include questions about:

- What brought you to therapy?
- Symptoms you are experiencing.
- What is not going well in your life.
- Your history (*your education, relationships, your current living situation, and your career*).
- How you are coping and have coped with situations in the past.
- What your support network looks like.
- What you want to be different in your life.
- Your goals for counselling.
- Your safety which will include risk to yourself and others (*family violence, abuse, and suicide ideation*).

You and your counsellor will come to an agreement about the length of counselling you require, and best approaches towards your mental wellness (*this may include connecting you to a different service that is better suited to your specific needs, and length of counselling you require*). We will develop some goals to measure progress and ways to protect your confidentiality. You will have an opportunity to ask any questions about counselling and the counsellor's training and credentials. You will also be asked to sign a consent form during this session which explains the nature of the counselling and your agreement to the same. (*If you have chosen a phone or zoom appointment, be prepared to provide an email address so we can send you some paperwork to complete during this session*).

Future visits will be more therapeutic in nature. For example, in your second session, you may explore a specific symptom, problem, or past difficulty you mentioned in the first session. To get the most success out of counselling it will take your honest participation and commitment at every session. Keep in mind that counselling usually requires multiple visits, and we have a limited number of visits we can offer. The plan you developed in the first session may also change as counselling progresses. What you can expect is that we will do our best to assist you to understand what you will need to move forward, and help you develop a plan to make these changes successfully. We will provide you with some tools to help you improve your mental wellness which can assist you over your lifetime as you continue to use them.

If you can't make your appointment

Call to cancel your appointment (403)314-3297 ASAP (*ideally 24 hours in advance*).

We can be flexible when illnesses or emergencies occur. If we need to cancel your appointment, we will give you as much notice as possible.

We understand that it may be difficult to attend your first appointment, but please consider that 3 people are affected when you cancel last minute or do not show up for your appointment:

1. Yourself because you missed the support you need.
2. Another person who could have used the appointment.
3. Your counsellor and the time they set aside for you.

If you arrive late

- Your session may be shortened or rebooked to accommodate those scheduled after you.

If you do not show up for your appointment

- You are responsible to rebook an appointment, as we respect your choice to discontinue counselling at any time without notifying us.
- If you try to rebook after two no show appointments, your service may be discontinued depending on your situation. If this happens, we will refer you to other community resources that better meet your needs.

We look forward to meeting you at your scheduled time!

Red Deer Primary Care Network Counselling Team