

## **MARIE YVETTE LEPAGE - COUNSELLING SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET**

### General Information

My orientation to practice has always been to assist individuals and families to maximize their potential for social, mental, and emotional wellbeing. My approach is to foster resilience, affirm agency, and provide practical support for meeting life's challenges in healthy ways. I will work with you to identify and maintain your current wellness practices and commitments, as well as the other ways and means you wish to move forward with your goals.

There are many roads to health and wellbeing. And while counselling can be effective for many people, it is important to keep in mind, it does not work for everyone. It also might not give you the results you are looking for. There are also potential risks or "down-sides" to any kind of counselling or psychotherapy. Here are a few of the more common risks:

- Some people feel worse before they feel better. Sometimes this occurs because situations prove to be more difficult or complicated than they originally seemed. Sometimes the work itself can stir up unanticipated and sometimes difficult thoughts, feelings, or memories.
- Therapy can be hard work. Most people find it takes time, and effort for real change to take root.
- It can also be costly, particularly for those who do not have benefits or other sources of funding.
- A desire changes in how we see ourselves or in our relationships with others are often the things that bring us to counselling in the first place. Sometimes these changes may be challenging for others to accept or adapt to, and can cause stress or strain in relationships.

These are just a few of the things to consider before consenting to counselling. There are also many different approaches to counselling, so finding the approach, and person, that is best for you is an important step. Counsellors, of course, have different skills, strengths, and orientations. I believe, and the research literature affirms this, that the nature and quality of the relationship that develops between the client and the counsellor is more important than any particular evidence-based theoretical or philosophical framework. In other words, counselling is most effective when there is safety, respect, collaboration, and most of all, a good "fit" in the context of the therapeutic relationship.

A productive therapeutic relationship usually takes time to develop, but generally speaking, most people sense the potential for this fairly early on in the process. For this reason, I offer clients a 20 – 30 minute appointment or phone consultation, free of charge, to establish if what we each bring to the process is enough of a fit to move forward in our work together.

During this initial contact we will talk about the pros and cons of counselling, and what you hope to gain from it. I will inform you of the advantages, limitations, and any risks I see that are associated with what I can offer. If we decide to go ahead, our first few sessions will be spent getting to know each other better, exploring the nature and context of the difficulties you are facing, your strengths and resources, and establishing goals. As our work together progresses, I will check with you from time to time to see if what we are doing is helpful to you, and whether or not there is anything that needs to be done differently.

At any point, if you are dissatisfied with our work together, or feel it is not going the way you want it to, I encourage you to express your concerns to me. Then we can try to make changes or we can explore alternatives. It is, of course, always your right to stop attending counselling without any explanation. But in my experience, sorting through concerns or misunderstandings together is part of the work, and can be a rich source of insight.

Finally, if you cannot come to an appointment you've scheduled, **please cancel with a minimum of 24 hours notice. No-shows / late cancellations will be billed.**

#### Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

**Be assured, I take your confidentiality seriously.** You can be assured that:

- I will not disclose whether or not you are attending counselling sessions with me without your written permission, including the person who may have referred you to me.
- It is also your choice whether you wish to greet me in public. I leave it to you take the lead.
- I will not seek information about you from other sources than yourself unless I have your permission. If you do consent to release of any information and afterwards change your mind, you can withdraw your consent at any time.

It is important for you to know that I keep a file for each client. Files include the client's contact information, session notes, forms, applications, and anything else relevant to your counselling. Keeping a file is necessary to provide you with the best service possible. Session notes helps me remember the details of what was said in the past, keep track of what was agreed upon, and to see the progress you are making. Please note:

- Files are kept securely and are never transported. I store files securely, double-locked in my home office. They are not accessible to any other person.
- Files are kept for 10 years after the last date of service, or in the case of a young person, ten years since the person's nineteenth birthday. After that files are shredded.

There are some exceptions to confidentiality. It is important that you understand these from the beginning.

- I am compelled to protect people from serious harm. This means that when there is a risk of suicide, violence, or harm to a child, or vulnerable adult I may have to break confidentiality, even if you do not agree. These situations are rare. When they occur, I will share only the information necessary to ensure safety.
- It is possible that the Courts could subpoena me or your file. I would have to comply with a Court Order.

#### Professional Registration

There is no regulatory body for social workers in Yukon. For this reason, I am registered outside of the territory with the Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers (NLASW), Certificate Number 3536. If you have any concerns about my competence or ethics, these can be reported to NLASW by calling 709-753-0200.

#### Appointments and Fees

The frequency and length of appointments varies from person to person. This is something we would decide upon together.

My current fee is \$140/hr. I am not required to collect GST. Payment by cash or cheque is due at the session. E-payments can be sent before the session or by the end of the day.

If you need to cancel a scheduled session, please do so with a minimum of 24-hours notice. Cancellations with less than 24 hours notice and/or “no shows” will be billed for the full amount, payable at the start of the next session.

Preparation of letters or reports will also be billed for, based on my hourly rate.

#### Availability Outside of Sessions

I am often available outside of scheduled sessions and can be reached by email (mylepage@protonmail.com) or by telephone (867-689-6462). I check for messages daily, Monday through Friday, and am usually able to respond within 24 hours.

Thank you for your consideration of my services.

Yvette Lepage, M.S.W. R.S.W.