**Welcome to Quiet Healing Counselling and Yoga**

Thank you for reaching out! I hope this information package answers any questions you have about the counselling process. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

**About Counselling and Your Counsellor**

I view counselling as a collaborative process where folks reconnect with their own wisdom to experience healing. Generally, a counsellor provides tools and support, but does not offer direct advice. It has elements of support, care, gentle challenge, education, and skill building.

I completed my Bachelor of Social Work in 1999, my Masters in 2004 and my yoga teacher certificate in 2013. I love professional development opportunities and tend to take multiple trainings each year resulting in a rather eclectic mix of approaches and modalities.

**Risks and Benefits**

Sometimes counselling can be distressing. You may experience changes in your relationships or beliefs that have unexpected results, and sometimes it can be a bit exhausting and disorientating. The good news is it can also be joyful, grounding, and spacious as we work towards longer lasting change and healing.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

I view counselling as a co-created space in which we both have rights and responsibilities. These may include:

* *The right to curiosity and transparency.* You can ask questions about what we are doing, or why we are doing it at any time. If you hear about a counselling approach you are interested in, please let me know and we can discuss if we’re able to incorporate it into our work.
* *The right to personal autonomy.* You have a right to refuse any interventions that are offered and to request other interventions. I also have a responsibility to decline incorporating certain approaches or invitations if I see them as potentially harmful to the therapeutic process or if they are outside my scope of practice.
* *The right to referral.* Sometimes my approach or personality might not be what you need. Should this happen, we can discuss what or who might fit better. There also may be times when I may offer referrals to better support your care.
* *The right and responsibility to create a brave(r) or safe(r) space*. Some vulnerability is needed in the counselling process. I encourage you to be as honest as you can about what is helpful or not helpful to you. It’s important to note that I do not offer on-going crisis support and do not check emails, texts, or voice messages outside of my office hours. If you feel intense emotional distress or believe you will hurt yourself or others, you are encouraged to connect to others for crisis supports such as:
	+ The distress line at 403 327 7905 or toll free 1888 787 2880
	+ 911
	+ Hope for Wellness (Indigenous Services) [www.hopeforwellness.ca](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/) or 1-855-242-3310
	+ Trans lifeline 1-877-330-6366
	+ or a supportive person in your life you can ask to help keep you or others safer.

**Confidentiality**

While I deeply value confidentiality, there are times when I may need to speak to others without your permission as required by law. These include when:

* The information you’ve shared is subpoenaed by a court of law.
* I am concerned you or another person is at serious risk of harm.
* I am concerned a child or dependent adult needs protection.

I may also share information if:

* You are abusing an animal
* You choose to take legal action against me
* You disclose abusive behavior from a helping professional.

**Professional Boundaries and Privacy**

Counselling relationships are unique as there are rules about the interactions I am allowed to have with clients. I am not able to:

* Have any other kind of business relationship with you.
* Be your therapist if I am related to you or a close friend.
* Give other types of professional advice (legal, medical, financial, etc.)
* Have any kind of romantic, friendship, or sexual relationship with a former or current client, or with any people very close to the client.
* Give or receive gifts from you except tokens with personal meaning to the therapy process.
* Be your supervisor, teacher, or evaluator while engaged in counselling with you.
* Attend personal parties/events of yours outside of the therapeutic process.
* Engage in therapeutic processing if you are unable to consent to care while under the influence of drugs/alcohol.

As Lethbridge is a smaller city, dual relationships may occur and will be discussed.

**Consultation and Supervision**

As a life-long learner I engage in on-going consultation and supervision both as a supervisor and as a supervisee. This means that I may discuss general details about your counselling process with other mental health professionals or tape sessions so I can explore if I might do things differently to improve my, or my supervisee’s skills. Please know that no sessions are recorded or observed without your expressed, written permission, and that declining to have a session recorded does not change your access to counselling services.

**Fees**

I charge $160 per session. If you are experiencing barriers to a living wage, please inquire about my accessibility rates, the Breaking Free Foundation and the Lethbridge City Subsidy Program which offers financial support for a limited number of sessions.

I currently use a combination of direct billing and self-pay. If you have insurance coverage, you are responsible to monitor the number of sessions available to you. Some plans allow me to direct bill, while others require you to pay me upfront and then submit a receipt. If insurance coverage ends prior to the end of your counselling work, I can assist you in accessing another counselling agency or service that may fit better for your financial situation.

Payment can be made via Cash, Cheque or e-transfer sent to quiethealing1@gmail.com at the sessions end. I use an on-line Invoicing and Accounting program called “Waveapp” for billing and book-keeping. It is a cloud-based application with a secure login in which your name and contact information will be entered. Invoices and receipts will be sent to your email address. If you prefer paper receipts, please let me know.

**Missed appointments and cancellations**

Many factors can impact your capacity to attend a session. If you need to reschedule or cancel an appointment, please text or call at **(587) 691 4466** or email quiethealing1@gmail.com. If there is a pattern of frequent no shows, we may discuss your individual circumstances. This might mean pausing counselling, referring to a different service, or charging for future missed sessions.

Should I need to cancel or reschedule I will contact you as soon as I am able, and we will arrange for an alternate session time.

**Documentation and Your File**

I am required to collect and record information about our counselling process. I keep paper files which are stored in a locked cabinet and kept for a minimum of 10 years. You can request your file and discuss its content with me. Your file will be closed when you complete services, or if I have not heard from you for six months. If I am unexpectedly unable to provide services, an assigned counselling professional will have access to your files and will store them for the required 10 years.

Your name and phone number will be stored in my password protected work smartphone which may at times will be stored outside of the office.

**Complaint Procedure**

If you have a concern about your counselling at any time, please know your counsellor takes suggestions and feedback seriously and will respond with care and respect. If you believe that she would be unwilling to listen and respond, or that they have behaved unethically, you can contact the Alberta College of Social Work at [(780) 421-1167](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=ACSW) to file a complaint.

**Counselling through TeleHealth**

**Videoconferencing & Phone Based Sessions – The Basics**

Some folks prefer to connect through tele-health, and I am happy to be able to support this. To use videoconferencing, you will need a smartphone, I-pad or computer with a camera and a microphone. You will need an email address and will need to download the Zoom app onto your device in order to access the appointment.

**Accessing Your Appointment**

Via phone: If you are connecting by phone, I will phone you at your pre-determined appointment time and conduct the session on the phone, allowing for auditory connection.

Via videoconferencing: You will receive an email from me inviting you to join your Zoom meeting. The first time you use Zoom, at the top of your screen there will be a prompt to download the Application. Click on “download”. From there you may be prompted to enter an email or password. Once entered, the program should direct you to join our virtual meeting space. Once selected the system may request a Meeting ID or Password which will be provided in your invitation email. Enter this into the provided space and you should be directed to your meeting. After that first time, you should be able to simply click on the highlighted link in the email and it will take you to our zoom room.

If you struggle with any of the steps, please contact me at quiethealing1@gmail.com or (587) 691 4466 and we will work together to address any challenges.

**Privacy via Telehealth**

For sessions accessed via videoconferencing your counsellor is using a software program called Zoom Pro with additional HIPPA qualification. I use multi-factor authentication on both my devices and software. This means that there are protections on the software to help increase privacy and reduce the risk of a breach in privacy.

For more information on Zoom's privacy and security limits you might find this link helpful as well.  <https://zoom.us/trust> Like any telehealth format, complete privacy cannot be completely guaranteed, but the version I have does have additional privacy controls and meets HIPAA Compliance, the additional security needed for Counselling. <https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom-hipaa.pdf> Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns and I will be happy to discuss them as best as I can.

At this time, all email communication is not encrypted so it is vulnerable to confidentiality breaches. I suggest deleting meeting invitations, any forms you’ve emailed, or receipts to help increase your privacy.

**Tips for on-line counselling**

To help ensure the privacy of your sessions, you are invited to access the session in an area relatively free of distraction, to use headphones, and to ensure you are not disrupted by others during the session. I am a big fan of comfort so it’s also helpful to have cozy blankets, tea, or water, stuffies or paper/pen nearby. And pets are welcome to join as well.

**Risk/Challenges specific to telehealth**

While engaging in videoconferencing has many benefits, there are some unique risks that are outlined below:

* Using videoconferencing or phone for counselling might feel uncomfortable initially and it may feel a bit stressful to get the initial software set up.
* It may be annoying or irritating for technology to unexpectedly pause or not work the ways in which you would like it to.
* At times your counsellor may have to ask more descriptive based questions to better understand your present moment experience.
* If you disclose imminent threats or risks of harm to self or others, you counsellor may need to utilize more intrusive means to help ensure your safety.
* As with any technology, your counsellor cannot guarantee your privacy.

**Benefits**

* On-line counselling can be a rich and beautiful counselling environment
* You may be able to have your session from the comfort and privacy of your own home.
* It may be a helpful option in moments of self-isolation and/or social distancing.
* You may find it is easier for you to share your thoughts and feelings through a videoconferencing or phone format.

**In Gratitude**

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the information in this form please let me know and we can discuss it further.