

PRACTICE POLICY

Standard of Care

At Grünberg Patterson Counselling & Psychological Services we believe that every client has the right to a respectful and collaborative relationship. We work with clients to set therapeutic goals and to choose interventions that fit their own life values.

Our Assessment and Intervention practices are informed by an ever-developing body of research in the fields of human development, education, therapy, trauma and recovery. We invest many hours each year in professional development and training so that we can bring to clients skills and tools that reflect the leading edge of our fields of practice.

This policy reflects compliance with the following:

- *College of Psychologists of British Columbia - Code of Conduct*
- *British Columbia Psychological Association – Code of Ethics*
- *British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors – Code of Ethics*
- *Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association – Code of Ethics*
- *Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (PIPEDA)*
- *British Columbia Health Professionals Act (BCHPA)*

Representation of Professional Qualifications

Clinicians are subject to requirements of their applicable professional regulatory body to maintain current and on-going registration and memberships, as well as current and on-going professional liability insurances. Clinicians are also required to participate in and stay current with professional development and peer review or consultation. Documentation of educational and professional qualifications is posted in our business offices.

Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality is of utmost concern at Grünberg Patterson Counselling & Psychological Services. Our clinicians and employees have taken every precaution to protect our clients' privacy and personal information. This includes all paper and electronic files. Please refer to our Personal Information Protection Policy, which is available for review at www.grunbergpatterson.ca or in our business office.

Minors

If you are a minor, parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy.

Duty to Warn

Clinicians have a duty to take protective action when they become aware of a clear and imminent danger to someone's safety. If a client discloses the intention to harm self or another person, we must do what we can to prevent harm. This may include asking a physician, family member or police officer for help.

We have a special duty to report danger to children (e.g. BC Ministry of Children and Families, police, etc.). We will report upon a child who is at risk of being harmed, and upon persons who have harmed or are at imminent risk of harming a child.

Informed Consent

Informed Consent is essential to clinicians' respect for the clients' rights to self-determination. Consent must be given voluntarily, knowingly and with understanding.

Voluntarily means that consent to participate in counselling, assessment, research or any other professional services must be given freely without pressure or coercion. **Knowingly** means that clinicians fully disclose relevant information to clients as to what they are giving their consent for. This includes disclosing the type of information that may have to be reported to a third party. Information must be given to clients in a manner which is sensitive to their cultural and linguistic needs. **With Understanding** means that clients have the ability to comprehend the conditions for consent sufficiently to make an informed decision.

Appointments, Cancellations and Payments

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. Failure to do so could result in a charge for the full fee of your session. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held in good faith. If you are late for a session, you may lose some or all of your session time.

The standard session time for psychotherapy or counselling is 50 minutes unless other arrangements have been made.

Private counselling and/or psychological services are on a fee for service basis. An interest rate of 2% per month will be applied to any unpaid balance after 30 days.

Payment is due at the conclusion of each session unless being paid by a third party (e.g. Employee Assistance Programs, Health Canada, Blue Cross, etc.), however, should any third party coverage refuse to pay, you will be billed for session fees.

We accept cash, cheques or eTransfers.

Telephone and Internet Accessibility

Office phones are answered Monday to Friday between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm. All messages left on our office answering service are kept confidential. Messages for clinicians will be forwarded to them daily and in most cases they will return calls within 24 hours.

Extensive information is available on our website. Emails sent via our website are checked daily.

Social Media and Email

Due to the importance of confidentiality, clinicians **DO NOT** accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.). This can compromise confidentiality and privacy or could compromise the boundaries of therapeutic relationships.

Email is used to facilitate scheduling and payment processing only. Please do not send or receive emails containing any content related to therapy sessions.

Cybercounselling

Under certain circumstances, our counsellors will work with clients via the telephone and/or teleconferencing technology (such as Skype, FaceTime, etc.). Clients need to be aware that there may be risks to privacy associated with the use of distance communication for counselling or psychological services. We do what we can to ensure confidentiality and privacy, but we cannot guarantee against unforeseen breaches of privacy by government or private interests.

Electronic Records Management

To better serve clients, Grünberg Patterson Counselling & Psychological Services utilizes Electronic Records Management software. This software is developed specifically for psychotherapy and counselling practice with a view to safeguarding client privacy and confidentiality. Access is strictly limited and password protected. Please refer to our Personal Information Protection Policy, which is available for review at www.grunbergpatterson.ca or in our business office.

Termination

On occasion, a client and clinician are not able to establish a productive therapeutic relationship. If either party chooses to discontinue this relationship, both clinician and client have the right to discuss options.