

NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION



VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATION PACKAGE

Office Hours
10:00am – 3:00pm
Monday to Thursday

Volunteer Counselling Sessions are available outside regular office hours.

Mission Statement

NFLA is a passionate, dynamic, and inclusive community-oriented organization that delivers interconnected personal and professional growth services responsive to the community's needs.

What Do We Offer?

Counselling sessions are conducted online and last 50 minutes. Available times range from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Who is Eligible?

Services are available for youth who can specify their needs within the areas our counsellors are equipped to help with (listed below). Youth counselling is available for youth aged 13-18.

Who Provides the Support?

Volunteer Counsellors are dedicated, trained, skilled helpers who receive comprehensive training, ongoing learning, and supervision. In addition to our training program, they have completed the Vancouver Island University courses "Counselling Skills" Level 1 & 2 or have obtained equivalency.

Our volunteers are trained to serve in the areas of:

- Communication
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Resolution
- Anger Management
- Grief and Loss
- Stress Management
- Family Dynamics
- Anxiety and Depression
- Making Changes & Goal Setting
- Trauma
- Relationships
- Boundaries
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Exploration

What is Counselling?

At NFLA, counselling is a confidential, supportive space where you can explore personal challenges, emotions, and life experiences with the help of a trained volunteer lay counsellor. It's a collaborative process that can help you gain insight, develop coping strategies, improve relationships, and make meaningful changes. Whether you're facing a specific issue or just feeling stuck, counselling offers a safe place to be heard, understood, and supported without judgment.

**DUE TO THE VOLUME OF PEOPLE WAITING FOR COUNSELLING SERVICES,
WE ASK THAT YOU ADHERE TO OUR POLICIES.**

Client Understanding and Agreement Volunteer Counselling Program
I understand that once the coordinator has matched me with a counsellor, I must respond to the counsellor within 3 days to schedule my first appointment. If I do not respond within this timeframe, my file may be closed.
If I do not connect with the counsellor within 3 days , I can contact the coordinator to be placed back on the waitlist.
If I need to cancel a session, I will do my best to give at least 24 hours' notice by leaving a voicemail or sending an email to my counsellor.
If I cannot provide 24 hours' notice, I will contact the coordinator at 250-754-3331 ext. 427 to request to continue with sessions.
If I cancel an appointment, I understand it is my responsibility to book a new session with my counsellor within 3 days . If I do not, my file may be closed.
I agree to commit to weekly counselling sessions . If I am unable to attend weekly due to shift work, childcare, or other reasons, I will notify my counsellor or the coordinator.
Other people, including parents, are not allowed to attend sessions with me.
I must be alcohol- and drug-free during all counselling appointments.
If I stop attending sessions, my file will be closed. If I wish to return, I will need to complete a new intake form . Although I can request the same counsellor, there is no guarantee of a rematch.
If I feel that my counsellor is not the right fit, I can contact the coordinator to request a new match .

At Nanaimo Family Life Association, one-on-one, accessible, and affordable counselling is provided to youth by skilled volunteer lay counsellors who undergo an intensive training program.

Our volunteer counsellors are trained in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), Family Systems, Person-Centered, and Trauma-Informed practices. They are not trained in specific modalities such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Our volunteer lay counsellors are not clinical or professional counsellors; insurance companies do not cover their services.

Sessions are offered online. This allows you to access counselling from the place that is most convenient for you.

Benefits of online counselling:

- Research shows that online counselling can be as effective as in-person sessions.
- Online communication gives a sense of increased anonymity; people are quicker to open up about personal issues. Trust is foundational to the success of counselling. For many people, the comfort of being behind a screen can remove barriers to openness that would otherwise slow down traditional counselling.
- The prerequisites for a successful online counselling session are the same as in-person counselling, so don't treat it differently. The need for trust, open communication, and motivation with your counsellor is the same.
- It helps with any stigma around attending counselling sessions, discomfort sitting in waiting rooms, or fears of seeing someone you know.
- Online counselling sessions also mean you can schedule sessions at times that may be more convenient for your schedule.

It offers greater accessibility for individuals who have mobility challenges and people who experience barriers to leaving their homes.

As a client at Nanaimo Family Life Association, you can expect the following:

An NFLA counsellor will contact me for an intake to help me receive the most appropriate support for my current needs.

Your assigned volunteer lay counsellor will conduct themselves professionally and ethically with appropriate boundaries, such as:

- Not exploiting your trust.
- Providing a non-judgmental environment.
- Not using therapy techniques that they are not trained in.
- Avoiding any personal relationship.
- Being punctual and informing you of any changes to session dates or times at least 24 hours in advance.
- Clearly explaining our services and requesting your signature to confirm your understanding.
- Explaining confidentiality and its limits during your first session.
- Creating a safe space for you to explore and work on your goals.

This ensures respectful and effective support from your counsellor sessions.

If you have any concerns or questions that you are uncomfortable discussing with your assigned counsellor, please contact the program's coordinator, Ardith Finnamore.

Contact information :

a_finnamore@nflabc.org

250 754 3331 ext.427

Counselling Fees

The Nanaimo Family Life Association is a nonprofit organization that offers counselling services to the Nanaimo community. Trained volunteer counsellors deliver these services under the supervision of the Volunteer Counselling Program Coordinator. If your needs aren't fully met here, a counsellor or the program coordinator will help you explore other options.

Payment Procedures

Please pay your session fee at the end of each session. NFLA collects fees through electronic funds transfer (EFT). Please send your payment to the email address below and use the provided password. Otherwise, your payment may not be received.

payments@nflabc.org
Password: Counselling

Funding for the program comes from various sources, including the BC Gaming Commission, United Way, membership fees, donations, and service fees. The volunteer counsellors do not receive any payment for their counselling work; all fees are reinvested into the Volunteer Counselling Program.

If you're unable to access our services due to financial hardship, assistance might be available. For assistance, please get in touch with Ardith, the VCP Program Coordinator, at 250-754-3331, ext. 427 or email at a_finnamore@nflabc.org.

Individual Session
\$20.00
\$30.00
\$40.00
\$50.00
\$60.00

Counsellor Evaluations

Written Evaluations of your counselling sessions are very important to us. Your counsellor will give you two simple evaluation forms to complete (one midway through and one at the end of your counselling sessions) regarding how you feel about your experience with your counsellor. Your counsellor will only be informed of the evaluation with your permission.

We Will:

- Keep your personal information private.
- Provide you with an environment dedicated to your mental and emotional well-being.
- Assign a new counsellor if you do not believe your counsellor suits your needs. (If this is the case, please get in touch with the Volunteer Counselling Program Coordinator at ext. 427 or email at a_finnamore@nflabc.org.)
- NFLA offers services in an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment. We do not tolerate discrimination on any grounds. If you believe any representative at NFLA has discriminated against you, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

Community Resources

Van Isle Crisis Line	1-888-494-3888	Tillicum Lelum	250-753-6578
Brooks Landing Crisis Counselling	250-739-5710		
Youth & Family Addictions	250-739-5790		

ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Our workshops foster growth through self-awareness in a respectful, group setting. Each session costs \$20 and requires pre-registration. Please get in touch with us if cost is a concern. Below are the workshop descriptions.

Effective Communication: Effective communication is defined as individuals intentionally using conversation to find common ground with the person they're speaking with. This workshop will help us understand another person's message and communicate our message clearly.

Personal Boundaries/Assertiveness: Boundaries create structure in our lives. They clarify how we want to be treated. These skills can help reduce anxiety in stressful situations and boost self-esteem and confidence.

Conflict Resolution: This workshop explores both negative and positive perspectives on conflict and conflict styles, offering constructive strategies to manage conflict.

Healthy Self-Esteem & Self-Exploration: Healthy self-esteem involves having a positive sense of your inherent worth as a person. It includes self-confidence, self-worth, and self-respect. It influences everything you do.

Exploring Anger: Anger occurs when we see an event as a threat or when we feel frustrated over unmet needs. Feelings of fear, loss, hurt, or sadness usually come before it.

Exploring Stress: Stress affects us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It is a natural, useful part of life and survival. However, unmanaged stress can lead to illness. Our way of responding to stressors greatly determines how stress impacts us.

Exploring Grief & Loss: In this workshop, we examine the common causes and symptoms of grief, harmful myths and clichés, stages of grief, mourning needs, coping strategies, and exercises for grief work.

Exploring Anxiety & Depression: In this workshop, we explore depression and anxiety, focusing on the difference between stress, anxiety, depression, and grief/sadness. We also discuss ways to manage anxiety and depression.

Creating Personal Change: This workshop explores positive ways to create change, how self-defeating thoughts and language affect us, understanding what is within our control, discovering our passions and values, and key principles for successful goal setting.

*Thank you for your interest in NFLA's counselling program.
We look forward to meeting you.*