

# NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION



## VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM CLIENT 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 orientated organization that delivers interconnected personal and professional growth services responsive to the needs of the community at all stages of life.

## What Do We Offer?

Personal Counselling  
Relationship Counselling  
Adolescent Counselling  
Essential Life Skills – 2 hour each (More information on Page 5)

Counselling Sessions are held in person at Nanaimo Family Life Association  
OR online and are one hour.

Counselling times are available between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

## Who is Eligible?

Services are available to individuals and couples who identify needs in the areas our counsellors can serve you (outlined below). Community workshops are open to everyone. Adolescent counselling is available to youth 13-18 years old. Find the intake form here:  
<https://www.nflabc.org/counselling/youth-counselling/>

## 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
- Parenting
- Anxiety and Depression
- Making Changes & Goal Setting
- Trauma
- Relationships
- Boundaries
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Exploration
- Elder Abuse (Senior Peer Counselling)

## What is Counselling?

Counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance, growth, and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully. Counselling relationship will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing, and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict, or improving relationships with others. The counsellor's role is to facilitate the clients' work in ways that respect the client's values, personal resources, and capacity for self-determination.

Due to the volume of people waiting for counselling services we ask that you adhere to our policies.

### Nanaimo Family Life Policy Regarding Counselling Sessions

I understand that once the coordinator has matched me with a counsellor, and the counsellor has contacted me I need to respond to counsellor within 3 days to set up my first appointment or I risk my file being closed. If for some reason, I cannot contact the counsellor within 3 days, I can contact the coordinator to be put back on the waitlist.

I will do my best to give my counsellor 24 hours' notice by leaving a message on their voicemail if I cannot make a session.

If I cannot give my counsellor 24 hours' notice, I will contact the coordinator to continue sessions with my counsellor. Ph: 250-754-3331, ext. 427

I will commit to weekly sessions, if I cannot commit to weekly sessions due to shift work or childcare, etc. I will contact the coordinator.

I understand if I stop coming to counselling my file will be closed. I understand if I wish to be connected with a counsellor again, I will need to fill out a new intake form. Please note that there is no guarantee I will be matched with the same counsellor, but I can request it.

I understand that if my counsellor is not a good match for me, I can contact the coordinator to be matched with another counsellor.

I am aware that the VCP program does not offer crisis counselling and will not be able to provide services immediately. Wait time varies from a few days to a few weeks or more. If in crisis, please call 1-888-494-3888 or access Brooks Landing Crisis Walk-In Clinic at #203-2000 N Island Hwy, Nanaimo, BC, V9S 5W3.

I will not bring children to counselling sessions.

I will remain alcohol and drug free when seeing my counsellor.

I understand if I experience flu-like symptoms or if other health concerns arise that are contagious, we require that you do an online session or reschedule the appointment.

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

Our volunteer peer counsellors are trained in Solution Focused, 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 peer counsellors are not clinical or professional counsellors; insurance companies do not cover their services.

Sessions are offered in person at 1070 Townsite Rd or online via Zoom.

Note: We want to ensure that our services are accessible to all individuals; therefore, we offer online counselling via Zoom, which allows you to connect with counselling from a place that is the most convenient for you. Engaging in online counselling sessions will move you through the waitlist at a faster pace.

## Benefits of online counselling:

- Research shows that counselling online can be just as effective as in-person sessions.
- Online communication gives a sense of increased anonymity; people are quicker to open about personal issues. Trust is foundational to the success of counselling, and for a lot of 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 any 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 to your schedule.
- It is more accessible for people who are disabled or housebound.

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

To receive an email 48 hours after submitting a Volunteer Counselling Intake form stating that your intake has been received and forwarded to the program's coordinator.

If you have not received an email within 48 hours, please contact the program coordinator, Mia Maarika:

Email : [m\\_maarika@nflabc.org](mailto:m_maarika@nflabc.org)

Phone: 250 754 3331 ext.427.

Your assigned volunteer Peer Counsellor will conduct themselves professionally and ethically with appropriate boundaries such as:

- Not exploit your trust.
- Provide a non-judgmental environment.
- Use any therapy techniques that they are not trained in.
- Engage in a personal relationship of any nature.
- Be punctual and inform you of any changes to the session dates/times 24 hours before your session.
- Our services will be clearly explained, and you will be asked to sign a document that ensures your understanding.
- Your assigned counsellor will clearly explain confidentiality and the limitations of confidentiality at your first session.
- Your assigned counsellor will create a safe space for you to explore and work on the goals you bring to your sessions.

If you have any concerns or questions that you are not comfortable bringing forth to your assigned counsellor, please contact the program's coordinator: Mia Maarika.

Contact information :

Email : [m\\_maarika@nflabc.org](mailto:m_maarika@nflabc.org)

Phone: 250 754 3331 ext.427.

## **COUNSELLING FEES**

Nanaimo Family Life Association is a non-profit private agency that provides counselling to members of the Nanaimo Community. Counselling is provided by trained volunteer counsellors under the supervision of the Coordinator of the Volunteer Counselling Program. If your needs cannot be met here, a counsellor will assist you in choosing some alternatives.

## **PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

Please pay your counsellor at the end of each session.

Funding for the program comes from a variety of sources including the BC Gaming, United Way, memberships, donations, and fees for service. The volunteer counsellors do not receive any fees for counselling services. All counselling fees are contributed back into the Volunteer Counselling Program.

Below is a guide to how much is to be paid per session based on your net monthly income. If you are unable to access our services due to financial hardship, assistance may be available. For those seeking assistance you will need to attach proof of income with your Intake form or contact the VCP Program Coordinator at 250-754-3331 ext. 427.

<b><u>Monthly Net Income</u></b>	<b><u>Individual Session</u></b>	<b><u>Couples Session</u></b>
<b>Income under \$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
<b>\$2,000 to \$3,000</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
<b>\$3,000 to \$4,000</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>\$4,000 to 5,000</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	<b>\$60.00</b>
<b>\$5,000 +</b>	<b>\$60.00</b>	<b>\$70.00</b>

## **COUNSELLOR EVALUATIONS**

**Written Evaluations** of your counselling sessions are very important to us. Your counsellor will give you two simple evaluation forms to complete with an envelope (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. If the evaluations are not completed, the Volunteer Coordinator may contact you by phone for a verbal evaluation unless you ask not to be contacted.

### We Will:

- Keep your personal information private.
- Provide you with an environment dedicated to your mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Assign you a new counsellor if you do not believe your counsellor is suited to your needs. (If this is the case, please contact the Volunteer Counselling Program Coordinator at ext. 427).
- NFLA offers services in an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment. We do not tolerate discrimination on any grounds. If you feel you have been discriminated against by any representative at NFLA please contact the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Van Isle Crisis Line	1-888-494-3888	Tillicum Lelum	250-753-6578
Haven Society (admin)	250-756-2452	Brooks Landing Crisis Counselling	250-739-5710
Rainbows Nanaimo	250-802-3716	Youth & Family Addictions	250-739-5790
Beyond Blame	250-754-3331	Seniors Abuse and Info Line	604-437-1940
Haven Crisis Line (24hr)	250-756-0616		

## ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Sometimes our waitlist for counselling can be long and we know this is a difficult time for many. Please consider signing up for one or more of these workshops for additional support and information while you wait to be matched with a counsellor.

Our workshops provide an opportunity for growth through increased self-awareness and understanding. These are offered in a group setting that allows for learning from others in an atmosphere of respect and comfort. Each workshop is \$15.00 and requires pre-registration each week. As with our counselling, if cost is a barrier please give us a call.

*Below are descriptions of each workshop:*

**Effective Communication:** Effective communication is defined by individuals intentionally using conversation as a mechanism to find common ground with the person they're speaking with. This workshop will help us to understand what another person's message is and to convey your message in a clear way.

**Personal Boundaries/Assertiveness:** Boundaries bring order to our lives. They teach people how we want to be treated. They keep people from coming into our spaces or us from going into their space. Following that, a person using assertiveness skills is better able to manage and minimize their anxieties in stressful situations. It also enhances their self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Conflict Resolution:** This workshop covers negative and positive views of conflict, conflict style, and offers constructive ways to handle conflict.

**Healthy Self-Esteem & Self-Exploration:** Self-Esteem relates to having a positive sense of your inherent worth as a person. It is made up of learned feelings and positive thoughts that reflect a positive attitude versus a pessimistic attitude. Healthy self-esteem is self-confidence, self-worth, and self-respect. It affects everything you do.

**Exploring Anger:** Anger is what happens when we perceive an event as threatening or when we experience frustration over unmet needs. It is usually preceded by feelings of fear, loss, hurt, or sadness.

**Exploring Stress:** Stress affects us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It is natural and useful and is a necessity for life and survival. However, unmanaged stress can cause illness. How we respond to stressors highly influence the impact the stress will have in our lives.

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

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

**Creating Personal Change:** This workshop covers positive aspects of creating change, self-defeating thoughts, and language, knowing what is in our control, discovering our passions and values, and keys to successful goal setting.