

NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION



SENIOR PEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM

OLDER ADULT ORIENTATION PACKAGE

Office Hours
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
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 8:00 p.m.

Who is Eligible?

Services are available to older adults aged 55 and older who can specify their needs within the areas our counsellors are equipped to support (listed below).

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 Senior Peer Counselling Program
I understand that once the coordinator has matched me with a counsellor and the counsellor has contacted me, I need to respond to the counsellor within 3 days to set up my first appointment, or I risk my file being closed. If, for any reason, I am unable to contact the counsellor within 3 days, I can contact the coordinator to be placed 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 counsellor to request to continue sessions.
I understand that if I cancel my appointment, it is my responsibility to book another appointment with my counsellor within 3 days; otherwise, I risk having my file closed.
I will commit to weekly sessions. I will contact the counsellor if I cannot commit to weekly sessions due to shift work, transportation, etc.
I will not bring others to my counselling session.
I will remain alcohol and drug-free when seeing my counsellor.
I understand that if I stop coming to counselling, my file will be closed. If I wish to connect with a counsellor again, I must complete a new intake form. Note: 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 Volunteer Counselling Program does not offer crisis counselling and cannot provide services immediately. Wait times vary from a few days to several weeks or more. If you are in crisis, please call 1-888-494-3888 or visit the Brooks Landing Crisis Walk-In Clinic at #203 – 2000 N Island Hwy, Nanaimo, BC.
If I plan to visit the office, I understand that if I experience flu-like symptoms or any other contagious health concerns arise, I should stay home.

At Nanaimo Family Life Association, one-on-one, accessible, and affordable counselling is provided 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-Centred, 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.

There is no charge for sessions in the Senior Peer Counselling program.

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, you can expect the following:

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 get in touch with the program's coordinator, Ardith Finnamore.

Contact information :

a_finnamore@nflabc.org

250 754 3331 ext.427

COUNSELLOR EVALUATIONS

Counsellor Evaluations

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	1-888-494-388	Youth & Family Addictions	250-739-5790
Brooks Landing Crisis Counselling	250-739-5710	Tillicum Lelum	250-753-6578

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. The Senior Peer Counselling Program is designed for older adults aged 55 and above. There are no counselling fees.

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 the intentional use of conversation to find common ground with the person you'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 and offers constructive strategies for managing 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 arises when we perceive an event as a threat or when we feel frustrated by 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 and essential part of life and survival. However, unmanaged stress can lead to illness. Our response to stressors greatly determines how stress affects us.

Exploring Grief & Loss: In this workshop, we examine the common causes and symptoms of grief, dispel harmful myths and clichés, explore the stages of grief, understand mourning needs, and discuss 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, examines how self-defeating thoughts and language affect us, and helps us understand what is within our control. It also helps us discover our passions and values and provides key principles for successful goal setting.

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