

Cortney Pasternak, M.Ed, RP, OAMHP, Therapeutic Counselling Services
www.ontariotherapist.com Guide to Services & Consent Form

SERVICES:

Cortney Pasternak offers private counselling services for people struggling with anxiety, stress management, grief and loss, depression, relationship issues, and life and career transitions. She offers counselling to individuals, couples and families and also offers pre-marriage counselling. Cortney has worked with adults, older adults, adolescents, children and larger groups. In addition to in-person counselling at one of her offices, she offers on-line and telephone counselling for those in different areas of the city and province, and may, on occasion and if necessary make home, hospital and hospice visits to accommodate the needs of her clients. She does not provide medical or psychiatric diagnoses or offer psychoeducational assessments. However, she is happy to collaborate with other health care providers to provide the most holistic care possible that serves the best interest of the client. She welcomes feedback at any time.

APPROACH:

Cortney has an integrative approach to address the unique needs of each client. She believes one needs to address more immediate symptoms but also root causes of problems in order for change, healing and growth to occur. Cortney has experience training in and has worked with several different therapeutic models and techniques. Please feel free to ask Cortney about working with any of these models.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & REGISTRATION:

Cortney Pasternak is a Masters level, Registered Psychotherapist and counsellor, trained at the University of Toronto in the Counselling Psychology/Counselling & Psychotherapy program. She has an additional Masters Degree in Communication and Culture and has completed doctoral level research. Cortney Pasternak is a member of the OACCPP and a member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) which means she is bound by a professional code of ethics. This also means that Cortney receives regular clinical supervision to provide the highest quality services to her clients. She also participates regularly in professional development.

YOUR RECORDS: Cortney keeps written records of your sessions together. You may request to see the file at any time and an appointment may be booked to review a copy of those records with Cortney present. If you disagree with any of the information on file or find the information to be incorrect, you may provide Cortney with a correction for the files. Please note however that Cortney is unable to change the file once it is written. Cortney is required to keep client files for 10 years. Files involving any records of allegations of sexual abuse or assault may be kept indefinitely.

LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY/CLIENT RIGHTS:

Cortney Pasternak takes the confidentiality of her clients very seriously. She is required to obtain your informed, written consent before releasing or obtaining any information except where authorized by legislation or directed by the courts. These exceptions are as follows:

1) In certain limited circumstances, your counsellor is required by law to disclose client information, and must comply with these mandatory obligations. These circumstances include, but are not limited to: significant concern about the safety of a child or an elder's (physical or sexual safety) or significant emotional harm (which includes situation and/or behaviours that seriously interfere with development and/or functioning); files being subpoenaed; search warrants.

2) In addition, it is a condition of the counselling relationship that your counsellor will release what would otherwise be confidential information if there is a reason to believe that you represent a significant and immediate threat of death or serious injury to yourself or others. Please note, that Cortney Pasternak will take whatever steps are necessary to avert danger to a client or others. The threat of harm always takes priority over confidentiality.

Cortney regularly consults with a clinical supervisor and her accredited peers to provide the best quality of care. In addition, there may be a need to share pertinent personal information with appropriate accredited bodies, and other therapists via a group or peer supervision format, who are, like Cortney, ethically and strictly bound to maintain confidentiality.

Please note that due to confidentiality concerns, Cortney will not generally interact via email or texts unless previously arranged through a consent process, and with an understanding about the concerns for confidentiality, for anything more than appointment scheduling. She will not interact or connect via social media and will not respond to requests to do so. She will not search or 'google' information about a client except in cases where a) requested by the client or previously agreed upon, b) In cases where there may be concerns about safety, security, conflict of interest, or other conflicts that might interfere with the counselling process, c) As part of the therapeutic work (ie: perhaps viewing work that is meaningful to the client, etc). Finally, with respect to confidentiality, she will not communicate with clients she sees outside of the counselling office unless the client initiates contact or unless otherwise agreed upon between the client and Cortney. If you are concerned about any aspect of these limitations to confidentiality, please discuss your concerns with Cortney.

In the case of online and telephone communication and counseling, clients must complete the specific online and telephone consent form. While I will do my part to protect privacy online with client information and through online video chat services, the client understands that it is not possible to guarantee complete protection in these or other forms of communication. Text and email are not generally considered secure forms of communication. Client understands I cannot guarantee phone or online conversations will not be intercepted, stolen and used without our knowledge or without our consent and shared with authorities.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS: In order to adhere to the code of ethics set out by the College of Psychotherapists and Cortney's professional association (OACCPP), Cortney is bound by the following rules about the types of interactions between clients and counsellors. Counsellors must engage in professional conduct at all times. Counsellors *cannot*:

- * Give or receive gifts from clients with the exception of something of token value.
- * Attend social events of clients unless otherwise agreed upon.
- * Advocate in legal matters or prepare reports/documents for reasons not disclosed in the initial request for service.
- * Have a relationship beyond the counselling itself. This means counsellors cannot have a business relationship or provide legal, medical, financial advice, be a supervisor, teacher, or evaluator while engaged in counselling with a client, cannot be related to or have a friendship with a client, or have any kind of romantic/sexual relationship with the client or anyone close to the client.

Please note, in order to protect your confidentiality, I will not approach you or engage you in conversation unless otherwise agreed upon. You are however, welcome to approach me if you wish.

PHYSICAL CONTACT: To ensure client's safety and security, and to prevent misunderstandings and maintain professional boundaries, physical contact is generally not advised.

COUPLES COUNSELLING AND PHYSICAL ABUSE: While Cortney provides counselling to couples in conflict as well as for pre-marriage and divorce counselling, **she is unable to provide counselling to couples in which physical abuse is occurring.** Research indicates that counselling in this context may increase the danger for the victims of such abuse.

REFERRALS AND DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES: Even though Cortney has experience working with a broad range of clients, if she feels ill-equipped to meet their needs, she may refer the client to a more

specialized therapist, out of respect for the client and her ethical obligations. If financial matters present a barrier to the client, she will also refer clients to subsidized clinics.

FEES: Cortney's fees generally range from **120 – 130 (plus HST)**, unless otherwise agreed upon for regular office visits in Hamilton. She will offer a sliding scale where possible. She charges an additional fee for home, hospital and hospice visits to account for her travel time and associated costs which may include parking. These fees are based on **50 minute sessions** (unless otherwise agreed upon) **unless otherwise agreed upon**. Clients wishing to book longer than 1 hour sessions can discuss this with Cortney and the fee will be adjusted accordingly. They are booked on a regular basis. Telephone therapy or online (Vsee) sessions over 15 minutes in length are considered billable time. **Report or letter writing is billed at either an hourly rate or for a flat fee of 50 dollars for shorter requirements**, unless otherwise agreed upon. **Please keep careful note of your appointments to avoid mistakes and unnecessary charges. She will generally send out reminder notices up to a week in advance of an appointment but it is the client's responsibility to keep track of the appointment and cancel within the time frame necessary to avoid charges. In the case of repeated cancellations – regardless of timing – Cortney will likely suggest a re-evaluation of the therapeutic relationship.**

Cortney accepts payment by cash, interac e-transfer and credit card. If a client generally pays by credit card, their account will be charged for no shows or late cancellations and a receipt will be issued to them at their next appointment. Please note that Cortney will not be able to run tabs or continue booking a client who has not paid for their last appointment.

MISSED, CANCELLED OR LATE APPOINTMENTS, AND ILLNESS:

Cortney requires **48 hour notice to cancel appointments. Unless otherwise agreed, a cancellation fee of half the regular fee will be charged within the 48 hours. The full fee will be charged for cancellations within 24 hours. Clients will be responsible for the full hour fee in the case of late arrivals to appointments.** In the case that Cortney needs to cancel last minute or begin late, she will arrange to make up the time with you – possibly over the phone or online. In the case of **illness with symptoms related to flu, severe colds, infections, viruses for example, that are easily transmitted, but where the client or Cortney feels well enough to do the session**, Cortney asks that sessions are moved to the phone or online video (free and confidential Vsee App). You will be asked to complete an online and telephone consent form in advance to ensure this is possible.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION: To avoid issues related to non-payment in other capacities, and to provide convenience for clients who wish to pay by credit card, Cortney is now requiring that clients provide credit card information for back up unless otherwise agreed upon. This is to protect Cortney from non-payment and **she reserves the right to bill the credit card if the client has not paid within 48 hours.** If it is used, this information is being stored inside an online payment system for the purposes of recurring billing. More information about the company can be found: <https://www.bambora.com/en/ca/>

SCENTS: To protect client's with allergies and sensitivities, we operate in a **no-scent office**. We ask you to do your best to avoid bringing or wearing strong scents to your session.

CLIENT'S RIGHTS:

- You have the right to ask questions to your therapist and know their qualifications
- You have the right to end counselling at any time
- You have the right to a safe and secure environment
- You have the right to ask about and discuss my policies
- You have the right to make a complaint. **Email:** complaints@crpo.ca **or** 1-844-712-1364

CLIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

The client has the responsibility to participate to their fullest in counselling process; to treat the therapist with respect; to attend counselling as scheduled and to give sufficient notice if they are unable to attend; and to pay any fees for services as due.

Clients are now required to provide credit card information for back up unless otherwise agreed upon. If payment is not received within 48 hours, Cortney reserves the right to charge the credit card.

Visa/MC #: _____ Exp: ____/____ CV: _____

Agreed upon fee rate: \$ _____/hour (after HST)

Please circle if you agree and please sign and date below:

I/we understand the above limits to confidentiality.

I/we have been informed of my/our rights as outlined in the Guide to Services and I/we hereby consent to to participate in the therapeutic counselling process.

Name

Signature

Date

Revised: 03/04/2020