

# NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION



## VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM

### YOUTH 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 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, including parents, 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 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 with mobility challenges and people who experience barriers to leaving their homes.

## As a client at Nanaimo Family Life, 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.

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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](mailto: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](mailto:a_finnamore@nflabc.org).

Here's a guide to the session fees based on your net monthly income.

Monthly Net Income	Payment Per Session
Income under \$ 2,000	\$20.00
\$2,000 to \$3,000	\$30.00
\$3,000 to \$4,000	\$40.00
\$4,000 to 5,000	\$50.00
\$5,000 +	\$60.00

# 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](mailto: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.

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## 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

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## Youth and Consent

Our accessible and affordable counselling services are specially designed for youth aged 13-18. We adopt a client-centred, solution-focused approach and a family systems perspective, ensuring each young person receives personalized support. Our services operate on a sliding scale fee, and no one is turned away due to inability to pay. We believe that everyone has the right to mental health services, and we are committed to addressing the needs of youth who come through our doors. Our team of Volunteer Counsellors plays a vital role in providing this essential support.

We support youth facing various challenges, including bullying and family breakdown. While our counsellors can assist with many issues, we will refer clients to specialized services when additional support is needed.

### Legal and Ethical Guidelines for Reporting:

If there is a concern that a youth might harm themselves or others, or if abuse or neglect is suspected—especially if a parent is unwilling or unable to protect the youth—our counsellors are required to report these concerns to child welfare authorities.

### Youth Consent Policy:

Whenever possible, we seek guardian consent when youth access our services. However, if a youth, aged 14 or older, requests confidentiality and is deemed capable of consenting by a qualified NFLA staff member, they may sign the Consent for Service & Confidentiality Guidelines form independently.

Please complete the intake form provided and review the Client Orientation document for more details about our youth counselling program. Please note that the client must complete the intake form.

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