



## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

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The purpose of this section is to provide you with the information necessary to understand the process and nature of counselling. In addition, you need to be informed about the possible risks and benefits associated with counselling for you to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not.

For many, this will be the first experience with counselling (especially online counselling services), and we believe it is important to be clear and transparent about what counselling is, and what counselling looks like at My Quanta. My Quanta has contracted Larose Counselling Services to provide counselling services to clients. To be fully informed, please read all of the following material.

### Risks & Benefits

Counselling is very different than talking to a friend or family member. Our conversations have specific goals, and although your therapist will be empathetic, non-judgmental, and supportive, they also will challenge you. Sometimes you might feel annoyed, tired or upset following a session. This can happen as you are processing new ways of thinking or because you've spoken about something that's been upsetting you. As a result of counselling, you may experience changes in your relationships or beliefs that have unexpected results. Usually these changes are very positive in the long-term, but it may be difficult to experience as they are happening.

Your therapist may suggest trying specific techniques in counselling (i.e., relaxation exercises). If you have any questions about these techniques it's important you ask. It's also important to know *you have the right to stop any exercise at any time during the session*. Counselling is one form of treatment for client problems. There are many other forms, such as medication for psychological symptoms, spiritual groups, and physical activity (i.e., walking). Feel free to ask your therapist for referral information.

Rochlen, Zack, and Speyer (2004) summarized some of the benefits and challenges of e-therapy. There may be increased convenience for therapists and clients and for people with limited mobility or limited local access to mental health professionals and services. Likewise, people's willingness to access mental health services may increase when feelings of stigma and shame are not intensified by visibility in the community. E-therapy clients may be willing to share sensitive material earlier than when face-to-face.

Your therapist will work collaboratively to continually assess if the medium of therapy is appropriate for the goals of therapy with particular clients. You, as the client, understand that online sessions have limitations (as well as benefits). At My Quanta, we provide in-person therapy in the Eastern Ontario region. Please speak with your insurance company before purchasing online-therapy, since many will not cover this type of therapy. Some insurance companies might want to speak with a representative and so they are encouraged to contact Michel Larose at Larose Counselling Services through this website for additional information.

You understand that online therapy may not be appropriate if you are experiencing a crisis or having suicidal and homicidal thoughts. If you are experiencing a life-threatening crisis, you agree to contact a crisis hotline, call 911, or go to a hospital emergency room. You also understand that we follow the laws and professional regulations of the Province of Ontario and the psychotherapy treatment will be considered to take place in the Province of Ontario.

### The Relationship with Your Therapist

The relationship you have with your therapist is different than other relationships. You will be sharing important details with your therapist, but you will know little about them. This can be difficult sometimes; but as a professional, your therapist is part of an association that has rules about the types of interactions they are allowed to

have with clients. Your therapist is prohibited from engaging in a “dual relationship” with you, or one other than that of client and therapist.

As part of these rules your therapist:

- Cannot have any other kind of business relationship with you besides the therapy itself;
- Cannot be your therapist if they are related to you or if they are your friend;
- Cannot give legal, medical, financial, or any other type of professional advice;
- Cannot have any kind of romantic, friendship, or sexual relationship with a former or current client, or with any people close to a client;
- Cannot give or receive gifts from clients except tokens with personal meaning to the therapy process;
- Cannot be your supervisor, teacher, or evaluator while engaged in counselling with you;
- Cannot attend personal parties/events of clients even if you invite them.

Because your therapist is very concerned about protecting your confidentiality, your therapist will not approach or acknowledge you if s/he sees you in the hallway or in the community. This is not meant to be rude, but rather to protect your privacy.

When you have a therapist, it's important you feel safe with this person. Therapists should seem real or genuine, and should listen to you and help you find the answers you already know. Sometimes, even though therapists might be a great fit for a friend, they may not be a good fit for you. If you realize you're not comfortable with your therapist, you have a right to request a referral.

Likewise, therapists have a right to feel safe in their work, and also can ask that your care be transferred should they feel uncomfortable or that they are not the best therapist for you. This can occur if therapists believe their personal values, experiences, or reactions will interfere with their ability to provide you with the best care possible.

As you and your therapist have the right to feel safe, it is asked that you do not attend sessions while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This helps to enhance individual safety, while ensuring your participation and disclosures in counselling are voluntary and deliberate. If it becomes apparent that drugs or alcohol impacts your judgment, your therapist may end the current session and ask you to come back/reschedule.

You can ask questions about anything that happens in counselling. We are always open to discuss any intervention and to look at alternatives that might work better. You can feel free to ask your therapist to try something that you think will be helpful, as well as to refuse any counselling techniques/interventions. You can ask me about my training for working with your concerns, and can request that you be referred to someone else. You are free to leave therapy at any time, though we recommend you complete the session and discuss the matter with your therapist. You can request to access your personal information or request corrections to this information.

### Therapy & Confidentiality

Except in specific situations, you have the right to confidentiality in your counselling. Your therapist cannot tell other people about your counselling. This means that we cannot speak to your friends, parents, teachers etc. without your permission. If you would like us to share information with other people, such as a doctor, you must give us written permission. You have the right to change your mind and revoke that permission at any time.

Legally, we may need to share our concerns with others if we have concerns about safety. Your therapist is legally bound to break your privacy if they believe:

- You are in imminent danger of harming yourself or know of another person in harms way.
- You will harm another person.
- A child (age 0-18) is being abused, neglected or is a witness of abuse (please refer to the Convention on the Rights of the Child at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>). In these situations, Family & Children's Services needs to be contacted.
- A dependent adult is being harmed or abused.
- When a client reports a reasonable suspicion that a resident of a long term care facility regulated by the Long Term Care Facilities Act of Ontario (such as a seniors residence or nursing home) is being physically abused by anyone, and /or has suffered or may suffer harm as a result of unlawful conduct, neglect, or

improper or incompetent care by staff in the home. In these situations it may be necessary to report it to the provincial Director of Nursing Homes. If your record is subpoenaed, the therapist may advocate limiting the information admissible, but the court can access your file.

- When a client discloses that they were sexually abused by another helping professional who is a member of a profession regulated by the Regulated Health Professions Act of Ontario (e.g., psychologist, medical doctor, physiotherapist, etc.) or the Social Work & Social Service Workers Act of Ontario, it may be necessary to report the name of the professional (not the client) to the relevant college.
- If your record is subpoenaed, the therapist may advocate limiting the information admissible, but the court can access your file.
- In a situation of the unexpected death or illness of the therapist, you may be contacted by a representative who is acting on behalf of the therapist. This representative will be obliged to ensure confidentiality as the therapist does and will provide you with an appropriate referral.

Your therapist will most likely inform you of whom they are contacting to help ensure the safety of yourself and/or others.

### Confidentiality and Online Therapy

The following are some of the limitations and expectations for each other when we use Online services:

1. Any Internet-based communication is not guaranteed to be secure/confidential.
2. There are precautions that you can take to increase security, including:
  - a. Ensuring that you are online in a private room/area with the door closed, and if possible, using some type of sound blocking device;
  - b. When possible, connect to the Internet directly (as opposed to using WiFi; this also helps with transmission);
  - c. Make sure to turn your Online service program off, not just disconnect from the call when the session is over.
3. Make the same commitment to your online session that you would to an in-office appointment:
  - a. Be punctual;
  - b. Limit distractions – turn off cell phone; avoid “split screens.” Explain to others that you are unavailable for the next hour (perhaps hang a ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign on the door);
  - c. Have your computer on a firm surface and sit on a sofa/chair or at a desk if possible;
  - d. Check the audio/visual in the ‘preferences’ each time before a session so that you can see what your therapist is seeing (and vice versa).
4. An online session is subject to our 24-hour cancellation policy.

We make every effort to keep all information confidential. Likewise, if we are working online together, we ask that you determine who has access to your computer and electronic information from your location. This would include family members, co-workers, supervisors, and friends. We encourage you to only communicate through a computer that you know is safe, i.e., wherein confidentiality can be ensured. Be sure to fully exit all online counselling sessions and emails. If we are unable to connect or are disconnected during a session due to a technical breakdown, please try to reconnect within 10 minutes. If reconnection is not possible, email to schedule a new session time.

### Confidentiality, E-mails, and Communications

Therapeutic email exchanges are delivered via Gmail. When documents are sent, they will be password protected and the intended client will be authorized to review and permitted only to make comments. If you choose to email from your personal email account, please limit the contents to basic issues such as cancellation or change in contact information. I will not respond to personal and clinical concerns via regular email. Any email received or sent to your therapist will be printed out and kept in your file. If you call us, please be aware that unless we are both on landline phones, the conversation is not confidential.

Should we need to contact you, we will try to reach you via email and/or the telephone number you’ve provided to us on the Guest Card. If your therapist is contacting you from their direct line, their name and number may appear on your phone.

### Confidentiality, Recording and Supervision

Your sessions will not be recorded to maintain your confidentiality. However, if you choose to record the session, you understand that you are legally responsible with this information. In addition, if you use the recording for malicious purposes, My Quanta reserves the right to follow with legal action.

Your therapist may access consultation from trained professionals in the community and may engage in-group supervision. The names of external supervisors and participants are available upon request. When participating in off-site supervision, your therapist will not share your name in order to protect your confidentiality.

### Age of Consent

We believe partnerships with parents are helpful. Although we usually encourage involvement of parents, youth 12 years of age or over and are considered “mature minor” have the legal right in Ontario to private, confidential counselling and therefore can meet on their own with a therapist (Child & Family Service Act, 1990, section 28).

### In-Person Services

Larose Counselling Services therapists may meet clients in their home in the Eastern Ontario Region. To do so, the therapist will contact you before the session and complete a Home Assessment Form to determine any risk-related issues. When agreed upon, the therapist will schedule a session with you. An additional travel fee will be added for this service. Please refer to the Current Fees for Services on My Quanta’s website.

### Record Keeping

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep client treatment records. In your file, we keep a copy of your Guest Card (for each session), proof of payment, the therapeutic letter (which is encrypted and sent to you at the end of the session), and a copy of your final invoice for the session (which is also sent to you with the therapeutic letter). We maintain your records for 10 years after your last contact with My Quanta in a secure location that cannot be accessed by anyone else.

### Release of Information Forms

Should you or your therapist wish to discuss your situation with another individual or agency, you will need to complete a release of information form stating whom they are allowed to speak with and the type of information they can release. Please know that other units and health centres may not be bound by the same confidentiality rules as My Quanta.

### How Your Information is Stored

Counselling Services uses a locked cabinet system. Our filing policy is as follows:

- All files are stored in locked cabinets.
- Your file will be closed when you and your therapist terminate counselling, or if we have not heard from you after 30 days.
- Files will be shredded after 10 years.

### Payment for Services

Payments for services must be made prior to the time of each session. Insurance typically will not cover online therapy. Please consult with your insurance provider. You may make payment via Email Transfers of Funds. The Current Fees for Services are listed on My Quanta’s website.

**First appointment:** is usually 60 - 75 min for \$125 to allow for an initial assessment.

**Follow-up sessions:** are usually 60 min at the hourly rate of \$90.

**Couple Therapy:** all appointments are \$100.

- Limited sliding scale rates are possible depending on financial circumstances. Please contact Michel Larose to discuss.
- Work done outside of sessions (letters, reports, resume writing, check-in calls, consultations with other professionals, etc.; except a therapeutic letter at the first session) is also charged by the hourly rate.
- Full payment is required at the time of each scheduled appointment in the form of cash, personal cheque (made out to Michel Larose) or eTransfer to [myquanta.lcs@gmail.com](mailto:myquanta.lcs@gmail.com).

- Payment for sessions will be required prior to scheduling subsequent appointments. In the event that payment is not received for an appointment, clients will be given the opportunity to do so and if payment is still not made, My Quanta reserves the right to employ the services of a collection agency to recover unpaid fees.
- A \$25 service charge will be added to the amount owing for NSF cheques.

### Extended Health Insurance

Larose Counselling Services are sometimes covered under extended health benefits. Please verify with your insurance plan if you have coverage for a Registered Psychotherapist (College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario), for a master's level therapist (Master of Science in Marital and Family Therapy), or if you have a health spending account. Larose Counselling Services will collect your payment directly, and you will then be provided with a receipt via email to be submitted to your insurance company for reimbursement. It is your responsibility to contact your insurance company in advance of starting therapy to determine your annual coverage and whether you need a referral from a medical professional, as each insurance plan is different.

### Complaint Procedure

If you have a concern about your counselling, we hope you will talk to your therapist. We take criticisms and suggestions seriously, and will try to respond with care and respect. If you are unable to resolve things with your therapist, believe that your therapist will be unwilling to listen and respond, or that they have behaved unethically, you can contact Michel Larose, the Coordinator of My Quanta. If you are still not satisfied with the result, you may contact your therapist's professional association to file a complaint. Your therapist's professional association can be found on the website in the section About Your Host.

### Client Consent to Counselling

- I have fully read the About The Services section of the My Quanta website, had sufficient time to consider it carefully, asked any questions that I needed to, and understand it.
- I understand the limits to confidentiality required by law, and those indicated by my therapist.
- I understand that if I threaten to harm myself, others, and/or a child/dependent adult, my therapist is required to protect these individuals at the expense of protecting my privacy.
- I understand my rights and responsibilities as a client, and my therapist's responsibilities.
- I know I can end therapy at any time I wish, can request another therapist and that I can refuse any requests or suggestions made by my therapist.
- I am over the age of eighteen, or have been designated a mature minor.
- I understand that I have the right to talk openly and honestly with my therapist, and will try to provide my therapist with feedback about how I think counselling is working.
- I will do my best to attend scheduled appointments. If I cannot attend an appointment, I will contact my therapist prior to the appointment to cancel or reschedule. If I am late for an appointment, I understand it will still end at the original time.
- I agree to engage in counselling under the conditions outlined in this document.

You are asked to please acknowledge that you understand the above information on the Guest Card.

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The following was inspired by:

Rowland, H., McBride, D., Ellis-Toddington, J. (2010). Informed consent for counselling at the University of Lethbridge. Retrieved from University of Lethbridge Counselling Services (Canada) website:

[www.uleth.ca/counselling/](http://www.uleth.ca/counselling/)