

Shift Psychological: Online Counselling Privacy Policy

At Shift Psychological, we respect the importance of our client's privacy and security. We developed this Online Counselling Privacy Policy in order for our clients to understand how we collect, use, communicate and disclose, and make use of personal information. For online therapy sessions, we use the secure VSee application. The following outlines our online privacy policy:

1. Before or at the time of collecting personal information, we will clearly identify the purposes for which information is being collected.
2. We will collect and use personal information solely with the objective of fulfilling those purposes specified by us and for other compatible purposes, unless we obtain the consent of the individual concerned or as required by law.
3. We will only retain personal information as long as necessary for the fulfillment of those purposes. In accordance with the College of Alberta Psychologists' record keeping standards and guidelines, all client files must be kept for a period of 10 years after the last point of contact.
4. We will collect personal information by lawful and fair means and, where appropriate, with the knowledge or consent of the individual concerned.
5. Personal data should be relevant to the purposes for which it is to be used, and, to the extent necessary for those purposes, should be accurate, complete, and up-to-date.
6. We will protect personal information by reasonable security safeguards against loss or theft, as well as unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, use or modification.
7. We will make readily available to customers information about our policies and practices relating to the management of personal information.
8. We are committed to conducting our business in accordance with these principles in order to ensure that the confidentiality of personal information is protected and maintained.

What is Personal Information?

The client's personal information includes:

1. legal name, current mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number;
2. year of birth, gender identity, and language;
3. payment history;
4. case notes from each session;
5. information you communicate through e-mail, faxes, letters, and phone calls; and
6. other personal information collected to provide a specific service or to research our client base.

Client-Therapist Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all communications between a client and their psychologist is vitally important to the therapeutic relationship. The therapist will not divulge information about services the client has received, items which were discussed or communicate these to others, with the exception of several special circumstances. Outside of these types of situations, the client communications with the psychologist and the services they have received remain completely confidential.

The exceptions below outline situations in which we are legally bound to take action even though it requires revealing some information about a client's treatment. If at all possible, we make every attempt to inform you when this will have to be put into effect. The legal exceptions to confidentiality include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. If there is a good reason to believe the client is threatening serious bodily harm to themselves or others. If we believe a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we may be required to take protective actions, which may include notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization. If a client threatens harm to him/herself or another, we may be required to seek hospitalization for the client, or to contact family members or other who can provide protection.
2. If there is good reason to suspect, or evidence of, abuse and/or neglect toward children, the elderly or disabled persons. In such a situation, we are required by law to file a report with the appropriate agencies.
3. In response to a court order or where otherwise required by law.
4. To the extent necessary, to make a claim on a delinquent account via a collection agency.
5. To the extent necessary for emergency medical care to be rendered.

Finally, there are times when we find it beneficial to consult with colleagues as part of our practice for mutual professional consultation. The client's name and unique identifying characteristics will not be disclosed, except in the case of a provisional psychologist's consultations with her supervisor. The consultant or supervisor is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Client's Rights

Clients have the right to receive care and treatment with respect and consideration throughout the course of therapy. If at any time the client feels uncomfortable or feels their therapist may not be the right fit, the client has the right to stop the session at anytime.

Client's Responsibilities

Clients have the responsibility to cancel or reschedule their appointments as needed within our 48-hour cancellation policy. The client also has the responsibility to ask

any questions they have about therapy. We encourage the client to let their therapist know if their psychological condition has worsened or is posing a threat to their health and/or well-being.

Attendance

Shift Psychological requires at least 48 hours notice to cancel or reschedule any appointments, including online video sessions. Failure to notify Shift Psychological within 48 hours, via email to booking@shiftpsych.com, will result in the full appointment charge.

Finances

The client agrees to pay for their session prior to the appointment using a provided PayPal link or by giving authorized consent for us to charge their card in Helcim. If the client has insurance that we are able to direct bill to, we will process their claim at the beginning of their appointment. If the client is not fully covered, we will give them the option to settle the remaining amount owed by using PayPal or charging their card in Helcim. Please note we do not accept cash, cheques, Internet transfers, or AMEX.

Personal Financial Information: Helcim Commerce

We store all credit card information in the secure system, Helcim. The software allows us to safely store the client's credit card information and process any payments. Helcim keeps up to date with the latest firewalls to protect all data and information from threats. Helcim also goes through regular testing and auditing to make sure their system is strictly secure. For more information on Helcim, visit: <https://www.helcim.com/us/security/>.

Secure Online Video System: VSee

At Shift Psychological we use a secure system called VSee to accommodate online video sessions. VSee was developed as a solution to the many security flaws other online video systems had. For more information about VSee, visit <https://vsee.com/security/>.

Online Browser Data

We automatically collect technical data from visitors to our websites. This data is not connected to your personal information. It includes:

1. server logs, which permanently records the computer IP address, browser type, operating system, and timestamp for each web page visited; and
2. session cookies, which temporarily stores on the computer, the login information, the page being viewed, and language preference.

Online Consent to Video Therapy

I, the client, agree to the above terms and conditions outlining my online video therapy at Shift Psychological using the secure video system, VSee. I acknowledge and agree to the following:

1. My personal information will not be collected without my consent
2. Shift Psychological, Helcim, and VSee will collect and store my personal information for the online video therapy sessions
3. I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the Shift Psychological Online Counselling Privacy Policy, Helcim Privacy Policy, and VSee Privacy Policy
4. Personal information obtained prior to and during the session will not be disclosed unless any of the exceptions outlined in this document occur

By booking and appointment for Shift Online Therapy, I understand and agree to all the terms and conditions listed above for Shift Psychological's Online Counselling Privacy Policy.