

Intake and Consent Forms (June 2024) — Consents

Informed Consent for Therapy

My goal is to provide compassionate, evidence-based therapy to help you feel better and improve your quality of life. My areas of expertise are Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and mindfulness-based therapies. Therapy might involve one or a combination of these. I provide therapy online only to clients in provincial jurisdictions where I am registered (see below).

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND POTENTIAL REFERRALS

During the first 2 - 4 sessions I will do my best to help you feel comfortable with me and reach a deep understanding of the issues you're seeking help with. Typically, I'll provide feedback and recommendations. If at this point I think that your needs would be better served by another provider, I will provide referrals. Though rare, I may refer you to another provider later in therapy if I determine your needs fall outside of my scope of practice or if there is a conflict of interest.

AREAS OUTSIDE SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Some concerns are outside my scope of practice. I do not work with individuals with severe mental disorders, a history of harm to self or others, or those at risk for harm to self or others. Because I work remotely, I cannot provide the intensive level of timely, hands-on support needed for these situations. Additionally, online therapy may not be ideal for some forms of exposure therapy. I do not provide any services involving litigation or third parties who require reporting on progress and symptoms such as WCB and disability benefits programs. I do not work with children, adolescents, or couples. If you require local assistance or assistance outside of my scope of practice or anticipate that you might in the future, let me know so I can help you find referrals.

YOUR PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

I adhere to guidelines regarding confidential information set by the colleges regulating the practice of psychology in BC, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec; the Canadian Psychological Association Ethics Code; and federal and provincial law pertaining to the privacy of personal information and psychological treatment. I disclose confidential information to third parties only if you have given written consent.

There are limits to confidentiality as follows.

A psychologist may and in some cases must release information if:

- A client presents an imminent danger to themselves or others
- A child or vulnerable adult is in need of protection
- A court orders the release of information
- A psychologist believes on reasonable and probable grounds that a client is operating a vehicle in an unsafe manner as per the Motor Vehicle Act in BC and the Traffic Safety Act in Alberta

- A client is a health professional under the Health Professions Act in BC and the psychologist believes on reasonable and probable grounds that the continued practice of this health professional might be injurious or dangerous to the public
- A psychologist has reason to believe that a person under their care has a communicable disease or sexually transmitted infection as per the Communicable Diseases Regulation in Alberta
- A client reports a psychological condition, that in whole or in part, was caused by something that happened at work and this caused them to be off work for more than one day, and/or caused or is likely to cause them to be unable to perform their regular working duties in Alberta
- A psychologist learns of sexual abuse of a client by another regulated health professional in Ontario
- A psychologist learns of an adult in a long term care or retirement home in need of protection in Ontario
- Any other circumstances where required by law

In these cases, a psychologist releases the minimal amount of information to protect the safety of the client or others or as required by law.

My professional colleges require that psychologists consult with other registrants to maintain professional competency. I may therefore consult with other psychologists about your therapy without disclosing your identifying information.

I take several steps to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of your information. Your file is stored on secure encrypted servers using Jane App which I access with a password protected computer which I store locked in my office. While your electronic file is stored on servers located in Canada, I will also use Google Workspace and Zoom in our work together, and thus your data may be transmitted and stored outside of Canada and subject to foreign privacy laws. Please let me know if you do not consent to this and I will provide referrals to other providers.

Consistent with requirements for psychologists, your file is kept for seven or 10 years (depending on your province) after your file is closed.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN APPOINTMENTS

Please contact me at 587.557.2114 and natsumi@mindbright.ca. Please do not send texts.

I am not immediately available by phone or email. I will do my best to return messages within 48 business hours.

In emergencies, call your family doctor, the Distress Line (Alberta) at 780.482.4357, the Crisis Centre (BC) at 604.872.3311, the Distress Centre 416.408.4357 (Ontario), 911, or go to an emergency room. For a comprehensive list of crisis centres and lines across Canada see <https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/>

POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THERAPY

Psychological treatments are effective for a variety of concerns. Common benefits include:

- Learning new ways to understand yourself and your challenges
- Learning new, effective coping skills to manage emotions

- Learning new, helpful ways to think about yourself, your life, other people, or the world
- Improvements in mood, energy level, and activity level
- Improvements in stress management
- Reducing impulsive behaviour or other behaviours that cause problems in your life
- Solving everyday problems
- Improving relationships
- Moving towards goals that are important to you

Depending on your situation, you may experience these or other benefits. The benefits of therapy depend greatly on how much work you put into it. Just like learning to play a musical instrument, learning new ways to cope, think, and act take practice. If you are concerned about whether you are benefiting from therapy let me know. I will be happy to discuss this with you.

THE POSSIBLE RISKS OF THERAPY

The therapies I provide are based on scientific evidence and work well for many. Nevertheless, sometimes therapy involves short-term emotional discomfort or changes in relationships. Therapy often involves making changes in your life that may be uncomfortable. It also involves hard work and a significant time commitment. I will do my best to help you cope. My clients often find that the initial discomfort in therapy decreases over time.

I strive to provide the best treatment possible; however, the therapies I provide might not work for you. We'll work together to monitor your progress and determine whether therapy seems to be helping. If therapy has not helped after an expected period of time, this could be because you need a different therapy or treatment provider. Please speak with me if you have concerns about your progress. Other therapies exist and some people may not benefit from therapy and I will happily provide recommendations.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

I care deeply about your experience in therapy and well-being and welcome questions and feedback about any aspect of our work together. Your input helps improve my practice and enhances your experience and growth. Please feel free to share any questions or concerns regarding therapy with me. I strive to be a safe person for you to discuss both positive and negative feedback. If your concerns persist or if we determine there is a poor fit between us, I will assist you in finding another provider if necessary.

ALTERNATIVES TO PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CONSEQUENCES OF NON-ACTION

Psychological treatments have been shown to be effective for a variety of concerns and they are considered the first line of treatment for some. The Canadian Psychological Association has created this document to provide information on the effectiveness and efficacy of psychological treatments if you would like to learn more:

https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Practice/TheEfficacyAndEffectivenessOfPsychologicalTreatments_web.pdf

Alternative treatments exist. Speak to your family doctor if you would like to learn more.

While psychological concerns will sometimes improve on their own, some individuals who do not seek any treatment for psychological concerns may find that their symptoms get worse or remain unchanged.

QUALIFICATIONS, REGISTRATION, AND JURISDICTIONAL MATTERS

I have a PhD in Clinical Psychology from McGill University and I am registered and in good standing with the College of Health and Care Professionals of BC (CHCPBC), the College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP), and the Ontario College of Psychologists (CPO). My status as a registrant of the colleges in these provinces authorizes me to provide psychological services to clients located there. These colleges oversee the practice of psychology and ensure high standards of professional conduct and practice within their jurisdictions. I choose to maintain registration with the OPQ as a “non-practising member” in Quebec.

My practice is based in Alberta but I may provide services from other locations. In most provinces in Canada including Ontario, BC, and Alberta, therapy is considered to take place where the client is located from a regulatory perspective. Therefore, the legal jurisdiction regulating my practice in the context of our work together will be the provincial jurisdiction you are in irrespective of my location.

SERVICES, FEES, AND SCHEDULING

Sessions are typically 50 minutes but may be scheduled for longer.

The fee for a 50-minute session is 240 dollars payable by credit card or email money transfer to natsumi@mindbright.ca. Payment is due at the end of each session. If you pay by credit card your number is automatically stored in my system and will be charged for future sessions. Please advise me in advance of your session if you have a credit card on file and want to make alternate payment arrangements.

I will provide receipts for income tax and insurance claim purposes. Duplicate receipts can be provided upon request however I charge my hourly rate for the time required to process such requests.

If I am late for a session, I will make up the missed time or prorate your bill. If you are late, you may use the remainder of the session time but you will be charged the full session fee.

A prorated fee of 288 dollars per hour is charged for all documentation (e.g., forms, letters, reports, duplicate receipts etc). In the unlikely event that you require my services in court or for any other proceeding, my fee is 10000 dollars per day or for any portion thereof.

I may increase my fees during the course of our work together. I will provide 2 months advance notice for fee increases.

By signing below I attest that I have read and understood all of the information above and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the conditions of consent to therapy. I attest that I fully agree and consent to all of the terms and conditions outlined above. I understand that this consent is valid starting today and for the duration of therapy but that I may withdraw my consent at any time by making a request in writing.

- I have questions and/or concerns about the Informed Consent for Therapy Form. Please contact me to discuss.

Electronic Communication Policy and Consent

There are risks to the privacy of information shared via electronic methods such as email, text message, and social media. Privacy is not guaranteed as electronic communications can be intercepted, misdelivered, or read and distributed by third parties. All electronic communications received are considered part of your file and are stored accordingly.

EMAIL

You are welcome to communicate with me by email for the purposes of scheduling sessions and sharing materials but please be aware of the risks to your privacy and confidentiality and do not send sensitive health information via email. I use Google Workspace email. Google Workspace has stringent privacy and security standards however as is the case with most email providers, data transmission and storage occurs outside of Canada. This means that emails could be subject to foreign privacy laws. If you do not consent to your data being transmitted/stored outside of Canada please do not consent to online therapy with me.

JANE APP

Session receipts and reminders are delivered by my online file management system called Jane App to your email. I may also share materials discussed in session (e.g., recommended books or videos; diagrams; sketches) via Jane App. While materials shared via Jane App are sent from my file management system, they are sent to your email so the same security concerns described under the heading email above may exist.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I am on social media for business purposes but please do not communicate with me in any way on social media as this compromises your privacy. To protect your confidentiality I do not respond to any social media communications or requests from clients.

TEXT MESSAGES

Please do not send me text messages.

- I understand the risks to privacy and confidentiality associated with electronic communications and I consent to receiving email communications from Natsumi Sawada. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by making a request in writing.
- I do not consent to receiving electronic communications from Natsumi Sawada

Informed Consent for Online Therapy

I offer psychological services using an online audio-video platform with robust security features called Zoom.

Online sessions provide some advantages over in-person sessions. They enhance accessibility, convenience, and comfort.

They also come with risks and limitations not typically encountered during in-person sessions. Nonverbal information may not be noticed by the client or psychologist because communication is

occurring through a screen. This may slow down or distort communication and lead to miscommunications which might need to be clarified. Online therapy requires access to an electronic device and high speed internet services. It can therefore be negatively affected by technological difficulties/failures. If one of our sessions is interrupted due to technical difficulties less than 40 minutes after the scheduled start time I will charge my prorated fee for the number of minutes of online therapy and we will reschedule the session. If a session is interrupted 40 minutes or more after the scheduled start time I will charge the full session fee.

As with all online communication there is the potential for breaches in privacy with online therapy. I will protect your privacy to the best of my ability by conducting our online sessions in a private office, by using secure and encrypted audio-video platforms, by changing my passwords frequently, and by password protecting my computers and storing them in a secure, locked location. However, any online communication is inherently at risk, in part because there is always a chance that online communication could be intercepted or hacked. Furthermore, please note that as is the case with email, while Zoom has stringent privacy and security standards, data may be transmitted/stored outside of Canada and thus subject to foreign privacy laws.

The risk for breaches in privacy and confidentiality is also higher in online therapy because the client is likely at home where a third party could overhear or interrupt the session or find records of therapy sessions on the client's phone or computer. Although using a secure, encrypted audio-video platform and email provider mitigates this risk to a degree, it is always greater in online therapy than during sessions where a psychologist and client are in a private office together.

Because of the limitations of online therapy, some treatments may be less effective when provided online. It may also be contraindicated for certain issues or psychological problems (e.g., where there is risk of harm to a client/someone else and for complex/severe psychological problems). For this reason, it is important that the psychologist and client review on an ongoing basis whether continuing online therapy remains in the client's best interest or whether the client might receive greater benefit from in-person services. Accordingly, if during the course of our therapy I determine that online therapy is no longer the most appropriate option I will let you know, we will discuss, and I will do my best to refer you to a treatment provider in your region. Lastly, it is important to note that I may be less familiar with additional mental health resources and supports in your area than a psychologist who is local and that in the case of a life-threatening emergency that necessitates a breach in confidentiality, although I will attempt to contact your emergency contacts or the appropriate emergency services in your area, my ability to do so will be limited by the fact that I am at a significant distance from you. For this reason I do not recommend that you seek treatment with me if you have a history of mental health issues that require emergency, crisis, or other intensive interventions or if you or I anticipate that you may need this in the future.

As part of our online therapy I request that you:

- Read the Zoom Security White Paper and let me know if you have questions/concerns <https://explore.zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom-Security-White-Paper.pdf>
- Participate from a secure, private location that is quiet and free from distractions
- Secure your computer so that records of our sessions are not found or intercepted by a third party (e.g., use password protection, store your computer securely, delete records of our sessions)
- Never record or share any portion of our sessions without prior written permission

- Inform me if you have any questions about whether online therapy is appropriate for you

- By signing below, I attest that I have read the information above as well as the Zoom Security White Paper and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the conditions of consent to online therapy. I also attest that I fully agree and consent to all of the terms and conditions above. I understand that privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in any online communication and I accept this risk. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by making a request in writing.
- I have questions and/or concerns about the Informed Consent for Online Therapy Form. Please contact me.

Cancellation Policy

Please avoid canceling sessions. If you must cancel please provide as much notice as possible.

If appointments are repeatedly cancelled I may recommend that we stop therapy for the time being.

The full session fee is charged for missed appointments and appointments cancelled with less than 48 hours notice for any reason including unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances (e.g., illness, accidents, and emergencies). Insurance policies do not cover sessions that were not attended.

Cancellations must be made by calling 587.557.2114 or emailing natsumi@mindbright.ca.

- I understand that the full session fee is charged for missed appointments and appointments that are cancelled with less than 48 hours notice for any reason. *Required*

Services Related to Litigation and Third Parties

- I understand that Natsumi Sawada does not provide any services related to litigation and does not work with third parties who require reporting about my progress and symptoms, such as but not limited to WCB and disability benefits programs. I understand that if during treatment I wish to have my psychologist provide services related to litigation or a third party I will need to change treatment providers, *Required*