

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Alicia Follett, Psychologist

Please read this document carefully and ask any questions before signing. This consent is valid for 12 months and will be reviewed if the service changes significantly. You may withdraw your consent at any time.

1. Nature and Purpose of Psychological Services

As part of providing a psychological service, including assessments and counselling, Alicia Follett, Psychologist, will need to collect and record personal information pertaining to you. This information is a necessary part of psychological assessment and treatment.

Psychology services vary depending on the personalities of the psychologist and client and the particular reasons you are seeing a psychologist. Your psychologist may use many methods to address the problems you hope to resolve. Psychology and psychotherapy call for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things discussed both during sessions and at home.

The first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your psychologist will be able to offer you some first impressions of what the work will include and a treatment plan to follow. If you have questions about the psychologist's procedures, you should discuss them when they arise.

You can cease therapy with your psychologist at any time. You may also withdraw your consent to the collection and use of your personal information at any time — though this may affect our ability to continue providing services. If you feel uncomfortable with what is happening in a session, you may request that the session stop at any time.

2. Consent as an Ongoing Process

Informed consent is not a one-time event. This consent will be relied upon for a period of up to 12 months, after which it will be formally reviewed with you. Consent will also be revisited if there is a significant change to the service or the therapeutic relationship, including:

- A major change in the focus or scope of treatment
- A change in treatment approach or modality (e.g., moving from general counselling to EMDR or another specialised approach)
- A change in how services are delivered (e.g., from in-person to telehealth)
- A change in who is involved in sessions (e.g., moving from individual to couples or family work)
- A new presenting problem or referral, or a new episode of care following a gap of 6 months or more

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. If you have any questions or concerns about the service at any point, please raise them with your psychologist.

3. Cultural Safety and Access

This practice is committed to cultural safety, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. We recognise the ongoing impacts of colonisation and are committed to providing culturally safe and responsive care.

Please inform your psychologist of any cultural considerations that are important to you in the way services are provided, and who you would like involved in your care. Please also inform your psychologist of any specific access or communication support needs, including:

- Ramps, accessible parking, or other physical access needs
- Interpreting services or resources in other languages
- Assistive technology or resources in alternative formats
- Any other support needs to assist your participation

4. Access to Your Information

Relevant personal information about your current situation will be collected and recorded as part of providing psychological services. This information assists in providing an appropriate and thorough service and is stored securely.

Files are held on the clinic's practice management software, which uses encrypted, Australian-based servers. Psychologists are required to keep your file for a minimum of 7 years from the last date of service, or — if you were under 18 at the time of treatment — until you are 25 years of age, whichever is the longer period.

You may access the information in your file on request, subject to the exceptions in the *Privacy Act 1988* (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>).

5. Confidentiality and Privacy

All personal information gathered by your psychologist during the provision of psychological services will remain confidential and secure. We will not engage with you in public or online in a way that identifies you as a client. Please personally contact your psychologist to engage with them, rather than approaching them on social media or in public forums.

If information about your condition or situation is required from another person (such as a GP or family member), this will be discussed with you beforehand and your permission will be sought.

Confidentiality will only be departed from in the following circumstances:

1. A court subpoena or other disclosure required or authorised by law.
2. Mandatory reporting is required — psychologists have a legal obligation to report evidence or reasonable suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or when a child is at risk of harm, in accordance with relevant state/territory legislation. This obligation applies regardless of the age of the person making the disclosure.
3. Your consent cannot be obtained due to a requirement to access emergency services during a medical crisis.
4. Unauthorised access to data held by the clinic occurs, requiring notification to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.
5. Failure to disclose the information would place you or another person at risk of harm.
6. You have provided prior approval to share a written report or discuss your information with another professional or agency.
7. You have provided your consent to share your information for a specific reason and purpose.
8. You would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed to another professional or agency, where disclosure is directly related to the primary purpose for which it was collected — such as informing your GP of treatment progress or claiming Medicare rebates on your behalf.
9. Clinical supervision with another professional is required to provide better services. Your psychologist participates in regular clinical supervision as required by professional registration standards. Case material discussed in supervision will be de-identified. Identified information will not be shared in supervision without your separate written consent.

If, during your treatment, your psychologist becomes aware of a risk to someone's life, health, or well-being, the psychologist is required to report the matter to the appropriate agencies.

6. Telehealth Services

If services are provided via telehealth (video or telephone), the following additional considerations apply:

- Sessions will be conducted via a secure, encrypted platform. You will be informed of the platform used.
- You are responsible for ensuring you are in a private location during telehealth sessions where others cannot overhear.
- There are some limitations to telehealth compared with in-person services, which your psychologist will discuss with you.
- In the event of a technical failure during a session, your psychologist will attempt to contact you by phone.
- If you are in crisis during a telehealth session and your psychologist is concerned for your safety, they may need to contact emergency services at your location. Please ensure your psychologist has your current address at the start of each telehealth session.

7. Capacity and Decision-Making

Your psychologist will act in accordance with your capacity for decision-making at all times. If there are any circumstances in which your capacity to provide informed consent may be affected — for example, due to a health condition, medication, or acute distress — please discuss this with your psychologist so appropriate arrangements can be made.

8. Referral to Other Services

If your psychologist recommends referral to another service or professional (such as a psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, or other allied health provider), the reasons for referral, the benefits, and any associated costs will be discussed with you in advance.

9. Session Fees

Fees are reviewed in January each year.

Session fee: \$190 per session

Up to one hour (50 minutes is standard). Payable at the time of consultation.

Medicare Rebates

Under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (Better Access), Medicare rebates are available to clients with an assessed mental disorder. Rebates are accessed with a Mental Health Treatment Plan and referral from a GP, psychiatrist, or paediatrician. The rebate is limited to a maximum of 10 sessions per calendar year, with a maximum of 6 sessions per referral. Rebates will not be provided beyond the number stated on the referral.

Private Health Insurance

Some health insurance policies cover psychology services. Please check with your insurer regarding your eligibility. Medicare rebates and private health insurance cannot be claimed for the same session.

Costs of Referral

If you are referred to another professional or service, the costs and benefits will be discussed with you before any referral is made.

10. Cancellation Policy

48 hours' notice required for cancellations and postponements.

Less than 48 hours' notice: 50% of the session fee

Missed appointment or no-show: Full session fee

Cancellation fees are payable on or before your next visit. There are often other clients waiting for appointments — we greatly appreciate timely notification.

11. Complaints

If you have concerns about the psychological service you have received, you are encouraged to raise them directly with Alicia Follett in the first instance. You also have the right to make a formal complaint to:

- **AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency):** www.ahpra.gov.au
- **NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC):** www.hccc.nsw.gov.au (or the relevant body in your state/territory)

12. Emergency

In an emergency, call 000 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support)

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

I confirm that I have read and understood this Informed Consent document and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand the nature and purpose of the psychological services to be provided, the limits of confidentiality, the fees that apply, and my rights as a client.

I understand that:

- This consent is valid for 12 months and will be reviewed if the service changes significantly.
 - I may withdraw my consent or cease services at any time.
 - De-identified case material may be discussed in clinical supervision.
 - My psychologist has mandatory reporting obligations as described in Section 5.
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