

# Online Counselling Service Client Information Sheet

Welcome to Relationships Australia Victoria. Please read the following information carefully.

## ONLINE COUNSELLING SERVICE

As part of our therapeutic programs, RAV provides an Online Counselling Service. A description of the service is available on our website at [onlinecounselling.relationshipsvictoria.com.au](http://onlinecounselling.relationshipsvictoria.com.au). The service is staffed by qualified, experienced professionals, chosen for their ability to provide this specialist service.

RAV is fully accredited with ISO 90001:2008 (for a Quality Management System for Child, Youth and Family Services). We have well-established quality management systems and processes in place across the organisation. RAV is an organisation designated by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of providing family counselling services, under s 10C Family Law Act 1975.

## Qualifications

A statement about your practitioner's qualifications is available on the Online Counselling Service [website](#). Please feel free to ask your online counsellor about his/her qualifications, training and experience. All practitioners receive regular supervision.

## CONSENT, CLIENT DATA, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

### Consent

By making an appointment, you are indicating your consent to receive this service.

### Basic information and client data

In order to provide services to you, RAV needs some basic information, including your name, email address, telephone number and date of birth. This information will be stored securely. More information is provided in the Privacy section below.

### Confidentiality

In general, information provided by you cannot be disclosed to anyone outside RAV without your permission and our online counsellors must maintain

the confidentiality of client information. RAV protects client information as required by the Privacy Act 1988.

The main exceptions which legally require or permit disclosure of your personal information **outside RAV** are:

- Reasonable suspicion of child abuse, or risk of child abuse – we have a legal obligation to report this to the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection);
- A risk of physical or psychological harm to a child;
- A serious threat to the life, health or safety of yourself or others;
- Other matters of a serious or criminal nature involving threats of violence, or damage to property;
- If RAV receives a subpoena/witness summons in Court proceedings and the information may be admissible as evidence;
- If a Court or Tribunal orders RAV to disclose that information, or as otherwise required by law;
- If you consent to the disclosure of that information.

For further information about the exceptions, please read paragraph 3.6 of the [RAV Privacy Policy](#).

Personal information will be shared **within RAV** where there is a serious risk to the life, health or safety of yourself or others, a reported breach of a Family Violence Intervention Order (or equivalent order), to review previous service delivery, where it is necessary for the purpose of supervision, or otherwise with your consent.

### Privacy

We take seriously our commitment to the privacy of your personal information, and encourage you to raise any concerns with your online counsellor or through email to [onlinecounselling@rav.org.au](mailto:onlinecounselling@rav.org.au).

RAV's Privacy Policy is available on our [website](#), or in hard copy format, free of charge, upon request by emailing [onlinecounselling@rav.org.au](mailto:onlinecounselling@rav.org.au). The policy contains information about:

- how RAV manages your personal information
- how you may obtain access to your personal information and, if necessary, seek correction of that information
- how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how RAV will deal with your complaint.

Our Online Counselling Service client data is stored securely.

While every effort will be made to ensure client data remains protected and secure, we cannot guarantee that any online data you transmit to us is fully secure.

If you believe that in participating in this Online Counselling Service, your safety may be put at risk because of current family violence, you may need to consider alternative service options. If you are in immediate danger, please call 000. If you are not in immediate danger, we recommend you contact [1800RESPECT](#) on 1800 737 732 for support and advice in Australia. Please read the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on our website for more information.

## FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

We invite clients to participate in the evaluation of our Online Counselling Service after their appointment finishes. This feedback assists us to review and plan our services.

## RECORDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

To ensure our service is of the highest quality, a written record of all online counselling appointments is held for supervision or related purposes, as required by law and in accordance with good professional practice.

Recording of an Online Counselling Service appointment, or any communication with a RAV staff member by a client outside the Online Counselling Service, using any form of electronic device is not permitted, unless there are special circumstances approved in writing by the counsellor, and also the prior knowledge and consent of all persons being recorded.

## COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

RAV is concerned if a client is dissatisfied with any aspect of the Online Counselling Service. If you have a complaint or concern, please:

- raise your complaint or concern directly with the online counsellor; or, if you prefer,
- make your complaint directly in writing via [onlinecounselling@rav.org.au](mailto:onlinecounselling@rav.org.au) or verbally to RAV's Complaints Officer, who will refer to the appropriate manager, by calling (03) 8573 2222 in Australia.

If your complaint remains unresolved, the RAV Complaints Officer will investigate and respond to your complaint. At this point, you will need to put your complaint in writing. If you remain dissatisfied about how your complaint was managed within RAV, you can forward your complaint to one of the following.

### Victorian Office of the Ombudsman

Phone: (03) 9613 6222

Email: [ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au](mailto:ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

### Office of the Health Complaints Commissioner Victoria

Level 26, 570 Bourke St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 1300 582 113

Website: [www.hcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hcc.vic.gov.au)

Suggestions about any aspect of our Online Counselling Service are also welcome, and may be made orally, or by completing a Client Feedback/ Suggestion Form – which can be requested by emailing [onlinecounselling@rav.org.au](mailto:onlinecounselling@rav.org.au).

## FEES

RAV is a not-for-profit organisation. A fee is charged for our Online Counselling Service. The fee is stated on the service [website](#) and on the [appointment booking page](#). Fees are payable at the time of confirming your appointment.

## APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS OR RESCHEDULING

Appointments for online counselling usually take 50 minutes. If you do not attend the appointment or do not provide at least **24 hours' notice** of cancellation or rescheduling of the appointment time, the pre-paid appointment fee will not be refunded.