

# CLIENT INFORMATION BOOKLET



Client Information Booklet

May 2023

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## Help us Help Others

**Your tax-deductible donation helps us  
to continue to provide counselling services**

**EFTPOS is available at reception  
or donate here**



## Feedback and Complaints

As part of our commitment to high standards of service, we welcome open and honest feedback from our clients. All clients will be offered the opportunity to provide feedback during and at the conclusion of counseling services via a feedback form. Of course, feedback is welcomed at any time.

YAFA is committed to handling and resolving client complaints in a confidential, fair and timely manner.

The process for making a formal complaint is:

1. Complete a complaint form, available from the office or from our website: [www.yafa.com.au](http://www.yafa.com.au) and give this to the Coordinator.
2. The Coordinator will contact you within 5 working days of reading your complaint, to tell you what has been done, or what action is proposed.
3. Your complaint will take from 5 -30 working days to resolve. If the situation isn't finalised within this timeframe, the Coordinator will contact you with a further timeframe and process.
4. If the situation is still unresolved, your complaint will be heard by the YAFA Management Committee. The committee will contact you and do what it can to resolve the complaint.
5. If you attend government funded sessions and the issue remains unresolved, you may escalate the complaint to: Complaints Unit, Department of Children, Youth Justice & Multicultural Affairs, Locked Bag 7096, Brisbane QLD 4001, Email: [feedback@csyw.qld.gov.au](mailto:feedback@csyw.qld.gov.au), Ph: 1800 080 464, or go to [www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/contact-us/compliments-complaints](http://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/contact-us/compliments-complaints).
6. If you are a NDIS or Home Care Package client and the issue remains unresolved, you may escalate the complaint by contacting your relevant funding provider.

As far as possible, the fact that a client has lodged a complaint, and the details of that complaint, will be kept confidential among those directly concerned with its resolution. The client's permission will be obtained before any information is given to other parties that may help in the resolution process. However, where a complaint relates to matters of an unlawful nature, this complaint will be passed on to the relevant authorities. We recommend that a client bring an advocate or support person with them for meetings about their complaint.

As clients of YAFA, we encourage you to email the department about the quality of treatment and care you received at YAFA.

*We love positive responses too!*

### **Responsibilities:**

As a client, you have a responsibility to:

1. Act in a way that facilitates the work of the Counsellor, in terms of behaviour and language (as resolution of client needs can only occur in an appropriate environment).
2. Draw staff attention to any complaints that you may have, so that the appropriate procedures can be initiated.
3. Notify the YAFA office about your need to reschedule or cancel appointments. If you fail to notify of your inability to attend on two or more occasions, or if 3 consecutive sessions are cancelled, then future appointments may be refused at the discretion of the counsellor.
4. To help us to help you; we invite you to actively participate in your counseling by telling us your choices and preferences throughout your counseling. Tell us what does/doesn't work for you and we will try to adapt to you within our capacity.

### **Health and Safety**

YAFA aims to provide a safe environment where clients, staff and volunteers may engage without fear of accident or injury.

Everyone has a role to play, including clients. Clients can help keep YAFA a safe place for all by:

- Reporting any observed safety concerns.
- Informing staff of any harm that comes to them during their time at YAFA. (Please ask for a copy of our Child Protection Policy & Procedure or Client Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure.)
- Making arrangements for childcare during your appointment where possible as YAFA cannot accept responsibility for children while a parent is in a counselling session.
- Cooperating with staff directions in the case of a major threat.
- Refraining from aggressive behaviour, otherwise you will be asked to leave.

YAFA is committed to the safety of children and we comply with the Child Risk Management Regulations (2011). For more information, please ask for a copy of the Compliance with Child Protection Regulations document.

### **History of YAFA**

YAFA has been in operation since the early 1990's, first as an organisation to provide care, and a place to go, for youth who spent large portions of their weekend evenings on the streets. Its first operations were Drop in Centres. In 1997 we began a State Government supported *Family and Individual Support Program* counselling service, which operates in Kallangur, providing free professional counselling and referral services to children, young people and their support networks. From time to time Group Therapy programs are provided for specific groups, for example parents of teens, etc.

From its inception, members have been motivated by Christian beliefs and principles. In 1994, our name changed to ***The Youth and Families Association of Pine Rivers Incorporated, (YAFA)***, and we continue to operate as a Christian-led incorporated association. Our Management Committee provides governance over all of YAFA's activities. Executive management positions are filled by members elected at our Annual General Meeting, who serve in these roles as volunteers.

Our original mission statement, ***Supporting Youth and Families through care, protection, and self-development***, still expresses our mission well, as it is the motivating desire of the staff and management team to improve the well-being of our community members. Our goal is expressed as *"To provide to Youth and Families an environment of support, and to encourage positive personal and social development through the channeling of energies, educational programs, counselling and avenues of social integration."*

### **What We Do**

With funding from the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, YAFA provides short-term and long-term counselling services for families, young people and children over the age of 6. Children under 6 can be seen in the context of a family group.

YAFA offers limited fee for service counselling for all other clients including those funded by NDIS and Aged Care Home Care Packages.

## Confidentiality

YAFA has policies and procedures in place to ensure that our service provision and record keeping procedures comply with the Information Privacy Act (2009). All staff, volunteers and students are bound by an Oath of Confidentiality.

The *Counselling Agreement* form that clients sign before commencing counselling with YAFA explains our privacy policy and the limits to confidentiality.

YAFA will only share information about clients with other service providers with the client's written consent.

Clients have the right to access their own confidential records if they so desire. To access your personal information, please complete a Request Access Personal Information form, available from your Counsellor. Clients will be able to know:

1. If we (still) hold any of their personal information;
2. What type of information that is; and
3. The main purpose for which it has been used.

The exceptions for access to documents by Clients of their personal information are if their information:

1. Will endanger a person's life or physical safety;
2. Will enable the existence or identity of a confidential source of information;
3. Will result in a person being subjected to a serious act of harassment or intimidation;
4. Will prejudice a system or procedure for the protection of persons, property or the environment; or
5. Is likely to result in other consequences as listed in the Right to Information Act (2009) Schedule 3 (10).

If a client wishes to appeal against such a decision, a written complaint may be made to the Management Committee, who will arbitrate the decision.

## Your Rights and Responsibilities

YAFA has high standards regarding service delivery to clients. For this reason we have put together the following to give you information about your rights and responsibilities as a client of YAFA. It is our expectation that this will enable us to maintain high standards of practice and service, together.

### **Rights:**

As a client, you have the right to expect that:

1. You will receive a high standard of professional practice in the counselling that you receive.
2. That the Counsellor and Client will set counseling goals together.
3. All matters relating to counselling will be kept confidential except when the professional involved perceives that you are at risk.
4. Your Counsellor will seek permission from you in writing, in situations where they consider it is in your interest to consult with other professionals or organisations.
5. All written documents relating to your counselling will be kept securely.
6. You may initiate the complaints procedure to express your concerns, in cases where you are dissatisfied with the service.
7. Staff are willing to listen where concerns are expressed and exercise diligence to resolve any concern.
8. An interpreter, friend or advocate may be present with you during counseling. Please discuss this with your Counsellor if you would like us to help you arrange a translator or you would like to bring someone with you into counselling.

For more details, please ask for a copy of our Confidentiality and Privacy Policy.