



Client Information Booklet

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April 2026

Help us Help Others!

Donations are Tax-Deductible

**Donations support ongoing counselling services
in our community**

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



Feedback and Suggestions

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. 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 providing feedback is:

1. Complete a Feedback & Suggestions booklet, available from the office or from our website and hand to your Counsellor or our 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 our funding Department.
6. If you are a NDIS or Support at Home 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. 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. For fee paying clients, a cancellation fee may also apply.
3. 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.
4. Draw staff attention to any complaints that you may have, so that the appropriate procedures can be initiated.

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 ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and youth under our care. We are committed to the ongoing development and implementation of robust policies and procedures that provides cultural sensitivity and fosters secure and supportive environments.

History of YAFA

YAFA has been providing care to youth since the early 1990's motivated by Christian beliefs and principles. The organisation started with Drop-in Centres for youth who would otherwise spend most of their weekend evenings on the streets. When the Drop-in Centres were discontinued by the end of 2000, YAFA continued to seek other opportunities to assist those in need in our community. In 1997, our Family and Individual Support Program counselling service commenced. It operated in Kallangur and then moved to Lawnton, providing professional free counselling and referral services. From time to time, group programmes have also been provided for specific interest groups, for example parents of teens, etc. YAFA returned to Kallangur in 2014 and we have been counselling from the Anzac Avenue premises since.

Our original mission statement, **Supporting Youth and Families through care, protection, and self-development**, continues to express YAFA's mission well. It remains the motivating desire of all staff, volunteers and the management team. As an Incorporated Association and a Benevolent Institution, YAFA operates under a constitution, in compliance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, the ACNC, as well as other regulatory bodies.

What We Do

With funding from the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, YAFA provides client-focused early intervention and counselling primarily to children and young people over the age of 6 years, but also with families wherever possible and appropriate.

YAFA offers limited fee for service counselling for all other clients including those funded by NDIS and Aged Care Support at Home 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 a Statement 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 desire. To access your personal information, please complete a *Consent to Release 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.

Rights:

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

1. You can expect a high standard of professional practice in the counselling 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.