



## Okanagan College Counselling Services

### Confidentiality Policy

As in all counselling services, some records are kept regarding each individual we see. These records are usually quite brief and are designed to ensure continuity of service. All hard copies of student information related to counselling sessions are kept in a locked area to which only counselling staff has access. Some documentation may also take place through computer-based record keeping programs. In such cases, security measures are in place such that only counselling staff has access to those materials.

All communications between you and your counsellor will be held in confidence and will not, except under the circumstances explained below, be disclosed to anyone outside of the Counseling Department **unless you give written authorization to release the information.** (A copy of our release form is available from our receptionist or your counsellor.) Safeguarding the privacy of your personal information is an ethical obligation to you that all members of our department take very seriously. If you would like us to talk about you with someone, such as a doctor or a professor, we will ask you to sign a release of information form.

There are five times when we are required to break confidentiality. Those LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY are outlined below:

1. If we have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection, we are required by law to report our concerns to child protection social worker in the Ministry of Children and Families.
2. If we have reason to believe that a person is a danger to him/herself or others, we must notify the appropriate authorities e.g. the RCMP, OC administration and any other people who have the ability to protect the person at risk. You should also be aware, that at times we may be required to notify the person who is in danger.
3. If a judge, coroner, ombudsman, children's commission and other such authorities order us to release records or to appear and provide information, we are obligated to do so.
4. To ensure a high quality of service, cases seen by members of the Counselling Department may be reviewed by other counsellors at OC. Consultation on difficult issues is frequently sought by team members.

If at all possible, your counsellor will discuss the procedures for making a disclosure with you and enlist your assistance in resolution of the situation. It is a very unusual circumstance for information about you to be shared without your awareness or explicit permission. If you have any questions about privacy issues, your counsellor will be happy to discuss them with you.