

STATEMENT OF RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

WONDERING WHAT “THERAPY” IS??

...well, from our point of view(and yours), it is:

- a professional relationship between a therapist and client in an attempt to bring about change for the client.
- A therapist facilitating the client to find ways to help herself change.
- A co-exploration of client’s issues – both presenting and underlying ‘problems’.
- At times, emotionally uncomfortable and challenging work
- Collaborative work
- A safe place to express feelings and emotions.

THERAPY IS NOT:

- a forum for ongoing complaint
- about being ‘rescued’
- crisis management
- only about problem solving
- advice giving
- therapist giving answers or solutions
- psychiatric treatment
- social chit-chat/lonely hearts club
- always “warm & fuzzy” (although we always strive to be respectful and non-judgemental)
- a friendship relationship, even after therapy finishes.

Please note different therapists may have different “techniques” in order to facilitate above, don’t hesitate to ask yours about how she works.

THE WOMAN'S CENTRE

STATEMENT OF RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF WOMEN USING THIS CENTRE

ABOUT THIS CENTRE

The Woman's Centre was officially incorporated in November 1994 and began offering counselling in April 1995. It is a Non Government Organisation which is funded by the NSW Department of Health and guided by a management committee. The Woman's Centre is established as a counselling and therapy centre with a focus on women's mental/emotional health as well as on women affected by substance use. We aim to improve the health and well being of women who are adversely affected by their social and economic position in society. This includes, but is not exclusive for, women who experience domestic violence, childhood sexual assault, recent sexual assault, migration, unemployment, grief and bereavement and drug and alcohol use.

PAYMENT

We are a non profit organisation and do not charge fees for our services (the exception is a minimal charge for some groups if women can afford to pay) – Women who are not financial are given priority but this does not mean we are not available to women who are financial. Donations are encouraged and welcomed (any donation over \$2.00 is tax deductible) All donations will go toward furthering The Woman's Centre's resources in order to improve service quality to you the client.

OUR POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Woman's Centre follow certain Policies & Procedures which guide our work, these are outlined in a detailed Manual that is regularly reviewed and updated. As a client of the Centre you have a right to be informed of these Policies and Procedures so if you are interested to know more please ask a staff member who will organise with you to have access to a copy of our Policy & Procedures Manual.

ABOUT THIS PAMPHLET

In order for you, the client, to receive the best service this Centre can offer, and in order for us at the Centre to be in touch with how we can most effectively provide such a service, we believe that it is important for you to know what your rights and responsibilities are. Please ask staff if there is anything in this pamphlet you do not understand or need more information about.

AS A CLIENT OF THIS SERVICE YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

*** Quality and respectful service from all staff**

*** Confidentiality and privacy.**

The Woman's Centre aims to ensure at all times that your right to privacy is upheld and respected. Staff are ethically bound to not give information about you to anyone else without your signed permission and your full understanding of the purposes for which you are giving this permission. Please note that all counselling staff of The Centre work as a supervised team in order to support and assist each other in providing you with the best counselling service possible. Therefore, this means that your case will at times be discussed by your counsellor with the counselling team but not beyond.

NB: Supervision is received from external clinicians who abide by Centre's policies. Exceptions to this would be when :

- 1) The Woman's Centre is instructed or legally subpoenaed to submit your files to be presented in court as evidence or to send your counsellor to give evidence (because of this staff will always ensure that what is written in your file is a truthful representation of the counselling session);
- 2) you disclose knowledge or suspicions of a child being abused or at risk of being abused in any way. In such instance, The Woman's Centre has a Policy of notification to the proper authorities (Department of Community Services, Child Protection) and will assist you in doing this or will do so on your behalf.
- 3) you disclose details of a serious offence you have committed (such as murder, arson). A counsellor would be obliged to inform police, and if they fail to do this would be themselves committing a criminal offence called 'misprision of a felony'.

*** A safe and supportive environment**

For example, as many of the women who may use this service have experienced or are experiencing violence by men, The Centre has a policy of not allowing men into the waiting area.

*** Be informed and make decisions about how you can use this and other services**

*** Consent to or refuse any counselling offered**

*** Decide not to take part in any research**

If, however, you do agree to participate in any research undertaken at the Centre you have a right to be properly informed as to the purposes of this research and to remain anonymous (name and identifying details changed) at all times.

*** Decide not to be taped or videoed**

It is standard practice at the Woman's Centre for counselling staff from time to time to submit cassette or video tapes of their work with clients to the counselling supervisor and

supervision staff team. This is in order to further support and assist the counsellor to improve their skills in the work they do with clients of The Centre. However, the counsellor must always have your informed and signed permission to make such tapes and you always have the option to refuse or change your mind.

* **Refuse services from student counsellors**

From time to time The Centre will have student counsellors undertaking their training placements with us. These counsellors will always be carefully screened and supervised but you always have the right to be informed of their student status and to refuse their services.

* **Have access to information from your file**

Each client will have a confidential written file kept securely in The Centre. This is a legal document that must be kept up to date as a record of your attendance and of any important information that needs to be noted on your behalf. Even though the file always remains the property of The Woman's Centre, you have the right to access the information it holds. The procedure is that you make an appointment with your Counsellor or the Centre's Co-ordinator (in the absence of your counsellor). At this time the counsellor/co-ordinator will discuss the possible implications for you of viewing notes and agree with you on a manner in which to do so.

* **Access to interpreter services**

Please note that unfortunately this can take at least a week or two to organise in the first instance but can then be arranged to take place on a regular basis.

* **Fair investigation of complaints**

At The Woman's Centre we always welcome your feedback and suggestions. We also encourage you to let us know if you are not happy with any aspect of our Service as follows:

1) If you, as a client, have a complaint it should be discussed with your regular counsellor in the first instance. However, if you feel that you would prefer to lodge a complaint anonymously, The Women's Centre provides complaint forms that will live in the waiting area. There is a box in reception to put them in.

2) If the complaint cannot be resolved through informal discussion with your counsellor, or you do not wish to discuss it with your counsellor, you have a right to take the complaint to The Centre's Co-ordinator. You should put the complaint in writing with a proposed course of action (if you can) and a request for a written reply and further action. Alternatively, you have the right to make a verbal complaint and should therefore make an appointment to meet with the Co-ordinator in order to do so.

3) If the above procedures do not resolve the grievance you can request a meeting with the members of the management committee and the Co-ordinator.

4) You have a right to have a person of your choice at the meetings with the Co-ordinator and/or Management Committee.

* **To be assisted in making complaints about other services**

AS A CLIENT OF THIS SERVICE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

Be well informed about The Woman's Centre's services. Ask questions and consult with all relevant service providers, relatives or friends before reaching a decision about whether or not you wish to use this Centre.

Be well informed about the service's procedures and always feel free to ask questions of staff.

Keep appointments or advise staff if you are unable to attend. Please provide 48 hours notice where possible if unable to attend a pre arranged session. If you do not turn up for 2 appointments in a row without notice and/or reasonable explanation the service may be withdrawn from you. However, if you wish to recontact at some later date, appointments can be renegotiated. If your counsellor is unable to attend a pre-arranged appointment with you (for reasons of illness for example) an attempt will be made by our receptionist to contact you in order to inform you of this cancellation and to either confirm the next appointment time or that your counsellor will ring you to arrange another appointment.-

Not commit violence towards yourself, others or any property whilst at Centre.

Not smoke whilst at Centre

Not bring drugs or alcohol into the Centre.

Wash cups after use.

Organise childcare either privately or through Campsie Occasional Care. Please see over the page you further details of this.

Thank you for taking the time to read this pamphlet and please don't hesitate to contact any of our staff if you have further inquiries on PH: (02) 9718 1955, Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays) between 9.00am and 5.30pm.

Principles of Women's Health Care

The Woman's Centre has based its approach to delivering its counselling service to you in accordance with the "Manual of Standards for Women's Health Centres" (1995-Sydney) which outline "Principles of Women's Health Care" as follows:

"Community based women's health services in New South Wales are based on an understanding of health within a social context, as endorsed by governments throughout Australia, through the endorsement of the National Women's Health Policy.

This view recognises that:

- health is determined by a broad range of social, environmental, economic and biological factors
- differences in health status and health objectives are linked to gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, location and environment, racism, sex-role stereotyping, gender inequality and discrimination, ageism, sexuality and sexual preference.
- health promotion, disease prevention, equity of access to appropriate and affordable services and strengthening the primary health care system are necessary, along with high quality illness treatment services.
- information, consultation, advocacy and community development are important elements of the health process.

In accordance with these principles, women's health centres provide a service which:

- encompasses all of women's lifespans, and reflects women's various roles in Australian society, not just their reproductive role
- promotes the participation of women in debate and decision making about health issues, their own health care, health service policy, planning, delivery and evaluation.
- recognises women's rights, as health care consumers, to be treated with dignity, in an environment which provides for privacy, informed consent, confidentiality and safety.

- acknowledges that informed decisions about health and health care require accessible information, which is appropriately targeted for different socio-economic, educational and cultural groups
- uses existing data, research and policy concerning women's health, as well as incorporating women's views about their own health and the best strategies to address their health needs, in service planning and development.
- provides appropriate women's health care to women in local communities, within a statewide, co-ordinated approach
- ensures equity and accessibility of services without financial, cultural, geographic and or others barriers
- ensures effective community management and operation of women's health centres by women, for women
- provides a broad range of services and strategies within a preventive and holistic framework, which:
 - are provided by women, for women
 - value women's own knowledge and experience
 - facilitate the sharing of women's skills, knowledge and experience
 - link women's individual experience and health needs to the social and cultural context of women's lives
 - empower women
 - challenge sex-role stereotyping and gender discrimination which effect health
 - increase the accessibility, sensitivity and acceptability of health services for women
 - relate to identified health priorities at the local and state level.

*These principles are informed by the National Women's Health Policy and NGO women's health centres"

THE WOMAN'S CENTRE

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OCCASIONAL CARE FOR YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN WHILST YOU USE OUR SERVICE

Due to our limited resources we are unable to provide in-house childcare for your children and in order for you to gain maximum benefit from this service, The Woman's Centre has come to an arrangement with Carrington Occasional Childcare Centre (now located next to our Centre) as follows :

- If you will be attending the Woman's Centre for individual or group counselling and have a pre-school age child or children ages from that you need to have minded you will need to contact Carrington Occasional Child Care Centre (Director - Vicki) on 9787 9844 at 2 Carrington Square, Campsie 2194 , to arrange for yourself and your child to meet with them. You will need to ring One week in advance to avoid disappointment.
- The daycare centre requires that your child stays no more than an hour each time for his/her first couple of visits, or until the child gets a little used to the centre. You will need to arrange for this to happen in your own time before your first regular counselling appointment at our Centre.
- Once your child is settled and you begin to attend regular counselling at the Woman's Centre, you will need to book your child into the centre a week in advance, every week; your Counsellor will work out with you when your next counselling session will be, and remind you to make arrangements for childcare with the centre on that same day, coinciding with your next appointment.
- **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR REMEMBER TO RING ON MONDAYS OR VISIT THE CHILDCARE CENTRE ON THE SAME DAY OF YOUR COUNSELLING APPOINTMENT** in order to book your child in for the following week and avoid disappointment. When regular counselling begins you will need to book your child in for 1 ½ hours, in order not to be in a rush to get to and from The Woman's Centre.

**The childcare centre charges: \$ 3.50 per hour for one child,
\$ 6.50 for 2 children**

- If you are unable to afford the cost for your child to stay for 1½ hours at the childcare centre, The Women's Centre will cover this cost for you. You will need to pay the childcare centre in cash and obtain a receipt for this amount. Present this receipt to Lyn or Manjula at the Woman's Centre and she will reimburse the cash to you.
- Childcare is limited to 1½ hrs for individual counselling and 2½ hrs for groups that the Woman's Centre will pay for per week. Any time beyond that is at your own expense.
- Our Centre is located just 5 minutes walk from Campsie Railway Station, at 2 Carrington Square, Campsie, (front entrance) Local bus services: 400, 412, 413, 487, 492, 494.