

Adult Counselling

A resource guide

This information package includes information about SACE and ways to support yourself while you are on the waitlist for counselling, as well as when you begin counselling.



Listen. Believe. Support.

Office Line: **780.423.4102**

info@sace.ca

Welcome to SACE!

At SACE, we believe that healing is possible. We offer individual and group counselling for anyone who has experienced sexual violence, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, faith, culture, social and financial status, ability, or sexual orientation. We recognize that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, people are the experts in their own lives and experiences, and healing looks different for everyone.

The counselling offered by SACE focuses on addressing the impacts of sexual violence. Trauma counselling can be hard and may not be something that everyone is ready to do, and that is okay! You may discuss this with your client care specialist ahead of time, or your counsellor may work with you to determine if trauma counselling is the right thing for you right now. They may suggest other resources, such as addiction treatment, emotional regulation groups, or accessing medical or mental health services before you begin counselling. This is important because we are able to offer 15 sessions per client, and would like to work with you to get the most out of the time that you spend with SACE.

Counselling should be empowering. We believe those seeking counselling are the experts of their own healing journey, and our clients choose what they wish to share or work on. Some of the therapeutic approaches our counsellors may use in sessions include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Emotion-Focused Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization Regulation (EMDR), Movement Therapy, Feminist Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Play Therapy, and Somatic Experiencing.

If you have any questions about your file while you are on the waitlist, or require additional support, please contact our Client Care Specialist at **780.423.4102** or email info@sace.ca, and someone will get back to you.



Your First In-Person Appointment

Before your first appointment, you will speak to a Client Care Specialist, who will let you know your counsellor's name, and can answer any specific questions you might have.

When you come in, you will come up to the third floor, and a receptionist will buzz you in to our reception area. Try to arrive a little early so that any delays won't cut into your appointment time. The appointments are usually 50 minutes long, but depending on the day, may be a little bit shorter or longer.

Your very first appointment at SACE will include some information gathering, to get a sense of what you hope to get out of counselling. If you change your mind about counselling, or if for any reason the counsellor you are assigned to doesn't feel like a good fit, please contact a Client Care Specialist or the Director of Client Care at **780.423.4102** or email **info@sace.ca**.

It is normal to notice changes in mood or behaviour in the days before and after counselling appointments. You may notice feeling anxious before sessions, or feelings of tenderness afterward. It is important to listen to your body and be kind to yourself throughout the counselling process, as it can be hard no matter what age you are! This resource package includes some ideas for how you can support yourself outside of counselling.

SACE provides all services at no cost to our clients. We support thousands of people each year, so those seeking counselling generally have to be placed on a waitlist first. The counsellors at SACE work hard to keep this list moving.

To help us do this, we ask two things from our clients:

1. First, that if you find another counsellor, or change your mind about services, you call and let us know. You can always come back to SACE at a later time, but for now we will move on to the next person waiting for counselling.
2. Second, that you come to your appointments on time, and that if you need to reschedule, you provide at least 24 hours notice so that we can offer the spot to someone else. If you are struggling to find transportation for your appointments, please let us know and we can support you to access programs such as the [City of Edmonton's Ride Transit Program](#).

By helping us out with these two things, we can keep our lists moving and continue to do our best to offer support to all who need it.

Additional Counselling Resources



Saffron Sexual Assault Centre

110, 222 Athabasca Ave
Sherwood Park,
AB

780.449.0900

Provides up to 20 individual sessions and group support to those affected by sexualized violence, on a sliding scale basis. Can be accessed as an alternative to SACE.

saffroncentre.com



YWCA Edmonton

10402 124 St,
Edmonton, AB

780.423.9922

Provides individual and group counselling on a sliding scale basis. Can address topics such as complex trauma, domestic violence, and addictions.

ywcaofedmonton.org



The Family Centre

20, 9912 106 St NW
Edmonton, AB

780.900.6129

Provides sliding scale short term counselling to individuals, groups, families, and couples.

familycentre.org



Aboriginal Counseling Services of Alberta

#204, 10010 105 St
NW, Edmonton, AB

780.242.4357

Provides individual and group counselling for all individuals at no cost and minimal to no wait time.

aboriginalcounseling.com

Skills for Change at SACE

Skills for Change is a closed psychoeducation group requiring registration. It is offered to adult individuals of any gender who are on the waitlist for counselling services at SACE, and may be accessed without having worked with a counsellor in the past. If you are interested in this group, please contact a Client Care Specialist **780.423.4102** or email info@sace.ca.



Community Counselling Centre

202, 10534 124 St
Edmonton, AB

780.482.3711

Offers individual, couples, family, and group counselling on a sliding scale.

communitycounsellingcentre.ca



Drop-In YEG

Multiple Edmonton locations

Provides free walk-in single session counselling services to individuals, couples, and families. Various locations and times can be found on their website.

dropinyeg.ca



Access 24/7 Mental Health

13211 Fort Road NW
Edmonton, AB

780.424.2424

Provides a single point of access to adult addiction and mental health community based programs.



Cornerstone Counselling Centre

#400, 10230 142 St NW
Edmonton, AB

780.482.6215

Sliding scale from \$50 to \$200. Student counsellors available onsite at a rate of \$20 per session for those without benefits and whose household income is less than \$35,000 per year.

cornerstonecounselling.com



Momentum Walk-In Counselling

#132, 6325 Gateway Blvd
Edmonton, AB

780.757.0900

Offers single-session individual counselling services on a sliding scale from \$40 to \$200.

momentumcounselling.org



Jewish Family Services

104, 15023 123 Ave NW
Edmonton AB

780.454.1194

Low to no cost trauma counselling available for individuals, couples, children, families or groups. Clients do not need to be Jewish.

jfse.org

Support Lines



SACE Support and
Information Line
(9 a.m. - 9 p.m.):
780.423.4121



LGBTQ2S+ Youth
Line (2 - 7:30 p.m.
MT Sunday-Friday):
1.800.268.9688



Mental Health
Help Line (24/7):
1.877.303.2642



Alberta One Line
for Sexual Violence
(9 a.m. - 9 p.m.):
call or text
1.866.403.8000,
or chat at sace.ca



Family Violence
Info Line (24/7):
780.310.1818



Trans Lifeline (24/7):
1.877.330.6366



Central Alberta
Sexual Assault
Support Centre
Crisis Line (24/7):
call or text
1.866.956.1099



Children's Mental
Health Crisis and
Response Team:
780.427.4491
(visit their website
for hours)



Indigenous Hope
for Wellness
Help Line (24/7):
1.855.242.3310



Distress Line (24/7):
780.482.4357



Kids Help
Phone (24/7):
1.800.668.6868,
or text CONNECT to
686868



Islamic Family &
Social Services
Association Help-
line (10 a.m. - 10
p.m.):
780.900.2777



Suicide Crisis
Helpline (24/7):
9.8.8

For additional resources, visit [sace.ca/
help/community-resources](https://sace.ca/help/community-resources), call 211,
or visit ab.211.ca



Online Counselling at SACE

The Counselling team at SACE continues to offer virtual sessions to clients who have access to technology and feel this is a good fit for them. Video sessions are available for those who are physically located in the province of Alberta at the time of their appointment.

Helpful Information about Online Counselling

Online counselling can feel awkward. For some people the transition can feel easy, but especially if you've done in person counselling before, it can be an adjustment to transition to online.

Here are some points to keep in mind when you are considering if online counselling will be a good fit for you:

- Access to a device with a camera and microphone is necessary to support virtual counselling, in addition to a computer or tablet with good internet service. As much as possible, we suggest that clients do not connect to public wifi for sessions. If you do not have access to technology, but do have access to a phone, you are welcome to reach out for services: decisions about
- telephone counselling as an alternate option will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the counsellor you will be working with.
- Setting up a safe, private, and comfortable space for your appointment is key to getting the most out of your appointments. If possible, find a private space where you will not be interrupted for your 50-minute session. Some ideas to create privacy in shared spaces include asking anyone else you're living with to wear headphones, taking a laptop or phone out to a private yard or balcony with you, coordinating for when you can be alone, or even making a blanket fort to create a cozy, contained space.
- There are some advantages to doing counselling online. Explore them! You may make yourself cozier, with pillows, a blanket, your favourite tea, or a relaxing candle. You could have a pet join you. Sometimes it can feel easier to share when it's through a mode with a bit of distance, so virtual counselling may help you share more. You can also share links, or write in the
- chat if this feels easier for some things. Online counselling may mean that your counsellor can't read your body language as well, but this can also be a great opportunity to develop your emotional self-awareness, through describing the emotions and reactions you might have more explicitly.
- Using an online platform can involve lags, and there may be some awkwardness around this. Remember that you can talk to your counsellor about these things too. Together you may find that laughing about it can help, or find a solution that works for better for you, including a combination of text, video, and chat.
- Feel free to share feedback with your counsellor about what is and isn't working for you. Healing from trauma is hard work at any time, and struggles related to both day-to-day life and the counselling you are starting are all very real and very common—remember to recognize how other factors may be impacting your wellbeing, too.

What to expect for your first video appointment:

SACE uses a secure online platform called doxy.me. This appointment will be much like FaceTime, and will ensure as much privacy and confidentiality as possible. This platform does not require you to download any software. Instead, your counsellor will send you a link to follow.

In preparation for your first video session, your counsellor will send you instructions on how to sign the consent forms digitally, and provide you with the forms to be signed and sent back. Your counsellor will review the material at the start of your first session and can answer any questions you may have at that time. If you are unable to sign the documents, or do not wish to download them, your counsellor will ask you to provide verbal consent in your first session.

When you're ready to set up for your appointment:



Click the link and log in using your initials a few minutes before your appointment, to make sure you don't have any technical issues.



Have your phone nearby for your session. Your counsellor will call from a "No Caller ID" number if any technical issues come up.



Make sure doxy.me has access to your camera, speakers, and microphone. You will be brought to a secure, virtual waiting room. When your counsellor is ready, they will open the session.



Headphones can be helpful to ensure you can clearly hear the counsellor, and add another layer of privacy if you have people nearby/ in your home.



The first session is typically for reviewing forms, getting comfortable using the web platform, and reviewing what the process of therapy looks like. Feel free to bring any additional questions you might have to your counsellor during this session.

Additional Digital Resources



Anxiety Resources: www.anxietycanada.com/free-downloadable-pdf-resources/

SELF-COMPASSION

Dr. Kristin Neff

Dr Kristin Neff's Self-Compassion Exercises self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#exercises



UASAC Resource Hub for additional tools for survivors sites.google.com/ualberta.ca/uasacresourcehub/



<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/sexual-assault-centre/resources.html>



REACH Edmonton Covid-19 Community Resources: <https://reachedmonton.ca/covid-19-community-response/#neighbourhood-resources>

Healing is Not Linear



● Trauma

● Acute Phase

● Adjustment and
Return to "Normal"

● Long Term
Reorganization

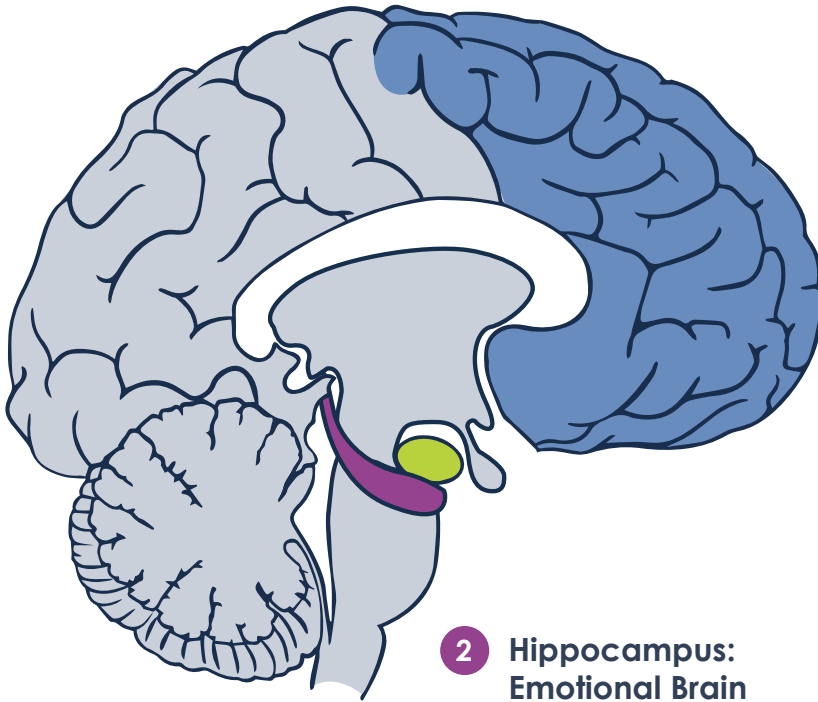
Sometimes flashbacks or other trauma symptoms come back or worsen, weeks or even years after a traumatic experience. This can feel defeating or frustrating, like we haven't progressed or healed at all. It's important to understand that this is normal, and the brain's way of reprocessing or reorganizing old memories. While this can present a short-term setback, the mind is

reorganizing the memories from a different perspective, with more distance from the event and informed by the current situation or growth that may have happened since. If trauma memories or symptoms come up for someone again, it can be a sign that they need more self-care or supports, or additional counselling to support the work the subconscious is doing.

If your loved ones are looking for ways to support you, or if you are also supporting someone who has experienced sexual violence, please visit:

sace.ca/learn/supporting-adults/

How Trauma Can Impact the Brain



Trauma can impact us in various ways, including physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. The following outlines how it affects three crucial parts of our brain and the resulting impacts.

1 Amygdala: Alarm System

The amygdala is helpful and protective in dangerous situations because it turns on before we even know it, putting us on alert to keep ourselves safe. Sometimes, though, the amygdala can have a tough time turning off, when our brain continues to think we may be in danger. When this happens, our bodies can experience things like anxiety, hypervigilance (feeling on edge all the time), avoidance of things that remind us of the trauma, or becoming easily startled or scared. When we are constantly on guard, it can be hard to do things like let our guard down even when we are safe or need to sleep.

2 Hippocampus: Emotional Brain

The hippocampus is responsible for memory and learning in the brain; it works like a librarian, marking memories with context by recording when and where things happened. When we have a traumatic experience, the hippocampus may be impacted. The time, location, or order of events may not be marked correctly, leaving us with "fuzzy" memories, things that don't make sense, or missing memories. When we experience triggers that remind us of the traumatic event, it can feel like the event is happening again (flashbacks, or nightmares if we are sleeping). The hippocampus can have trouble calming down the amygdala because the danger feels real during a flashback.

3 Pre-Frontal Cortex: Thinking Brain

The Pre-Frontal Cortex is responsible for controlling behaviour, emotions, impulses, decision-making, empathy, and awareness of others and ourselves. Usually this part of our brain lets us think clearly, make rational decisions, and have awareness in our day-to-day life. After something traumatic happens, this part of the brain can become less engaged. This may leave someone who has experienced trauma feeling irritable, numb, with less control over anger, struggling to concentrate or pay attention, and making more impulsive decisions.

It is important to remember that these impacts on the brain are not permanent. It is possible to move forward and heal from the trauma over time. In counselling, you will learn about strategies to work toward this, including skills to calm down (called grounding), such as breathing, relaxation, distraction, mindfulness, and meditation.



Self-care, including self soothing and looking after yourself, is helpful for managing everyday stresses. It's particularly important after a traumatic experience, or when doing trauma counselling. Try to engage in self-care

when and if possible. This can look different for everyone, so choose activities that feel right for you and your body. These are just some suggestions to get you started, what works for each person will be different.

Self-Care Wheel Ideas



Personal

get "me" time • learn who you are • figure out what you want in life • plan short and long-term goals • make a vision board • help others • foster friendships • go on dates • just relax • spend time with your family • cook • learn something new • chat with a friend



Professional

take time for lunch • set boundaries • take all your vacation and sick days • do not work overtime • leave work at work • do not work during your time off • get support from colleagues and supervisors • take mental health days • learn to say no • plan your next career move • take a class



Spiritual

take time to sit with your thoughts • be inspired • go into nature • self-cherish • find spiritual community • meditate • sing • dance • do yoga • play with children • watch sunsets • pray • find a spiritual mentor • volunteer for a cause • light a candle • watch the stars • practice self-forgiveness



Physical

keep or find safe housing • preserve a calm home or space • get regular medical care • fuel your body • be sexual • get enough sleep • take a bath • take a walk • turn off your cell phone • engage your senses • rest your legs up on a wall • take deep belly breaths • notice your sensations • take a bike ride • do some gentle stretches • get a massage or acupuncture



Emotional

practice affirmations • cry • learn relaxation or stress management techniques • check your negative self-talk • practice self-compassion • laugh • say "I love you" • find a hobby • flirt • read or watch something funny • buy yourself a present • let out a sigh • give thanks for something big or small • cuddle • ask for nurturance



Psychological

therapy • take time for self-reflection • journal • draw • paint • craft • go to the movies or a show • relax in the sun • garden • read a self-help or inspiring book • join a support group • think about your positive qualities • practice asking for and receiving help • sit in nature • buy some flowers • observe and work on your positive and negative self-talk