

Counselling for Children & Minors

-Fact sheet for parents and guardians bringing a child to counselling -

What this fact sheet covers

This fact sheet explains what to expect when you bring your child to counselling at Positive Solutions, including consent, privacy and how we communicate with parents/guardians. It also includes extra information for families where parents are separated.

Please note: only a parent with parental responsibility or legal guardian can provide consent for counselling (step-parents and extended family members cannot provide legal consent unless they have legal authority).

Our priority: your child's wellbeing

Our primary focus is always your child's safety, wellbeing and best interests. We aim to provide respectful, ethical and child-focused care, whatever your family structure.

We work with all families with care, fairness and professionalism.

Working with parents and guardians

We support children whose parents are together, separated, co-parenting, or in blended and diverse family arrangements.

Our approach is guided by:

- Respectful communication
- Legal and ethical responsibilities
- Clear boundaries that protect children and therapeutic relationships
- A strong focus on the child's needs and wellbeing

Consent for counselling

We take care to ensure that appropriate consent is obtained before starting or continuing services.

We make reasonable efforts to identify who holds parental/guardianship responsibility. We may request relevant legal documents (e.g., parenting plans or court orders).

Where decision-making responsibility is shared or when it is unclear who holds decision-making responsibility, we will generally seek consent from both parents/guardians for ongoing therapeutic services. Where we need to gain consent from both parents a maximum of 3 contact attempts will be made after which time we will proceed with only one parent's/guardian's consent.

In some circumstances, services may proceed with one parent's/guardian's consent. This may occur where there are safety concerns involving the other parent/guardian or when one parent/guardian is not reasonably available. These decisions are made carefully in line with legal and ethical obligations and with the needs of the child at the centre of the decision.

If consent arrangements are unclear or there is significant disagreement between parents/guardians, services may be delayed, paused, or discontinued until the situation is clarified.

Information we may ask for

To provide effective and appropriate support, we may request:

· Relevant legal documents (if applicable), such as parenting plans, parenting orders, or police-issued orders including FVO and PFVO.

- Background information from parents or guardians
- Updates if family arrangements change during service delivery

We may not be able to agree to provide counselling—or continue services—until required information is received and reviewed (including sighting any parenting orders or police-issued orders, where relevant).

How we communicate with parents/guardians

- We value open and respectful communication with parents/guardians.
- Unless legally restricted, parents/guardians are entitled to general information about their child's engagement and progress.
- Detailed session content is not routinely shared, to protect the child's privacy and therapeutic relationship.
- Clinical discussions occur during scheduled appointments only.

Information sharing may be limited where:

- it is not clinically appropriate
- it may place the child or another person at risk of harm
- it would compromise the therapeutic process

Positive Solutions does not act as an intermediary in parental disagreements.

Who attends sessions?

- Most sessions are child-focused and typically involve only the child and practitioner.
- Parent or guardian involvement may occur:
 - Briefly at the start or end of a session, or
 - In separate parent/guardian sessions arranged in advance

Where developmentally appropriate, we seek the child's consent to participate in therapy and aim to respect their voice within the process.

If conflict occurs during appointments, the practitioner may end the session. Ongoing conflict may mean services are paused or discontinued.

What to expect at the first appointment

- A parent/guardian usually attends at the start to share concerns, goals and background information.
- We explain confidentiality and how information is shared with parents/guardians.
- We spend time getting to know your child in an age-appropriate way (this may be with you present at first, depending on age and needs).
- We agree on next steps (for example: child sessions, parent/guardian sessions, or family sessions).

How you can help your child

- Tell your child counselling is a safe place to talk and learn skills—without pressure to “perform”.
- Arrive a few minutes early and ensure you have completed any requested intake paperwork.
- Let your child know what will happen (where you will wait, how long it will take, who they will meet).
- Support attendance and routines between sessions (sleep, meals, school).
- If you have concerns, book a parent/guardian appointment—rather than discussing sensitive issues in front of your child.

Fees and payments

- The person who books the appointment is responsible for payment (where relevant).
- Any cost-sharing arrangements between adults are managed privately.
- Positive Solutions does not intervene in payment disputes.
- Outstanding fees must be cleared before future appointments can be booked.

Privacy, confidentiality and safety

- Your child’s information is handled in accordance with privacy and confidentiality laws.
- Information shared in sessions is confidential except when:
 - there are concerns about a child’s safety, welfare, or wellbeing
 - there is a risk of harm to the child or another person
 - disclosure is required or authorised by law (e.g., subpoena)
 - information is needed for appropriate clinical consultation, supervision, or risk management

Where there is shared parental/guardianship responsibility, either parent/guardian may request access to records unless restricted by a court order.

Reports, court and legal matters

Positive Solutions:

- Provides therapeutic support only
- Does not complete custody assessments, parenting capacity reports, or make recommendations for court matters
- Does not provide diagnostic reports or reports for legal, medical or other purposes, nor letters of support (including for school adjustments or similar requests).
- Remains neutral and impartial at all times
- Records are released only when legally required.

Safety and our professional role

Our practitioners continually assess the safety and wellbeing of the child.

If we become concerned about a child's safety, welfare, or wellbeing, we may need to take action to protect them or another person, in line with mandatory reporting laws.

Concerns may include, for example:

- risk of physical harm
- emotional or psychological harm
- neglect
- exposure to family violence
- sexual abuse or exploitation
- self-harm or suicidal thinking
- threats to harm another person
- significant deterioration in a child's functioning or wellbeing

If concerns arise, we may need to share relevant information with appropriate services in line with legal, ethical, and professional obligations.

Where possible, we will explain this process to parents/guardians, unless doing so would increase risk. If family conflict significantly impacts a child's wellbeing or service delivery, services may be paused or ended. Your child's safety always comes first.

Questions before your appointment

If you have questions before your child's first appointment—especially about consent, court orders, or communication—please contact us so we can help you prepare.

If you would like more information or would like to make an appointment

please contact us at:

Phone: 03 6223 5612

Email: admin@positivesolutions.com.au