

Joel Saavedra Aguirre, DMin, RP
Registered Psychotherapist CRPO Registration # 002816
CASC Certified Psycho-Spiritual Practitioner
49 Bogert Avenue, North ON M2N 1K6 647.895.4769 joelaguirre0328@gmail.com

Land Acknowledgement for Toronto. I would like to begin by acknowledging the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands that we are on today. While we meet in-person or virtual platform, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the importance of the lands, which we each call home. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improving our understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

My practice and the location of its office is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Welcome. This psychotherapy disclosure form will answer many of your questions about my therapy services. Please feel free to ask questions if you need clarification or more info.

Non-Discrimination. My practice is open to all people, inclusive of all races, religions, spiritualities, ethnicities, cultures, gender identities and sexual orientations, and disabilities.

Commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada. I respond to the call for action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by offering care based on mutual benefit, respect, and cultural humility to Indigenous Peoples, their communities, and their context. I ensure that respect and support for them are given by acknowledging and recognizing their unique histories, current expressions of those histories, and continuing experiences. I do this by recognizing their diversity, being sensitive to their social location, and understanding their traditional practices. This includes a desire for clarity and validation by cultural guides as to when it is appropriate for me to participate in or otherwise participate in customary Indigenous methods and traditions.

I also recognize their distinct history of trauma as well as their resilience and cultural vitality. Culturally appropriate education and training are priorities for me, and I consider possible outcomes of using such practices and work with them to determine their suitability. When making ethical decisions, I consider cross-cultural contexts and seek guidance for culturally relevant outcomes. I respect their self-identity within the context of their culture and history. Within the therapy session, I encourage them to direct the level of cultural involvement.

My qualifications and experience. I have international degrees in Master of Arts and Doctor of Ministry focused on Counselling Psychology. Since 2001, I have been working with a wide range of individuals and groups including youth, families, immigrant clients, and university/college students of all ages in Canada and overseas. I have provided intake

assessment, crisis intervention, individual, family, couples, and group psychotherapy as well as workshops and corporate team-building events.

I currently hold a Registered Psychotherapist designation through the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) and a Certified Psycho-Spiritual Care Practitioner with the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care (CASC). These professional bodies govern my practice, ensuring that I adhere to strict ethical guidelines, and bring my clients' third-party accountability.

My therapeutic approach: My psychotherapy is collaborative, with the client and therapist participating as equal partners in both goal-setting and working together to reach those goals. I use an integrative approach to counseling and psychotherapy, drawing upon family systems therapy, Satir's family therapy, marriage and couples counseling, feminist theory, humanistic-existential therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, relaxation therapy, and guided visualization, depending on the unique needs of the client.

Goals of therapy: Therapeutic goals are set collaboratively with the client. Some common goals are improved communication skills, improved relationships, increased self-esteem, improved mood, decreased fear, panic, anxiety, stress or anger, positive lifestyle changes, etc.

Confidentiality. With very few exceptions, the information discussed during your therapy session and all documentation (written or in any other medium) are kept private and confidential. When working with me, unless you communicate otherwise, you agree to allow consultation with other healthcare providers for the sake of your care, as permitted by the Personal Health Information Protection (PHIPA) Act of Ontario. Some other very important exceptions to the rule of confidentiality are:

- If a client indicates that he/she/they are at risk to harm self or others (e.g. suicide or assault) and/or when he/she/they attend a therapy under the influence of substances and plans to operate a motor vehicle.
- If there is a court order for the therapist to appear, or to produce the client's chart.
- If the client authorizes his/her/their insurance plan to be used for services, some information may be shared for billing purposes and for evaluations to justify services and billing.
- If the therapist learns that there exists a serious threat to any person.
- If there is evidence of child or dependent adult or elder abuse (Children's Aid Society, Director of the Long-term Care Facility, or any pertinent authority should be contacted).
- If a client divulges that he/she/they have been harmed by another helping professional who is covered by the Regulated Health Professions Act of Ontario, it is essential to report the name of the professional to the appropriate college.
- If a client is a member of a profession controlled by the Regulated Health Professions Act of Ontario shares information that he/she/ they are engaging in a risky or harmful practice, it is essential to notify their appropriate college.
- In the event of the sudden death or illness of your therapist, a representative will contact you. As with the therapist, this representative will ensure confidentiality and provide you with appropriate referrals.
- When the therapist is required to submit documents for auditing or quality assurance by a government

agency (e.g. Ontario College of Registered Psychotherapists or Canada Revenue Agency).

- If a client fails to pay for a session, a therapist may have to contact a collection agency.

Parents & Children: Children need to know that their parents have a right to know what goes on in therapy, but rather than reporting back what is said, I may discuss how things are going. I want both the child and the parent to know that it's important for the child to feel like what he or she is saying will be kept private. If you are a minor and your parents are covering the cost of sessions, you authorize disclosures to parents necessary for purposes of payment.

Couples & Families: I encourage you to share any thoughts or feelings directly in our group sessions rather than privately with me.

Groups: As with individual therapy, I will hold confidential anything disclosed in groups. Group members are asked to agree to not share things with individuals outside the group.

No Secrets Policy. When a couple enters into counseling, it is considered to be one unit. This means that my allegiance is to the couple "unit," and not to either partner as individuals. I find this is particularly important in creating a space where both partners can feel safe. Therefore, I adhere to a strict "No Secrets" policy. This means that I will not hold secrets for either partner. This policy is intended to allow me to continue to treat the couple by preventing, to the extent possible, a conflict of interest to arise where an individual's interests may not be consistent with the interests of the unit being treated.

On occasion during the counseling process, individual partners may be seen for an individual counseling session. In this case, the individual session is still considered as part of the couple's counseling relationship. Information disclosed during individual sessions may be relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple. If an individual chooses to share such information with me, I will offer the individual every opportunity to disclose the relevant information and will guide this process. If the individual refuses to disclose this information within the couple's session, I may determine that it is necessary to discontinue the counseling relationship with the couple. If there is information that an individual desires to address within a context of individual confidentiality, I will be happy to provide referrals to therapists who can provide concurrent individual therapy. This policy is intended to maintain the integrity of the couples/marital counseling relationship.

Time. Individual and couples sessions are generally 50 minutes long. Longer sessions can be scheduled if we agree that it will be helpful and at an adjusted fee. I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left in the session. We need to end on time because of other scheduled appointments. The frequency of sessions will be based on your needs. Sessions may be weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly.

Duration of Therapy: The therapy will continue only so long as it is helpful to you. Its length will be mutually agreed upon, and its effectiveness will be assessed periodically. At any point, you may terminate therapy. When it becomes necessary for me to end the therapy, I'll refer you to another therapist or service agency.

Fees. My standard fee is \$150/individual, \$200/couple and \$250 family per session. Please let me know if your current financial situation may prevent you from paying my standard fees, so

we can discuss possible alternatives. **Payment is to be made at the beginning of every session, either in a cheque, cash, or via etransfer to joelaguirre0328@gmail.com.**

In special circumstances, such as writing letters on behalf of clients to agencies, legal entities, or other practitioners, you may need to pay for time outside of the session. You will be charged \$150/hour, rounded to the nearest 15 minutes.

Telemedicine/Telehealth policy. Telehealth is not appropriate for all client's situations. The therapist will determine this and discuss options with the client. In situations where we decide to have a real-time interactive session when we are not in the same physical location, by connecting using some means (e.g., video, telephone, or texting) other than a live face-to-face meeting, your participation means you consent and authorize the use of telehealth as an acceptable medium for your treatment. When possible, we will use the Zoom HealthCare PIPEDA & PHIPA Compliant platform. No recordings will be made by either party. You understand that other platforms (include Skype, FaceTime, and telephone) may not be secure. You understand that technical difficulties may occur before or during the telehealth sessions and that your appointment may not be started or ended as intended. If we are unable to establish a video connection, we will first quit and restart the application. If that does not remedy the connection, we agree to use our phones as a backup. If we get disconnected, I will wait up to 3 minutes for you to call me. If you don't, you are still responsible for covering the cost of the session. If you are unable to connect due to technical issues on your end, and we are unable to find another time to meet during the same week, you will be responsible for covering the cost at my usual private pay rate. We will discuss an emergency protocol, including an emergency contact to reach if deemed necessary by the therapist.

Missed Appointment and Cancellation policy. If you miss your appointment without calling or canceling your appointment with less than 24-hour notice, you will be charged a \$75 cancellation fee. If you are running late, as long as you call to let me know, I'll wait and hold the time slot for you. Unless you call to let me know, I will wait for a 15 minutes window after our appointed time, after which I will consider it a missed session and I may choose to leave the office to attend to other things. Likewise, if I fail to appear or to give 24-hour notice of a cancellation, your next appointment is at no charge to you.

Contact (including Email, Texts, Cell Phones, & Computers) and after-hours emergencies. My usual business hours are Monday to Friday from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. If I am unable to answer the phone, please leave me a message. I check my messages during business hours and I will return your call as soon as I can. I will usually return calls & emails within 1 business day. You are welcome to leave a voice mail at any time, but I may not be able to retrieve your message until my business hours.

I am not available after hours for emergencies. For after-hours emergencies or if you need immediate assistance, call the 24-hr local crisis team at Toronto Distress Line at 416-408-HELP (4357). If you are feeling very out of sorts and need a soft place to land, you can also contact your medical group or your primary care physician, or visit the emergency department of your local hospital, and they will help direct you. If you are feeling suicidal, please call The Canada Suicide Prevention Service at 1-833-456-4566.

If using Texting or Email, you acknowledge the understanding that these are not necessarily secure and confidential mediums of communication. Before sending you any initial Emails, I will ask for your verbal permission to do so. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted digital communication, texts, or phone messages, I will assume that you have made an informed decision. If any misunderstandings or upsets come up for you, please call to give me a chance to correct the experience.

Regarding communication through email, except for matters of scheduling, please save other questions and interpersonal sharing for our scheduled sessions.

If there is an emergency or if you need to cancel a session on sudden notice and it is less than 24 hours before the session, please call rather than email to assure that I will receive your message.

Outside contact. To respect your privacy, we will discuss how we should handle phone calls and contact outside of the therapy context if we should happen to see each other in public.

Social Media. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or other sites of this type are not used for contact with existing clients or past clients.

Drug use. Regardless of what that may mean for you, come to therapy sessions free from mind/mood-altering drugs except for prescriptions. Our work together is about learning to live in the present and not escape it.

Exchanges and bartering. We will consider the ethical issues surrounding exchanges such as bartering service or giving of gifts.

Ending. Therapy is voluntary and you can end it whenever you wish. In any case, should you choose to end, I encourage you to discuss the reasons for your decision during our session. Please allow for two final sessions so that we can review what we have achieved and offer feedback to each other. Additionally, I reserve the right to end our therapy work together and to refer you to other practitioners at my discretion, for reasons including, but not limited to, missing therapy sessions, conflicts of interest, untimely payment of fees, or my belief that I am not the best person to meet your needs.

Record Keeping: In Ontario, therapists are required by law to retain a record of each client interaction and therapy session. Client files are retained for ten years after the last session and when they turn 18 years of age. All information is kept in compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) of the Federal Government of Canada and the Personal Health Information and Protection Act (PHIPA) of the Province of Ontario. This implies that you have given your consent to all information obtained, used, and disclosed. Personal information is safeguarded by measures such as locked cabinets, computer passwords, and encryption. For a reasonable fee, you may obtain a copy of your records. Records with names of others cannot be released, and reports from other professionals cannot be released without their consent. Before release, all parties involved in a couple or family therapy file must give their consent. Without the individual's written consent or unless required by law, I am prohibited from disclosing the content of private sessions.

Recording: You are not allowed to video and audiotape sessions without the consent of all participating members and agreement to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants.

Feedback and Complaints: Please let me know should you have any feedback, or complaints. You may report me to the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario <http://www.crpo.ca/> and/or the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care <http://spiritualcare.ca/>, should you deem that I accepted unethically.
