



Nanaimo Family Life Association

Healthy individual and family relationships are the heart of a strong and resilient community.

Introduction

It is our pleasure to invite you on behalf of the Nanaimo Family Life Association, to apply for our 2024 Volunteer Counsellor Training Program.

Our agency has been supporting individuals, couples, and families for 54 years and we have a reputation for providing respectful and confidential counselling and referral services to those in need of assistance. In order to maintain this service, it is essential that we continue to train motivated, prepared individuals to become qualified Lay Volunteer Counsellors. We choose trainees who have the necessary background and those who are willing to be open to personal growth. We also look at an individual's ability to commit to the training and to the service requirement that follows graduation.

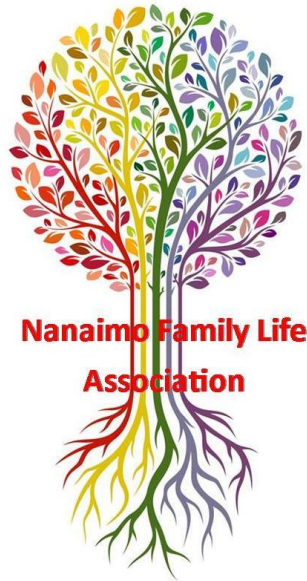
We are pleased to provide you with our 2024 Training Orientation Package, outlining information, the application process, dates of training, and information about our trainers.

We look forward to receiving your application and it is our hope to be able to welcome you into this year's training.

Deborah Hollins
Executive Director
Nanaimo Family Life Association

Mia Maarika
Programs Coordinator
Volunteer Counselling Program

**Welcome to
Nanaimo Family Life Association**



**Volunteer Counselling Program
Training Orientation Package**

Revised October 2023

**1070 Townsite Road
Nanaimo BC
V9S 1M6**

**Telephone (250) 754-3331
Fax (250) 753-0268**

NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

History

The agency was established in 1967 for the purpose of providing counselling and referral services to families in need of assistance. In 1974, a coordinator was hired primarily to handle intake calls, supervise office volunteers, and provide support services to counsellors. The counsellors, at this point, were a small group of committed individuals. During the 1974-1977 period, the agency's focus was group work – for counselling, personal development, and support. The coordinator did a lot of group counselling herself and initiated counsellor training and counsellor recruitment.

A period of growth for the Nanaimo Family Life Association and social services, in general, began in the late 70s. The agency experienced an increasing demand for individual personal counselling, expanded into the provision of Child and Youth Care Counselling Services, and greatly increased its staff. The Executive Director and the Board started to focus on establishing administrative procedures to deal with this growth. The Executive Director's role became more administrative, with less time for the nurturing of the Counselling Program. The counsellors' need for the continuation of strong support and supervision and the increasing demand for counselling services led to the hiring of a Counselling Coordinator - whose role was the nurturing of the Counselling Program.

In 1978, because of the continued demand for counselling, the Training and Education Committee focused on upgrading the quality of counsellor training and began discussions about the development of a certification program through Malaspina College, now known as Vancouver Island University. In the early 1980's the Counselling Skills Level 1 and II courses were developed cooperatively between Malaspina College and Nanaimo Family Life Association as a pre-requisite to entering the lay counsellor training.

In 1984 the formal certificate program as it exists today was developed. Every year approximately 12 volunteers are selected to go through the training program, which is to ensure a constant flow of volunteers in the Volunteer Counselling Program. This type of training enhances the community, as these volunteers are also involved in their own neighborhoods, families, schools, and other community settings.

Today a Program Coordinator and over 40 Volunteer Counsellors provide services. Our current mandate is to provide support to individuals and couples.

Interested individuals are invited to apply for our Counsellor Training Program after completing Counselling Skills Level I and II at Vancouver Island University. We also assess prior learning and may grant equivalency for Counselling Skills in Levels 1 and 2

Purpose

It is the purpose of the Volunteer Counselling Program to offer services designed to support individuals and families to better cope with the often-complex problems that are part of life. Our goal is to provide adult or adolescent individual and relationship counselling and supportive/educational group programs to clients who are experiencing situational life crises. Appropriate issues to be dealt with within this program include:

- Emotional health/stress
- Anger/conflict management
- Relationships
- Trauma
- Communication/assertiveness
- Grief/loss
- Work/School
- Parenting
- Health/illness

Intake Process

Anyone may refer an individual to the NFLA Volunteer Counselling Program. However, the people referred must then initiate contact with the program themselves. A significant number of clients are self-referred. A "Client Orientation Package" can be picked up at the front desk at Nanaimo Family Life Association by anyone wanting counselling.

Adolescents

Adolescents 13-18 years of age initiate counselling by meeting with staff from the program for a one-to-one information/assessment interview before being matched with a volunteer counselor.

NANAIMO FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION

TRAINING INFORMATION

The Volunteer Counselling Program appreciates your interest in our Volunteer Counselling Training. We have been providing quality volunteer counselling to the Nanaimo community since 1967. The program is funded by United Way, Gaming revenue, fundraising, and fees for counselling services.

We offer accessible and affordable individual and relationship counseling to clients 13 years and older. Clients are most often coping with basic life challenges that differ in complexity and intensity. We cover a wide variety of issues including relationship difficulties, communication skills, self-esteem, boundaries, anger and conflict, grief and loss, emotional and health issues, stress, etc. We focus on supporting clients to find their own solutions and discovering the means to make constructive changes. Clients are charged a fee for service according to family income ranging from \$10-60 per session. However, no one is denied service due to a lack of money.

What is a “Skilled Helper”?

Skilled Helpers are trained by professionals to provide lay volunteer counselling services and receive ongoing professional supervision of their counselling. This training does not give them formal credentials as professional counsellors. However, it does give them the skills to provide a high-quality service to our clients and to be valued within the Nanaimo community.

At Nanaimo Family Life Association (NFLA), volunteer counsellors provide affordable and accessible counselling to those who cannot afford counselling from private practitioners and for those who do not qualify for service from other programs. Volunteers provide all counselling services.

What is the training like?

You will meet as a group of approximately 12 trainees. Training session dates are enclosed. The training will be comprised of personal growth and a skill development component. You will also be required to keep a “reflective journal” throughout your training experience.

Throughout the training, we will focus on personal growth, self-awareness, empathy, and clear communication skills. Many different issues will be explored, and you will have the opportunity to clarify personal values, beliefs, and biases. You will also have the opportunity to practice counselling skills in dyads and you will meet 3 times throughout the training with a professional counselor for feedback. The counselling skills training will be from a client-centered, solution-focused, and family systems perspective.

The Volunteer Counsellor Training is valued at \$2,750.00 per person. We ask for a non-refundable fee of \$250 to be paid in advance of the training. The remaining amount (\$2,500.00) is provided during service hours. In exchange for approximately 120 hours of quality training, you agree to return 100 hours of direct client contact and formal supervision after graduation. If

you are not able to return the 100 hours of service a fee of \$ 1000.00 dollars would be required as payment for the training received.

Formal supervision includes attendance at monthly Peer Consultation Sessions and Collective Learning Opportunities (CLO).

Philosophy Paper

After the training, we will ask you to write a philosophy paper answering the following questions. The reflections from your personal journal will be helpful with this.

1. Describe your strengths (giving examples)
2. Describe areas for growth
3. What have you learned about yourself as a counsellor?

What happens when I have completed the training portion? How do I return my hours?

Upon completion of the training, you will receive a Certificate of Completion. You will be matched with individual clients based on your counselling experience and will receive encouragement and support through regular supervision. You schedule your own appointments with clients assigned to you, collect fees, record session statistics, and record notes. You are required to attend 3 Peer Consultation Sessions per year. (or 2 Peer Consultations and one CLO). We offer 9 Collective Learning Opportunities per year on a variety of topics and 10 Peer Consultation Sessions throughout the year. These sessions are very valuable in supporting you gain confidence and support in your counselling work.

We also provide Relationship Counselling Training, Group Counselling training, and Facilitation Training yearly.

Additionally, we offer volunteer counsellors opportunities to socialize and build relationships with the community of counsellors and staff at NFLA.

Why do people volunteer for this program?

What we often hear is that our participants value the depth of exploration offered, the quality of training that is noticeable in the interactions with their own family, friends, and co-workers, and the experience of being a part of a group of committed, caring individuals.

Most participants value the opportunity to support others in the community who could not otherwise afford such a service. Some enjoy the type of contact and learning counselling offers that they do not receive in their current work. For those considering counselling as a career, it provides valuable direct client experience and may enhance their application to college and university programs.

The training itself does not give you the qualifications to become a professional counsellor. However, it may enhance your ability to secure work in related areas when listed on your resume as volunteer experience and training.

What stops people from volunteering for this program?

This program involves a dedicated long-term commitment and not everyone can find the time to participate in regular weekends or evenings over the course of the training or commit to returning client contact hours for an additional 1–2-year period. If you are looking at job prospects outside the Nanaimo area or planning anything that would prevent you from fulfilling this commitment, this would not be the time to apply.

People may also choose not to apply because they are in crisis and not able to embark on three months of intensive group training, nor able to imagine supporting others at this time of their life. They may choose to apply at another time.

What will I have at the end of the training?

We hope you can say what others have said:

- “It has been a remarkable life-changing experience.”
- “I have come away with a deeper sense of self and enhanced my relationships.”
- “I have a better ability to be present with clients in a way that helps and empowers.”

You will be qualified as a volunteer counsellor to offer this valuable service – not as a professional counsellor who can see clients privately. Many volunteer counsellors remain with us for several years and find opportunities to be challenged and rewarded by their association with the Program and the Agency.

On what basis do you select trainees?

We select a diverse group of individuals of different ages, occupations, and backgrounds. We look for your ability to commit to attending and completing the training program and returning the 100 hours of service to the community. It is important to have been a client in individual, relationship, or group counselling and remain committed to your own personal growth.

We look for individuals who demonstrate the ability to convey warmth, support, and empathy. We also look for our ability to connect with you as self-aware, compassionate people – what we would want our clients to experience.

What happens after I have sent in my application?

The staff reviews all applications and selects approximately 18 people to come for Interviews which will be about 30 min long. We are planning to hold these interviews in March and will be contacting you for an appointment if selected. Please email or call the coordinator if you are planning to apply. All those who attend an interview will be contacted to be told whether they have been selected or not for training. **The Deadline for Applications is March 1st, 2024 (please return the application to 1070 Townsite Road) or email m_maarika@nflabc.org**

Following the interview, you will receive an email asking for your acceptance. Both the training program and the actual counselling are demanding, but the rewards are great. The Volunteer Counselling Program thanks you for your interest and your desire to be part of the important volunteer community of Nanaimo.

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR JOB DESCRIPTION

The Volunteer Counsellor reports to the Program Coordinator. Volunteer Counsellors enable clients to identify, understand, and overcome personal, family, and community-based problems through the establishment of realistic goals.

Volunteer Counsellors provide one-to-one individual and relationship counselling. Volunteer Counsellors provide service hours based on time availability which may include evenings and weekends.

DUTIES

1. Responsible for providing agreed-upon hours of counselling to clients using a Trauma-informed, client-centered, solution-focused, and family systems perspective.
2. Contact clients, make client appointments, and book counselling rooms.
3. Maintains records of assigned clients until their files are closed. Takes session notes, fills out forms, and writes letters in consultation with the program staff. Ensures client files are kept secure and confidential in accordance with program policy.
4. Records accurate statistics of client sessions.
5. Collects fees for sessions and write receipts.
6. Inform the coordinator when they require clients.
7. Listens to voicemail messages or reads e-mail messages on a regular basis.
8. Responsible for keeping informed about changes in policies and procedures.
9. Regularly attends support and supervision sessions.
10. Adheres to NFLA client confidentiality/suicide protocols. Reports all critical incidents to the Program Coordinator.
11. Promotes self-interest in development within the counselling field.
12. Participates in the evaluation of program effectiveness.

ATTRIBUTES OF AN EFFECTIVE COUNSELLOR

1. The counsellor understands that the most basic motivation of people is toward self-fulfillment and that the reward of counselling is to share in that experience.
2. The counsellor demonstrates stability in their personal life that positively affects security in career, family, and community relationships.
3. The counsellor conveys a willingness to be actively involved in personal growth. The ability of a counsellor to facilitate growth in another is directly tied to their own openness, willingness to change, and recognition that personal growth is a life-long process.
4. The counsellor's goal is to accept people as they are and understand that each person possesses their own set of values and beliefs.
5. The counsellor possesses the ability to relate with people of different ethnic, socioeconomic, educational, or cultural backgrounds.
6. A level of genuineness is present in the counsellor. This implies the ability to be truly oneself with others.
7. The counsellor has the capacity to empathize and to communicate empathy to others.

Program Responsibilities:

Program staff will provide approximately 120 hours of training. On-going regular evaluation of counsellor progress and training will be provided. Knowledge, experience, and skill will be taught, demonstrated, developed, and jointly evaluated in the following areas:

1. Boundary setting and maintenance skills.
2. Knowledge of and comfort with diverse populations.
3. Ethical counselling guidelines.
4. Program policies and procedures.
5. Managing conflict and other stresses.
6. Maintaining respectful relationships.
7. Organizing counselling time commitments.
8. Counselling Skills:
 - Client-centered, solution-focused, family systems perspective
9. Counselling development:
 - Accessing support and supervision
 - Receiving feedback

- Taking personal responsibility and a level of self-awareness

Trainee Responsibilities:

The training program is experiential, and we find this the most helpful way for trainees and potential NFLA counsellors to learn about the skills of counselling as well as learn about themselves and what they may bring to the counselling relationship. Because of the experiential nature of the training, we attempt to foster group cohesion and a connection between trainees. This allows trainees to gain support from each other as well as the trainers and NFLA staff and myself as the coordinator.

Note: Experiential education is a philosophy of education that describes a process that occurs between a teacher and a student that infuses direct experience with the learning environment and content.

As a result, we have expectations for each trainee/applicant as outlined below. Please read the following statements. With your signature, you are agreeing with the requirements outlined by NFLA.

1. I am aware that all the training dates/sessions are mandatory. There will be no exceptions. I have checked all the dates, and I am committing to attend all the training. During the training/sessions, if something occurs that prevents me from this attendance requirement, withdrawal from the training will be required.
2. I am aware that throughout the training I will be observed by all facilitators and pod group mentors to assess my readiness for counselling clients. On some occasions, a new trainee may be asked to do additional training or engage in personal counseling before being assigned, clients.
3. I am aware that there is an additional time requirement outside of the training dates for recording 3 counselling sessions each with your pod group and emailing them to the program's coordinator.
4. Applicants need to complete a criminal **record check** process before training starts. It needs to include a vulnerable sector check.
5. I am aware that for the first year of counselling after completion of the VCP Training, I

will take on clients continuously to gain a foundation with my counselling skills if I am not able to do so due to circumstances beyond my control I will meet with the coordinator to discuss.

6. The training is valued at \$ **2,250.00** of which a non-refundable payment of **\$250** is to be paid upon acceptance into the training. The amount of **\$2000.00** is to be paid back in 100 service hours by providing counselling for clients of the program. A key deposit of \$10.00 and a membership fee of \$10.00 is also required. Arrangements will be made for participants to repay for the training (up to **\$1000.00**) if they are unable to fulfill their commitment.

7. Each graduate trainee is expected to repay **100** hours of direct client service within 2 years. This service includes a minimum of **1 client per week, record keeping, and supervision time.**

8. After training, counsellors are required to continue to upgrade their counselling skills and abilities by attending a minimum of **2 Peer Consultation Sessions** per year and **1 Collective Learning Opportunity** if you are not able to complete the required sessions you would need to record 2 client sessions and be supervised by the program coordinator.

I, _____, have reviewed all the information in the Volunteer Counselling Training Package. I understand and agree to the terms of this commitment as outlined above.

Trainee

Date

Program Coordinator

Date

**VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING PROGRAM
TRAINING APPLICATION**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME TEL# _____ **WORK TEL#** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

COUNSELLING LEVEL II COMPLETION DATE: _____

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: _____ **TEL#** _____

IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED COUNSELLING LEVEL I AND II WHAT OTHER COUNSELLING EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Current Resume**
2. **Personal Statement Paper**
3. **The name, email, and phone number of a minimum of 3 individuals (specify personal or professional, 2 need to be professional) that we can contact regarding your strength as a potential Volunteer Counsellor. These must be recent contacts and not family members.**

Important Note: For those wanting to obtain equivalency for Counselling Skills Levels 1 and 2, please provide your documentation.

PERSONAL STATEMENT PAPER

The application process for becoming a Volunteer Counsellor in the Volunteer Counselling Program requires a paper defining your volunteer goals and addressing your past and present relevant experience. This paper is not expected to be a university writing standard, but it is an opportunity to **briefly** describe your beliefs and characteristics.

Your (3-5 page) paper must be typed and double-spaced and include the following:

1. Personal Experience

- Briefly describe 1 or 2 important life experiences/challenge(s), which have contributed to your identity and to your view of the world.
- Briefly describe the extent to which you have worked through personal issues. What specific steps have you taken to work through these issues?
- Briefly describe your current unresolved issues.
- Briefly describe the role of support networks and community resources in your life.

2. Professional Experience

- Briefly describe your past and current experiences working with people.
- Briefly describe your experience working with adults, youth, minorities, disabled, and disadvantaged persons if applicable.
- Briefly describe your experience in teamwork and consultation.

3. Counselling Goal Statement

- State your reasons for wanting to complete the Volunteer Counselling Training.
- Briefly discuss your views regarding the most important current social issues. Describe their impact on your work with individuals.
- Briefly describe the qualities that counselors should possess before entering counsellor training. To what extent do you possess these qualities? What are your strengths and areas of development?
- What are your learning goals in this training? What benefits do you hope to gain?

REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONS

The following questions will be emailed to the 3 references provided by applicants.

DATE: _____

FOR: _____ **BY:** _____

REFERENCE NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ **TIME KNOWN:** _____

1. Could you highlight some of the applicant's strengths and comment?
2. Could you comment on the applicant's verbal and written communication skills?
3. Please comment on the applicant's ability to take responsibility for:
Personal development:
Supervision/feedback:
4. Please comment on the applicant's ability to:
 - a) Participate as a team member
 - b) Maintain cooperative relationships.
 - c) Identify and manage conflict
 - d) Manage time and work commitments
 - e) Manage stress and stressful situations
5. Can you comment on how the applicant works within organizational policies and procedures?
6. Are there any areas that you believe would cause a problem for them in their role as volunteer counsellor?
7. Have you had any concerns about the applicant's performance and if so, what areas of growth do you believe are needed?
8. Is there anything else you could tell me about the applicant that would help us in making our decision?

TRAINEE CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Complete the Training Application, including a current resume, references, and Personal Statement paper.**
- ✓ **Attend the interview upon receipt of an invitation.**
- ✓ **Complete the Training Commitment Agreement**

- ✓ Complete a Criminal Record Check
- ✓ Once accepted into the training, pay a \$250 fee (First day of training)
- ✓ Join NFLA for the exciting journey to becoming a Volunteer Counsellor!

Training Dates 2024

Participation in all training dates is mandatory.

Orientation/ Foundational Practices and Unconscious Bias

Saturday, April 20, 2024, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Discuss the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer; sign a confidentiality agreement; receive a key card; go through building procedures; make training fee payments etc. Practice counselling dyads will be formed. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity about what will be expected. Foundational Practices and Unconscious Bias will be explored.

Session #1 Introductory Weekend

Friday, April 26, 2024, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Saturday, April 27, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 28, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The Introductory Weekend will provide you with an overview of the training components. We will focus on building group rapport; Transference/Counter Transference and examine personal issues relevant to counselling. A review of the counselling basics will be provided. First practice videos will be recorded.

Session#2 Pod Group Practice Session Review/feedback

May 11, 2023, 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

You will receive feedback on your first practice videos.

Session #3 Solution-Focused Counselling

Saturday, May 25, 2024, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 26, 2024, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

This session will focus on solution-focused counseling; customer/complainant and visitor relationship dynamics; goal setting; and providing homework to clients.

Session #4: Family of Origin Weekend

Friday, May 31st, 2024, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday, June 1st, 2024, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.
Sunday, June 2nd, 2024, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.

This weekend session will focus on the influences of your family of origin; family systems; and personal issues will be framed in the context of your family system; life position; life scripts; and beliefs. How these guide your interactions, show up with you, and how they show up with clients. This weekend will provide an opportunity to explore personal issues in a safe environment.

Session #5 Working with Grief, Indigenous Informed Practices

Saturday, June 8, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Explore different kinds of losses in life; how to support clients in grief; stages of grief etc.

Sunday, June 9, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Indigenous formed practices.

Session #6: Suicide Prevention

Saturday, June 15, 2024, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

This session will provide you with an overview of suicide prevention factors that contribute to suicide ideation and how to recognize possible signs and symptoms in clients. Suicide prevention safety plan practice session.

Session#7 Inner Child Work/Shadow Work

Saturday, June 22, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Exploring Inner Child Work and Shadow Work

Inner child work is an approach to recognizing and healing childhood trauma. It recognizes that our behaviors as an adult stem from our childhood experiences. Inner child work focuses on addressing our unmet needs by re-parenting ourselves.

Shadow work: Working with your unconscious mind to uncover the parts of yourself that you repress and hide from yourself. This can include trauma or parts of your personality that you subconsciously consider undesirable.

Session# 8 Pod Group Practice Session Review/Feedback, Protocols, Ethics, Potluck

Sunday, June 23, 2023, 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

You will receive feedback on your last practice videos.

Saturday, June 29, 2024, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

We will review all our protocols, forms, and ethics.
We celebrate the end of training with a potluck.

There might be minor changes to the schedule!