

KARI KOKKO, MSW, RSW, SEP

*Located at: The Refuge Centre for Healing and Recovery
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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Kari Kokko, MSW RSW, is a Registered Social Worker (registration #822186) and Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP). She earned her Master of Social Work degree from Wilfrid Laurier University in Kitchener, Ontario, and is active in her ongoing personal and professional development. Before your first session, we would like to give you an idea of what to expect from working together.

Description of Services

According to the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, “clinical practice refers to the professional application of social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability or impairment, including but not limited to emotional and mental disorders.” The overall aim is to provide an opportunity for people to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully. Therapeutic relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with addressing and working towards resolution of specific current or historical issues or experiences, developmental or mental health issues, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict, or improving relationships with others.

For a detailed description of services provided, please visit www.healingrefuge.com

Risks and Benefits

Counselling and psychotherapy may involve the risk of remembering unpleasant events, feeling unfamiliar sensations, or arousing strong or unanticipated feelings or memories. You may face issues or aspects of yourself that are uncomfortable, and counselling may lead to unforeseen changes in your relationships or take you out outside of your comfort zone to explore and expand your growing edge. Benefits may include developing an increased ability to live more effectively and improving your ability to cope with a variety of stressors and life challenges. You may also gain a better understanding of yourself, your goals and your values, which may assist you in your personal growth. You may experience relief or resolution of trauma symptoms, and develop skills, increased resiliency, and a healthier relationship with yourself and others. Additional benefits are described on The Refuge’s website.

Outcomes and Ethics

The outcome of counselling and psychotherapy is difficult to predict or guarantee, since it is dependent on a number of factors, such as the fit between you and your therapist, current adverse conditions that are actively contributing to your symptoms, and your readiness and willingness to work towards set goals. However, Kari will do her best to help you to handle the risks safely and experience the benefits of this work. If you have any questions or concerns, Kari encourages you to discuss these with her at any point. You may also direct your questions to the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

For more information, go to www.ocswws.ca or <http://www.ocswws.org/professional-practice/code-of-ethics/>

Your Responsibilities

Personal commitment to therapy is crucial in order to move towards your goals. To maximize the effectiveness of therapy services, it is advisable to make counselling a high priority, and not cancel sessions except in the case of an emergency. Your most important responsibility is to work toward the goals you and Kari have agreed upon. Seeing a therapist is often enhanced with additional efforts made between sessions, such as: thinking about the material covered in your sessions, monitoring the behaviours you are trying to change, reading a book or article, completing worksheets, practicing a new skill, or taking other concrete actions to support your growth. It is your responsibility to tell Kari when you are uncomfortable with any parts of the treatment. If you have any questions, please ask and she will do her best to answer your questions in full.

Confidentiality

Kari respects the privacy of her clients, holds in strict confidence all information about clients, and complies with applicable privacy and other legislation. No information will be released to a third party without your prior written authorization. At any time, you have the right to withhold or withdraw consent to, or place conditions on, the disclosure of your information. **Exceptions to confidentiality** include the legal and/or ethical obligations for your therapist to:

- Inform the Children's Aid Society if there may be a child at risk of harm or in need of protection due to neglect, or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse;
- Inform a potential victim of a client's intention to harm them;
- Inform an appropriate family member, health care professional, or police if necessary of a client's intention to end his or her life;
- Release a client's file if there is a court order to do so;
- Report misconduct by another regulated health professional;
- Report elder abuse of a resident in long-term care.

Kari's overall goal is to make this a place where you feel comfortable to talk about personal concerns. Kari will also consult with other professionals for guidance specific to the therapeutic modalities she uses, for the purposes of providing you with the highest quality care. Information provided in these other contexts will be anonymous. Finally, in a situation of the unexpected death or illness of the therapist, you may be contacted by a representative who is acting on behalf of the therapist. This representative will be obliged to ensure confidentiality as the therapist does and will provide you with an appropriate referral.

Privacy and Record Keeping

Therapists in Ontario are required by law to keep a record of each contact and therapy session with a client. Records are kept for a minimum of 10 years after a client turns 19 years of age. All information is maintained 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 means that all personal information obtained, used, and disclosed in therapy sessions is done so with your consent. Your personal information is protected by specific safeguards, including locked cabinets and computer passwords. You may request a copy of your records for a reasonable fee. Please note that records cannot be released when they contain the name of another person, and that reports from other professionals cannot be released without the consent of that professional.

Payment Policy

- Sessions are \$120 for 50 minutes.
- A sliding scale rate may be possible depending on financial circumstances. Please contact Kari to discuss.
- Work done outside of sessions (letters, reports, resume writing, check-in calls, consultations with other professionals, etc.) is also charged by the hourly rate.
- Full payment is required at the time of each scheduled appointment in the form of cash or cheque.
- Payment for sessions will be required prior to scheduling subsequent appointments. In the event that payment is not received for an appointment, clients will be given the opportunity to do so and if payment is still not made, Kari reserves the right to employ the services of a collection agency to recover unpaid fees.
- A 5% annual interest rate will be charged for payments not received within 30 days of the session.
- A \$25 service charge will be added to the amount owing for NSF cheques.

Extended Health Insurance

Kari's services are often covered under extended health benefits. Please verify with your insurance plan if you have coverage for a Registered Social Worker (Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers), or if you have a health spending account. Kari will collect your payment directly, and you will then be provided with a receipt to be submitted to your insurance company for reimbursement. It is your responsibility to contact your insurance company in advance of starting therapy to determine your annual coverage and whether you need a referral from a medical professional, as each insurance plan is different.

Cancellations and Missed Sessions

Please contact Kari to change your appointment with **at least 24 hours' notice** if you are unable to keep your scheduled time.

- Cancellations **within 24 hours from the session** will be billed at half the hourly rate.
- Missed sessions are billed at the full cost of the scheduled appointment.
- If you cancel or miss more than 3 consecutive appointments, or do not respond to Kari's attempts at contacting you, Kari reserves the right to discontinue your treatment and you will be provided with information about other services that might be of assistance if this is of interest to you.
- Fees for missed or cancelled sessions are not typically covered by extended health benefits plans.

Cancellation or missed session fees may be waived on compassionate grounds, such as in the event of a medical emergency, death in the family, dangerous weather conditions, or in the event of an accident or natural disaster.

In Case of Emergency

Emergency services are not available by your therapist between sessions. In case of emergency, dial 911, go to the nearest emergency department of any hospital, or call your local crisis line.

Somatic Experiencing

One of the main modalities that Kari uses is Somatic Experiencing (SE). SE is a naturalistic approach to the resolution and healing of trauma developed by Dr. Peter Levine. SE supports the body's natural ability to regulate itself, which is key to transforming overwhelming experiences, PTSD, chronic stress, and the wounds of emotional and early developmental attachment trauma.

- SE employs awareness of body sensation to help people "renegotiate" and heal rather than re-live or re-enact trauma.
- SE's guidance of the bodily "felt sense" allows the highly aroused or frozen survival energies to be safely experienced and gradually discharged.
- SE "titrates" your experience (breaks it down into small, incremental steps) so that you can remain embodied and present, rather than becoming flooded.

Note: Somatic Experiencing can be used with or without touch.

For more information, visit: www.traumahealing.org

Note: The Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute states that Somatic Experiencing is neither a form of psychotherapy nor a bodywork technique, though it lends itself well to being integrated into these and other treatment modalities. You are encouraged to discuss any questions you may have regarding this modality with Kari, and she will do her best to answer any and all questions fully and clearly.

How is touch used in Somatic Experiencing?

In SE, **touch is only used with the full and express permission of the client, which may be withdrawn at any time.** Touch can be applied with hands and occasionally with forearm or foot contact, and can also be offered indirectly, such as providing support through a cushion. **SE Touch is done fully clothed** and is not used to manipulate the body. Some examples of when touch can be helpful are:

- Identifying an area of the body for tracking internal sensations.
- Supporting an area of the body to release tension or constriction.
- Stabilizing a highly activated / dysregulated nervous system.
- Containing and processing difficult emotions (*e.g., feeling therapist's hands on the outside of your upper arms to provide a sense of containment to reduce flooding*).
- Bringing awareness to an area of the body that feels disconnected or numb.
- Engaging a reflexive action or defense to support completion / discharge of a response (*e.g., pushing into a therapist's hands to engage a frozen fight response*).
- Resourcing an individual with positive sensation or a healthy body function (*e.g., pressure on the feet can enhance a sense of grounding*).

Statement of Informed Consent

Informed consent for therapy, especially the body-oriented approach of SE that may include touch with your choice and express permission, is essential and out of respect for your right to choice and self-determination. Consent must be given voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently. You have the right to change your mind and withdraw informed consent at any time, terminate treatment, or refuse a particular treatment modality if you are not comfortable with it.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information contained in this document. I understand that SE Touch is not a form of bodywork, physical rehabilitation, or any other form of medical treatment, but is instead body-oriented and energy-based approach that can be integrated into my overall plan for healing and wellness. **I understand that I can undertake therapy WITHOUT any touch work.** Any and all questions I have regarding the contents of these documents have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to receiving psychotherapy services offered by Kari Kokko, MSW RSW.

- I consent to receive Somatic Experiencing
- I consent to receive Touch Work should the occasion arise in session, and I give my express permission at that time.

Client name: _____

Client signature: _____

Date: _____