



Client Rights

Bravehearts Inc.

Protecting Children through Prevention and Therapy

Our Aim

At Bravehearts we offer confidential counselling, information and support to children, adolescents and adults who have been sexually assaulted and their non-offending family members.

Bravehearts Inc is a community based, not-for profit, registered charity funded by local community benefactors and more recently the Queensland Department of Communities. We believe: *'Child Sexual Assault is never the child's fault'* and *'There is no excuse for child abuse'*.

All of our counsellors are trained in Psychology, Social Work or a related discipline and have experience in working with children and adults who have suffered child sexual assault.

This document outlines your rights as a client of Bravehearts' services. We aim to:

- Provide a client-centred service that ensures:
 - the service is safe and accessible
 - the referral and assessment processes are timely, responsive and equitable
 - the service is tailored to clients' specific needs
 - there are well maintained record system
 - there are linkages with other organisations and groups
- Ensure the rights and participation of clients through:
 - upholding the rights of clients in all aspects of the service provision
 - respecting confidentiality and privacy at all times
 - actively encouraging and valuing client feedback
 - ensuring open channels of dealing with complaints
- Provide client-centred counselling through:
 - counsellors actively working to understand the needs of the clients
 - utilising "client-appropriate" approaches, such as child-friendly techniques (art therapy, play therapy, drama, story-telling etc)
 - networking and working with other organisations and groups
 - actively monitoring progress through regular feedback and evaluation

Our Service and Your Rights

What to expect when you come to Bravehearts:

Making the decision to see a therapist can be a difficult process. Many people feel a little anxious when they first contact us, or when they come for their first appointment. The first interview is an opportunity for you to meet your family's therapist, have a look around the building, discuss your concerns and talk about your goals for therapy. Sessions last between 45 minutes and 1 hour and generally occur on a weekly or fortnightly basis. We generally aim to see children for about 10 sessions but the exact number will be up to you and your therapist to work out depending on your needs.

Fees and charges:

As Bravehearts is a charity organisation, it is necessary for us to charge counselling fees. The fees are kept to a minimum and should be clearly stated to you when you book your first appointment (the Intake Interview).

Missed appointments:

Appointment spaces are very precious as we often have a waiting list. Please let us know if you can't make the appointment 48 hours prior. We understand that on occasion appointments will need to be cancelled however, we must be given notice. If no notice is given, we cannot hold the next appointment open and it will be the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to contact us for your child's next appointment.

Confidentiality:

Conversations with our counsellors are kept confidential. This means that we do not discuss your personal issues with other agencies, friends, family or others without your permission. We work as a team at Bravehearts because we feel families benefit from the additional knowledge, skill and experience a team approach offers. Personal information about you and/or your child will only be shared with anyone else under the following conditions:

1. You request that we write a report or letter regarding your personal circumstances.
2. You give permission for us to consult with other workers involved with yourself or your child eg. teachers, Department of Families etc.
3. We feel that you are behaving in ways that are dangerous to yourself or someone else.
4. If it comes to our attention that a child is at risk of, or has been subject to further assault and/or abuse.
5. Occasionally our records are subpoenaed for court, if this happens we will discuss this process with you.

Records:

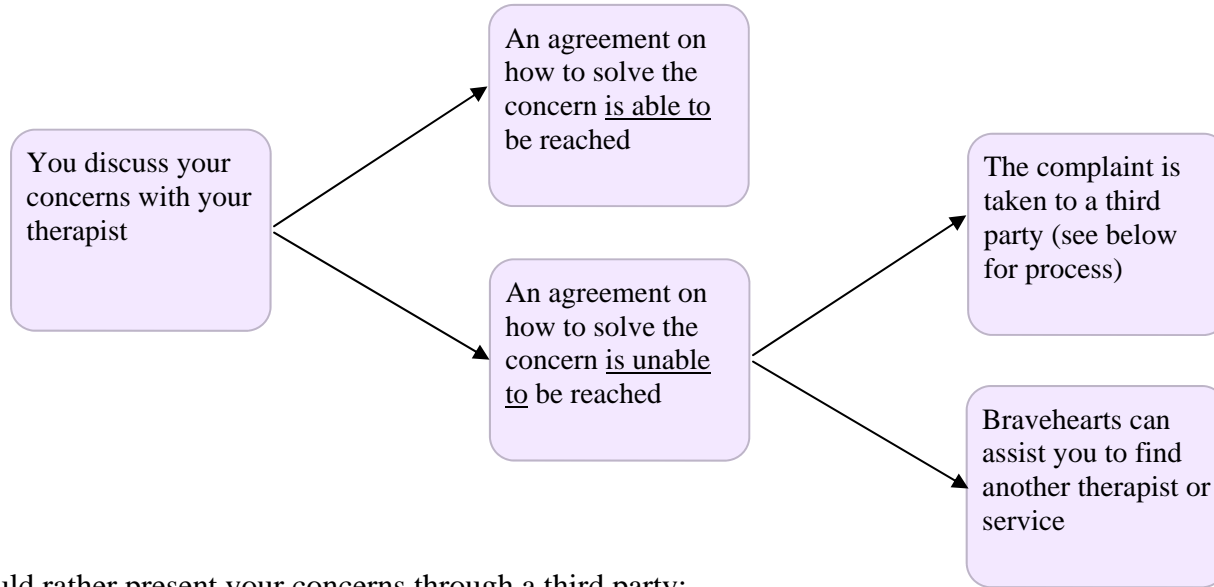
A file is created for each client of Bravehearts which contains information obtained at the time of referral, any correspondence with external bodies, copies of any statements, as well as a record of what happens in each counselling session. Only therapists have access to these confidential files. Occasionally our records are subpoenaed for court, if this happens we will discuss this process with you. If you have any questions, please talk to your therapist.

What to do if you are not satisfied with our service:

Therapy is a very personal thing. Not everyone finds the right therapist for them the first time. If you feel that Bravehearts is not the right place for you, please let us know and we will assist you to find another service. At Bravehearts we treat our clients and visitors with respect, dignity and consideration at all times. If you feel you have been mistreated by our service in any way you can address your concerns with your therapist and/or the Therapeutic Services Manager of Bravehearts or have someone else address your concerns on your behalf either by telephone or in writing. Your concerns will be dealt with promptly and thoroughly.

The procedures we follow are illustrated on the following page:

Procedure 1. If you feel comfortable discussing your concerns with your counsellor:



Procedure 2: If you would rather present your concerns through a third party:

