Western Winds Counselling

Privacy Policy & Privacy Practices

Effective Date: September 2026
Last Updated: September 2026

Western Winds Counselling is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and security of personal information entrusted to the practice. This Privacy Policy explains how personal information is collected, used, disclosed, stored, accessed, retained, and protected.

Western Winds Counselling handles personal information in accordance with Alberta's **Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)**, applicable professional standards, and other legal requirements.

Privacy Contact

Western Winds Counselling is a private counselling practice operated by:

Michaela Evanson, B.A., M.A., CT
Western Winds Counselling
ACTA/ACTC Registration #3333
Email: michaela@westernwindscounselling.ca

Michaela Evanson is responsible for privacy matters at Western Winds Counselling and may be contacted with questions, concerns, complaints, or requests regarding personal information.

Personal Information We Collect

Western Winds Counselling collects only personal information that is reasonably necessary to provide counselling services, operate the practice, and meet professional and legal obligations.

Depending on the services you receive, this may include:

- identifying and contact information;
- emergency-contact information;
- intake forms and informed-consent records;
- relevant health, mental-health, family, relationship, and social history;
- counselling goals and presenting concerns;
- clinical notes and relevant observations;
- assessments or measures used during counselling;
- appointment and scheduling information;
- relevant communications;
- consultation, referral, and report information where applicable;
- billing, payment, and receipt information; and

- information relating to the conclusion or transfer of counselling services.

Western Winds Counselling seeks to collect only the information reasonably required for the purposes for which it is collected.

Why Personal Information Is Collected and Used

Personal information may be collected and used for purposes including:

- providing and documenting counselling services;
- assessing client needs and developing counselling goals;
- communicating with clients about their services;
- scheduling and managing appointments;
- providing virtual counselling;
- maintaining clinical records;
- processing payments and issuing receipts;
- arranging referrals or continuity of care when appropriate;
- obtaining professional consultation or supervision;
- maintaining the security and operation of the practice;
- responding to client requests, concerns, or complaints; and
- meeting professional, ethical, insurance, accounting, and legal obligations.

Personal information will not be collected, used, or disclosed for purposes unrelated to these activities unless additional consent is obtained or the collection, use, or disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law.

Consent

Western Winds Counselling generally obtains consent before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information.

Consent may be written, electronic, verbal, or otherwise provided as appropriate to the circumstances and the sensitivity of the information.

Clients may withdraw consent to particular uses or disclosures of their personal information, subject to legal, professional, contractual, or practical limitations. Withdrawal of consent does not require Western Winds Counselling to delete information that must be retained to meet professional or legal obligations.

When consent is not required or disclosure is required by law, Western Winds Counselling will limit the information collected, used, or disclosed to what is reasonably necessary for the applicable purpose.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Personal and clinical information is treated as confidential and is not ordinarily disclosed to another person or organization without the client's consent.

Information may be disclosed without consent when permitted or required by law or professional obligations, including circumstances involving:

- a serious or imminent risk of harm;
- child-protection reporting requirements;
- a legally enforceable requirement;
- professional complaints, investigations, or legal proceedings; or
- other circumstances in which disclosure is authorized or required by law.

When disclosure without consent is necessary, Western Winds Counselling will limit the information disclosed to what is reasonably necessary and, when reasonably possible and legally permitted, discuss the disclosure with the client.

Professional Consultation and Supervision

Western Winds Counselling may engage in professional consultation or clinical supervision with qualified mental-health professionals to support competent and ethical practice.

Information shared for these purposes will be limited to what is reasonably necessary and identifying information will be avoided whenever possible.

If identifiable information must be disclosed or another professional requires access to a client's clinical record, informed consent will ordinarily be obtained unless the disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law.

Electronic Records and Carepatron

Western Winds Counselling maintains clinical and administrative information electronically using **Carepatron**, a third-party practice-management platform.

Carepatron may be used for:

- clinical records;
- intake and consent forms;
- appointment scheduling and reminders;
- client portal access;
- virtual counselling;
- billing and receipts; and
- other administrative functions related to counselling services.

Western Winds Counselling takes reasonable steps to select and use technology with appropriate privacy and security safeguards. However, no electronic system or method of electronic communication can be guaranteed to be completely secure.

Service Providers Outside Canada

Western Winds Counselling uses Carepatron, which relies on third-party service providers ("subprocessors") that may process or store personal information outside Canada.

Carepatron's current subprocessors include cloud-hosting providers such as Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud, which may process information in the United States, Australia, Europe, and Singapore. Carepatron also uses service providers in the United States for functions such as payment processing, insurance-claim processing, and customer support.

These service providers process information for purposes related to providing and supporting Carepatron's services, including electronic record storage, practice management, client communications, virtual counselling, scheduling, billing and payment processing, security, technical support, and related infrastructure.

When personal information is processed or stored outside Canada, it may be subject to the laws of the jurisdiction in which it is located, including lawful access by courts, governments, or other authorities.

Clients may request information about Western Winds Counselling's policies and practices concerning service providers outside Canada.

Questions regarding the collection, use, disclosure, or storage of personal information by these service providers may be directed to:

Michaela Evanson, B.A., M.A., CT
Western Winds Counselling
Email: michaela@westernwindscounselling.ca

Email, Text Messaging and Client Portal

Western Winds Counselling may communicate with clients through email, SMS/text messaging, and the Carepatron client portal.

Email and text messaging are primarily used for administrative purposes such as scheduling, appointment reminders, forms, billing, receipts, and brief logistical communication.

Ordinary email and SMS/text messaging may carry privacy and confidentiality risks. Clients are encouraged not to use these methods for highly sensitive clinical information, counselling, crisis support, or emergencies. Sensitive information should generally be discussed during a counselling session or through a more secure method when available.

Clients may discuss communication preferences with Western Winds Counselling at any time.

Safeguarding Personal Information

Western Winds Counselling uses reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards appropriate to the sensitivity of the personal information held by the practice.

Safeguards may include:

- password-protected accounts and devices;
- multi-factor authentication where available;
- access controls;
- secure electronic practice-management systems;
- appropriate device and software security;
- limiting access to personal information;
- secure methods for destroying records when appropriate; and
- procedures for responding to suspected privacy or security incidents.

Despite reasonable safeguards, no method of electronic storage or communication can eliminate all privacy or security risk.

Accessing or Correcting Your Personal Information

Clients may request access to personal information held about them by Western Winds Counselling and may request correction of factual errors or omissions.

Requests for access or correction should be made **in writing** to:

Michaela Evanson, B.A., M.A., CT
Email: michaela@westernwindscounselling.ca

Access may be limited in circumstances permitted or required by law. If information cannot be provided or a requested correction cannot appropriately be made, Western Winds Counselling will respond in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.

Accuracy of Information

Western Winds Counselling takes reasonable steps to ensure personal information used to provide services or make decisions affecting clients is accurate and complete for its intended purpose.

Clients are encouraged to inform Western Winds Counselling when relevant personal or contact information changes.

Record Retention and Destruction

Clinical records are retained in accordance with applicable professional standards and legal requirements.

For adult clients, Western Winds Counselling ordinarily retains clinical records for a **minimum of 10 years following the last date of professional service**. Records may be retained longer when required by law or applicable professional standards.

When personal information is no longer required to be retained, it will be securely destroyed or permanently de-identified as appropriate.

Privacy Incidents and Breaches

Western Winds Counselling takes suspected or confirmed privacy incidents seriously.

If personal information is lost, accessed, used, or disclosed without authorization, reasonable steps will be taken to:

- contain and investigate the incident;
- identify the information and individuals affected;
- reduce the risk of further unauthorized access or harm;
- assess the potential consequences of the incident;
- document the incident and response;
- take steps to reduce the likelihood of recurrence; and
- provide notifications required by applicable privacy law.

Where a privacy breach creates a **real risk of significant harm**, Western Winds Counselling will report the breach to the **Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (OIPC)** as required by PIPA and will provide other required notifications.

Questions, Concerns and Privacy Complaints

Questions or concerns about Western Winds Counselling's handling of personal information should be directed to:

Michaela Evanson, B.A., M.A., CT
Western Winds Counselling
Email: michaela@westernwindscounselling.ca

Western Winds Counselling will make reasonable efforts to respond to privacy questions and concerns and address complaints appropriately.

If you are not satisfied with Western Winds Counselling's response to a privacy concern, you may contact or submit a complaint to the **Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (OIPC)**.

Changes to This Privacy Policy

Western Winds Counselling may update this Privacy Policy from time to time to reflect changes in practice operations, technology, professional requirements, or applicable law.

The current version will be made available to clients upon request and, when available, through the Western Winds Counselling website or client portal.

Last Updated: September 2026