

Local 1059 has partnered with Addiction Services of Thames Valley to offer confidential addiction and mental health clinical counselling to members of the Local and their immediate family members with substance use, gambling or gaming concerns. Joshua Keene, the addiction/mental health counsellor available to assist our Local, shares answers to some of the most common questions around the confidentiality of this service and hopes he can put your mind at ease about the protection of your personal information.

As an addiction/mental health counsellor for 15 years, I've realized one of the main things causing people to avoid counselling is not understanding what happens to the personal information they share.

Confidentiality means your personal information will be protected. By law, agency policy and a code of ethics that I abide by, I am required to keep the information you share with me between us. No one will know; not your family, spouse, friends, employer or your union unless you decide to share it with them.

What type of information is considered confidential?

- Your substance use, addiction or mental health concerns
- When, how, where, what and why you are using substances
- Where you work
- Demographic information (the same data they collect at the doctor's office or when you sign up for a new credit card): name, address, date of birth, age and gender
- Medical history or records
- Clinical records and file progress notes
- Treatment plans, assessments, reports and referrals

How is confidentiality protected?

Paper files and sensitive information are kept secure under lock and key. Electronic files are password protected. No personal information can be released, even to a close family member, boss or coworker without your permission. In fact, as your counsellor, I cannot even confirm or deny that you exist.

Are there any reasons information would be shared without permission?

- When you are threatening harm to yourself (threatening to seriously hurt yourself or end your own life)
- When you are threatening harm to someone else
- When there is a medical emergency
- When a child is "considered to be at risk" (i.e., abuse, neglect)
- When a file is subpoenaed and must be handed in to the court

Changing your substance use, gambling or gaming is a "process" that occurs over time and typically not in a single event. It helps to have as much information as possible about the experience ahead of time. If you want more information about the counselling available to LIUNA Local 1059 members and their immediate family members, don't hesitate to give me a call. I'm happy to confidentially answer any questions you may have.

Joshua Keene RSW, CPGC

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