

Summary

What

Counselling is to:

- remind you of your professional responsibilities
- assist you in finding ways to enhance and improve your professional practice
- counsel you about professional standards.

Why

A complaint has been made about you. We believe that counselling you about professional standards will assist you to practice safely.

It is also an opportunity for you to reflect on, and respond to the complaint and to assure us that your practise is safe.

How

You will be asked to meet with our members at our office. The members may:

- ask you questions
- provide you with advice and guidance
- reinforce standards of practice and conduct

You will be able to ask questions about our role, expectations and processes.

At the end of the discussion, you will leave the room while the members discuss the matter. If further concerns are identified during the interview, the members may recommend further action to us. They will then discuss the outcome with you.

Who

You will be interviewed by one or more health practitioners, and usually a community representative. A staff member may also attend the meeting to provide administrative support.

You may bring a support person with you. They may not speak for you.

When

We will tell you the date, time and place of the meeting. We will give you at least two weeks notice of the interview. If you cannot attend, you should tell us as soon as possible.

What next

During the counselling interview, you may agree to complete some professional development activities or further written reflections.

The members may gain information during your interview which raises further concerns that need to be assessed. If this happens, we will contact you.

We will give you and our members copies of the same documents at least two weeks before the interview. These documents may include:

- the complaint
- your response and submissions
- your current curriculum vitae (CV), including continuing professional development (CPD)
- information about education in which you have enrolled or completed after the complaint
- contact details of any employer
- a copy of your most recent annual performance review report or a report from your manager
- your current plan for continuing professional development
- any other information you consider relevant.

Further details

This fact sheet details the following topics:

1. What happens at the interview?
2. What happens if you do not attend?
3. What can you do to prepare?
4. What happens after the interview?
5. Is the interview report confidential?
6. Where can you get support or advice?

Further details

1. What happens at the interview?

The interview will usually take about one hour and be conducted at our offices.

You may request a break at any time.

Our members will ask you about:

- the issues raised in the complaint
- what steps you have taken, or will take, to address the concerns in the complaint
- continuing professional development
- current work
- career goals
- future plans
- work history and
- any contributing factors to the complaint made.

2. What happens if you do not attend?

Under the Law, as a registered health practitioner, you are required to attend counselling if the Council has decided this is necessary.

If you do not attend and fail to provide us with a reasonable explanation, we may take further action.

3. What can you do to prepare?

Before the interview you should:

- read the information we have provided you about the complaint
- reflect on the issues arising from the complaint, and the relevant professional standards that apply to your work.

Reflecting on the incident that caused the complaint allows you to:

- increase your understanding about how you and the culture you work in may contribute to a negative experience for the client or patient
- improve your understanding about how the systems used can contribute to unsafe practice
- demonstrate to us that you recognise your strengths and can also identify areas of your practice that may need improving.

You can further demonstrate your professional insight by completing further education in areas you have identified as needing improvement and applying this learning to your practice.

4. What are the possible outcomes for you after the interview?

In most cases, the members will close the matter at the conclusion of the counselling interview.

If the members are concerned about your behaviour, practice or health, during the counselling interview they may recommend that we consider further action.

5. Is the counselling interview report confidential?

The complainant will not be provided with a copy of the report. We may be obliged by law to disclose information, including under subpoena, or under the Government Information (Public Access) ACT 2009 (GIPA). In the case of a GIPA application, we will consult with you before making a decision about releasing information.

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6. Where can you get support or advice?

We are available to answer any questions you have about our role and processes. If you would like independent advice or further support about how to respond to the complaint you may contact any of the following:

- NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association on either 02 8595 1234 (for Sydney metropolitan areas) or 1300 367 962 (for regional areas)
- your employee assistance program
- your lawyer
- your insurer
- your professional association.

We recognise that having a complaint made about you can be stressful. If you are concerned about your mental health and wellbeing, or need other assistance, you can speak to:

- your general practitioner
- your treating psychiatrist or psychologist
- Nurse and Midwife Support, 1800 667 877 (available 24/7) or nmsupport.org.au
- a mental health help line:

Mental Health Help Line	Contact details
Nurse & Midwife Support	1800 667 877
NSW Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636
Lifeline	13 11 14