



Counselling Services During COVID-19: Telephone and Video Counselling

In-person counselling is unavailable at BCIT while the British Columbia Ministry of Health's physical-distancing and related standards remain in effect in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure that BCIT students have continued access to counselling services, Counselling and Student Development is offering counselling appointments by telephone or video only.

Booking Appointments

Counselling appointments can be booked by calling 604.432.8608. Please indicate at the time you call whether you'd prefer a phone or a video counselling session.

Before Your Appointment

You'll be asked to complete some information and consent forms at least 24 hours prior to your first appointment. This is also the case for all students who have not had an appointment within the last 12 months. Please refer to the automated email reminder for your appointment details.

Special Considerations

Telephone and Video Counselling have aspects that differ from in-person counselling and that are important to consider. For example, the technology used in these forms of counselling may result in disruptions in reliability or quality; your counsellor will try to resolve any such issues as quickly as possible. Please wait for your counsellor to reconnect with you. If the technical issues cannot be resolved, the appointment may need to be rescheduled and your counsellor will follow up with you to ensure this is coordinated as smoothly as possible. If your counsellor has not reconnected with you after a period of time, please call Reception at 604.432.8608 and ask to be transferred to your counsellor.

There are also additional confidentiality and privacy considerations. BCIT takes your right to privacy seriously. Our counsellors are ethically and legally bound to keep the use of our services and the information you share confidential. While no electronic communication can be guaranteed 100% secure, BCIT has made every reasonable effort to implement technical security measures and administrative controls to reduce the risk of a security breach:

1. **Private Spaces:** BCIT's counsellors conduct all counselling sessions only from private locations. We also use headsets and built-in microphones to further reduce any risk of acoustic sound transfer.
2. **Identity verification:** BCIT Counsellors will request verification that the identity of the person contacted for the session is that of the student who booked the appointment.
3. **VPN:** BCIT counsellors use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) when accessing counselling appointment information and records.
4. **No Recording:** No counselling sessions are recorded by BCIT unless your consent to do so has been provided. Participants must receive their counsellor's consent if they want to record a session.



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Telephone Counselling: BCIT counsellors use Cisco Systems, Inc.'s Jabber application to make and receive telephone calls. Jabber provides an encrypted VoIP platform for communications and is hosted on BCIT servers that comply with Canadian data privacy laws. There is no storage of your personal information in Jabber and your BCIT Counsellor will delete records of calls made through this application.

You are responsible for the security of your own telephone system. Some steps that you can take to improve the privacy of your telephone counselling appointment are:

- Be in a private space at the time of and for the duration of the appointment.
- Turn off or log out of all other applications that might be running on your phone during the appointment (e.g., Facebook, Instagram).
- Ensure that you do not have a digital assistant (e.g., Google Home, Alexa) device nearby.
- Use a headset or earbuds and a microphone that remains close to your mouth for audio clarity and to reduce noise transfer.
- Turn off notifications or put your phone into Do Not Disturb mode once the session begins.
- Notify your counsellor immediately if you suspect any breach in your security.

Video Counselling: BCIT counsellors use the business-licensed version of Zoom Video Communications, Inc.'s Zoom application for video counselling sessions. Zoom is a cloud-based video-conferencing system that provides real-time sharing of audio, video, and screens using encrypted Internet software. The business-licensed version of Zoom has additional security features beyond those in the free version of Zoom, all of which are being utilized in the course of your video counselling appointment. BCIT counsellors also take every reasonable effort to implement other available technical security measures and administrative controls to reduce the risks of a confidentiality breach, to protect your personal information, and to ensure that the video sessions are private and confidential, including the deletion of all records of conferences on the Zoom application.

To use Zoom for video counselling:

- You may be required to provide personal information to Zoom.
- You may be required to accept Zoom's terms of use and to enter into a separate legal relationship with Zoom.
- Zoom may store your personal information outside Canada.
- Your counsellor may collect, use, and disclose your personal information through Zoom to facilitate video counselling.
- The use of Zoom may pose additional personal information privacy risks, and it is your responsibility to minimize such risks by supplying only the personal information that is necessary to facilitate video counselling or as instructed by your Counsellor.
- BCIT has limited ability to exercise controls over Zoom's information management practices.



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You are responsible for the security of your own video, computer, and network systems. Some steps that you can take to improve your privacy of your video counselling appointment are:

- Be in a private space at the time of and for the duration of the appointment.
- Turn off or log out of all other applications that might be running on your electronic devices during the appointment (e.g., Facebook, Instagram).
- Ensure that you do not have a digital assistant (e.g., Google Home, Alexa) device nearby.
- Use a headset or earbuds and a microphone that remains close to your mouth for audio clarity and to reduce noise transfer.
- Turn off notifications or put your devices into Do Not Disturb mode once the session begins.
- Notify your counsellor immediately if you suspect any breach in your security.

Suitability

Depending on your circumstances, telephone, video, or both types of counselling may not be appropriate. A BCIT counsellor will discuss this with you if it is relevant, and will provide alternative resources for support whenever possible.

BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)

BCIT collects and uses your personal information in accordance with the BC *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). Any personal information that you provide by participating in telephone or video counselling sessions is collected under the authority of section 26(c) of FIPPA for the purpose of providing you with BCIT counselling services. If you choose to receive counselling services via video conferencing, personal information about you, such as your name, email address, video images and audio, meeting metadata including location, meeting start and end times, login information, device identification and details, and IP address will be collected and shared with Zoom for the purpose of facilitating your video counselling sessions. Personal information maintained by Zoom may be stored on servers located outside of Canada. This means that some of your information may also be subject to the laws of another jurisdiction where privacy laws differ from the laws of Canada. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with Zoom's [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) for further details on how your information will be collected, used, and disclosed.

Questions and Feedback

For more information about BCIT's privacy protection practices, contact the Associate Director, Privacy, Information Access, and Policy Management, British Columbia Institute of Technology, 3700 Willingdon, Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2, email: privacy@bcit.ca.

If you have feedback about the counselling service that you receive through BCIT Counselling and Student Development, please first discuss this with your counsellor directly. You can also contact the Associate Director of Student Access and Wellbeing at 604.432.8608.