

Welcome to GWH

What to expect when you become a client of our service

Counselling

Gladstone Women's Health's counselling services are free of charge to women of the Gladstone Region and women who have experienced domestic and family violence in the Banana Shire. Our Counsellors are qualified and are focused on enhancing your safety, health and wellbeing. Services are tailored to your needs and our staff work with you to create a personalised support plan designed to meet your needs and goals. We have an intake process for those who have experienced domestic and family violence and this process takes approximately 90 minutes, but all other sessions are generally 45 minutes in duration. We do not have child-minding at our centres but our staff can make arrangements to watch your child(ren) if it means you can attend your appointment(s). We provide services in person at Gladstone and Biloela, and have video-conferencing and telephone counselling options as well. All women are eligible to receive free counselling, so please call us if you wish to discuss how we might be able to assist.

Confidentiality

Your 'Welcome Pack' has a wealth of information about our services and what we can do for you. It also contains specific information about privacy and confidentiality. All aspects of our service and our staff comply with relevant legislation. Our staff undergo rigorous training to ensure they know processes and procedures in relation to privacy and confidentiality, and what to do if there's challenges to maintaining these. All our records and your personal information that we collect is stored securely and only accessible by relevant and authorised staff. Your information will not be shared with anyone other than those who need your information to ensure we provide the best service to you, or when required by law to share. If this is the case, we will inform you of this fact in advance. The sharing of your personal information will only be done with your authorisation, unless directed by law to provide.

It is your right to have your information kept confidential and secure, so we do what we can to ensure this occurs. If any of our staff have a conflict of interest of any kind, they will declare it and we will arrange for another one of our staff to support you. It is important that you do let us know as soon as you think someone might approach us to get information about you so we can better manage your case. Please be advised that, by law, there are also exceptional circumstances when we are required to disclose information about you. If this relates to your situation, we will explain this to you.

What information do we keep?

As a client of GWH, we create a file about you. All your correspondence with us is documented, as is a summary of each interaction you have with your counsellor or other staff. We have to keep these, by law, for seven years. Our records are kept in a protected database and any hard copies (paper copies) are securely stored and managed. Copies of your information can be requested in writing, and we ask you allow 14 working days for us to provide these.

Your appointments

We will do our best to get you the first available appointment, and if your counsellor is busy, we will offer you an alternative counsellor if the matter is urgent. We send text reminders of all appointments and ask that you respond with a text stating 'YES' if you can attend and phone us if you cannot so we can fill that appointment with someone on our waiting list, and arrange an alternative appointment for you. If you do not respond, we will assume that you do not wish to attend the appointment and we will fill that appointment spot. It is important you liaise with us if you are having difficulties attending appointments because we can work with you to arrange something more convenient or another means, such as a phone appointment, if that suits you better.

Policies and procedures

GWH has copies of all our policies and procedures and the ones directly related to you as a client are provided upon first contact, or can be found hanging on display in our waiting area. We are always happy to provide copies of any relevant policy to you so please speak to your counsellor if you would like to see any of these.

Feedback

We welcome feedback as it helps us improve our services. Please look at the wall of your counselling room or the waiting room and scan the QR code to fill out the feedback form. You can also ask your counsellor or our receptionist for a hard copy (paper copy) form to complete. We truly value feedback, even if it is negative, because we use this to review what we are doing and develop better practices.

Women's Only Centre

Gladstone Women's Health Centre in Gladstone and Biloela are spaces specifically for women. We do this because we want to help women to better health and wellbeing – especially those who have endured difficult circumstances through domestic violence and sexual abuse. Please speak to our staff if you plan to have a male as your support person so we can review and make necessary arrangements to protect and ensure the comfort of other women.