



Consent for Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling to Provide Online Video Counselling and Support Services

Online video counselling and support is a way of obtaining help from Open Arms without leaving your home. Of course, online video counselling and support (**OVC&S**) has the same issues as face-to-face support, such as the timing of contact and confidentiality. It also has some additional issues, such as online security. This document is designed to inform you of factors that you need to be aware of before agreeing to participate in OVC&S.

Confidentiality

Open Arms is committed to preserving and upholding your right to privacy and confidentiality. This commitment extends to online video counselling sessions. As with face to face sessions, Open Arms will only share your personal information where you have provided your consent, or where the sharing of your information is considered appropriate or necessary. For example, Open Arms may be required to disclose your personal information without your consent when:

- Information about you is subpoenaed by a Court or Tribunal in legal proceedings;
- You or another person is at risk of harm;
- The disclosure is necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; or
- Disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law.

Should these circumstances arise, your personal information will only be released in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Use of OVC&S platforms

Open Arms will offer you OVC&S services utilising commercially available online platforms such as **Coviu, Zoom** or **Skype**. Each of these applications are free, high quality video conferencing programs, which allow users to see and hear each other using a computer or handheld device that is appropriately equipped with a camera and a microphone. These applications also have in-built instant messaging and file transfer features.

These platforms encrypt voice calls, video calls, file transfers and instant messages to protect users from potential eavesdropping or tampering by malicious users. These platforms indicate that they use Advanced Encryption Standard (**AES**) based security protocols. Where available, Open Arms will ensure that End to End encryption is enabled – this is a system which prevents potential eavesdroppers from being able to access the cryptographic keys needed to access the conversation.

As with any online platform, there are some security vulnerabilities.

Whilst highly unlikely, the primary risks associated with providing counselling over a public platform include, but are not limited to:

1. **Geolocation vulnerability:** *this is when someone is able to locate your geographical position by accessing your IP address when your computer is connected to the internet. Whilst this risk is considered to be low, it is recommended that clients reboot their modem in order to change their IP address to a different IP address from the pool of addresses that your internet service provider has.*
2. **Eavesdropping vulnerability:** *this is where someone 'hacks' or intrudes on the conversation whilst it is happening. This is more likely to occur if your computer is compromised (i.e. if it has a virus that is able to detect your internet activity by a remote connection and the virus is facilitating the transfer of that information to a third-party). It is recommended that clients ensure that their computer is equipped with an up-to-date anti-virus program.*

Open Arms **strongly recommends** that clients use up-to-date versions of their operating software (i.e. Windows, Mac OS, Android, iOS, etc.), anti-virus software, and OVC&S platform applications. While Open Arms takes all reasonable measures possible to protect your security and to mitigate risks such as those outlined above, clients using OVC&S agree that they have taken reasonable steps to ensure the security of their personal computing environment.



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By consenting to receive OVC&S services provided by Open Arms, you acknowledge these risks and consent to proceed with counselling and support on this basis.

Collection of your personal information by OVC&S platforms

When you agree to OVC&S with Open Arms, you are using online platforms which are subject to their own terms and conditions of use, as well as “data handling” practices.

A platform provider’s privacy policy will explain how the provider collects, handles, and stores your personal information when you choose to use the platform. It is important that you take the time to read the provider’s privacy policy so that you understand:

1. What personal information the platform provider will collect from you: *Some providers, such as Coviu, Zoom or Skype, collect minimal personal information from you, such as your name, email address, and IP address.*
2. **How** the platform provider will store any information it collects from you, including where this information will be stored and how long the information will be retained for: *Many providers store the personal information that they collect on the “Cloud”, and use providers who have servers that are based overseas (for example, in the United States).*
3. Whether any third-party has access to your information: *Some platform providers use third-parties to help them deliver their services and, consequently, those third-parties may have access to your information so that they can assist the platform provider to provide you with the product. Some third-parties will collect information from you. Most platform providers have agreements in place with their service providers to prevent the service provider from using or giving away your information for any commercial use or benefit.*
4. The ways in which the platform provider will use the information it collects from you: *Platform providers use the information they collect from you to provide you with the service that you elect to use (for example, when you download the application and create a user account). Some platform providers will use the information for another related purpose – for example, to provide you with information about other products and services that they offer which may be of interest to you.*

While Open Arms is offering counselling and support services via OVC&S at this time, you are not required to participate in counselling and support using any one or more of the platforms Open Arms uses. Please speak to Open Arms if you do not wish to participate in OVC&S and alternative arrangements will be made.

Please take the time to read about the different security and privacy features of each platform, which can be found here:

Coviu:

Terms and conditions of use: <https://www.coviu.com/terms-and-conditions/>
Privacy policy: <https://www.coviu.com/privacy-policy/>

Zoom:

Terms and conditions of use: <https://zoom.us/terms>
Privacy policy: <https://zoom.us/privacy>

Skype:

Terms and conditions of use: <https://www.skype.com/en/legal/>
Privacy policy: <http://www.skype.com/go/privacy>

Please let Open Arms know if you would prefer to use any particular online platform.

By agreeing to online video counselling and support with Open Arms, you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions and the data handling practices of your preferred platform.



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Confirmation of informed consent

I have read and understood the above information. I acknowledge that the protections and risks associated with OVC&S have been explained to me by Open Arms. I understand that audio or video recording of all or part of a counselling session is only permissible if both the client and Open Arms agree and that both parties must be aware that the session is to be recorded and consent to this before the session commences. Neither party may share the recording with any third party without the informed consent of the other. I give my informed consent for Open Arms to provide me with OVC&S.

Client's Name:

Client's Signature:

Date: / /20

Counsellor's Name:

In relation to family counselling and support, the above information has been explained to those persons (including minors) participating in the OVC&S and that I am the parent, guardian or agent of those persons attending the family counselling to participate on the terms and conditions set out above.

Client's Name:

Client's Signature:

Date: / /20

Counsellor's Name: