

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL TO ATTEND COUNSELLING?

Failure to attend counselling is considered a breach of the Counselling Order and deemed a contempt of Court punishable by law.



For enquiries on Personal Protection Orders, please call the Family Protection Centre (Family Justice Courts).

Tel: 6435 5077

For request for change of Counselling Review date at Family Court 1, please

- apply to change the Counselling Review date via the Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS) at <https://ifams.gov.sg> using your SingPass; or



- email to FJCOURTS_MAINTPOS@FJCourts.gov.sg with your case reference number, NRIC and reason/s attached with supporting documents. For example, a valid medical certificate exempting you from court attendance.

For details on your counselling sessions at the appointed agencies, please call the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

Tel: 6354 8264

Mandatory Counselling Programme



WHAT IS THE MANDATORY COUNSELLING PROGRAMME?

The Mandatory Counselling Programme is a court-ordered counselling programme to help persons who have experienced or used family violence. This programme is administered by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and aims to keep families safe through:

- Helping family members to learn more respectful behaviours to resolve conflict; and
- Providing family members with the necessary support and skills to ensure everyone's safety.

WHAT IS A COUNSELLING ORDER?

A Counselling Order is a court order issued by the Family Justice Courts that can accompany a Protection Order issued under Section 65 of the Women's Charter. If you are named in the Counselling Order, you must attend a counselling programme at a designated Social Service Agency.

WHO CAN BE ORDERED TO ATTEND COUNSELLING?

The person who applies for a Protection Order (called the "Complainant"), the person against whom the Protection Order is issued (called the "Respondent") and family members can be ordered to attend the Mandatory Counselling Programme.

According to the Women's Charter, a family member could include:

- A spouse or ex-spouse;
- A child, including an adopted child or step-child;
- A parent or parent-in-law;
- A sibling; or
- Any other relative or incapacitated person whom the Court regards as a member of the family.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU ARE ORDERED TO ATTEND MANDATORY COUNSELLING?

Step 1: Issuance of Counselling Order

The Family Justice Courts issues a Counselling Order along with the Protection Order. The Court will then inform you of the following:

- Objectives of counselling;
- Consequence(s) of not attending counselling; and
- The date and time when you have to return to Court for a Court Review.

Step 2: Counselling sessions

The counsellor from a Social Service Agency will contact you to set the date, time and venue for your first counselling appointment. During the first few sessions, the counsellor may need to interview you to better understand your overall family situation.

Your counsellor will discuss with you on the number and frequency of counselling sessions. The number of sessions depends on the progress made during counselling. The programme may continue if there are still violence issues to be addressed and if the Counselling Order is still in effect.

The sessions may be conducted with you, with the other party or in groups with others who have similar experiences as you. The type of session you will attend will depend on your counsellor's assessment of suitability. The counselling will help you understand:

- What family violence is;
- The impact of violence on your family;
- How to plan for safety;
- How to build better skills to keep your family safe; and
- Community resources available to you.

The counsellor will also assess the need for your other family members to receive counselling for the impact of family violence and discuss services that could help them cope.

The counsellor will typically conduct four sessions with you and then send a review report to the Family Justice Courts and MSF on the progress of the counselling.

Step 3: Court Review

You will return to the Family Justice Courts at the date and time of your Court Review (see Step 1). The Judge will consider your progress in counselling by referring to the review report submitted by your counsellor and any other relevant information. The Judge may require you to return for a second Court Review.

After the Court Review, counselling at the Social Service Agency may continue. At the end of the counselling, the counsellor will send a report to the Family Justice Courts and MSF. If there is progress in the counselling, you could then be recommended to be discharged from counselling.

