

Counselling Contract

Contract

The following agreement aims to clarify how I practice and to explain the terms under which we will work together. I am a senior member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The Ethical framework I follow can be found on the BACP website www.bacp.co.uk and outlines my commitment to you and our work.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of counselling sessions makes a safe environment within which you can speak openly. I take my work in an anonymous form to a qualified, clinical supervisor who also works under strict confidentiality requirements, with supervision focusing on increasing my effectiveness as a therapist. Formal supervision is an ethical requirement of the BACP.

There are some times when I may need to break confidentiality, but this happens very rarely and usually only after consultation with you. I may consider breaking confidentiality by informing an appropriate third party person or the authorities if I think that you or someone else is at significant risk of harm, if a child safeguarding issue has been raised, or if you inform me of a significant illegal activity, past or planned, such as involvement in terrorism or drug trafficking.

If you pay through online banking, you can choose to eliminate the word 'counselling' in the reference. Your name could potentially be exposed in the banking system in the event that I have to produce financial documents.

I keep brief notes of our meetings on paper and these are stored in a locked filing cabinet, with no identifying information. These records will be destroyed by shredding, 7 years after therapy has been completed, unless otherwise agreed. Any texts, emails or other messages will be deleted after they have been read or any necessary action taken, unless they form part of your notes. In the event of my death, the notes will be destroyed. Your telephone number, address, date of birth and GP surgery will be kept in a small filing card locked in a cabinet and will be kept for 7 years. You will be allocated a client number so that your personal notes will not be identified by your name. I do not keep client notes on computer; however, invoices, letters and reports will be stored for up to 7 years. Letters or reports sent to you or an external body with your permission involving personal detail will be encrypted.

I do at times provide a letter of confirmation of attendance at sessions but do not provide diagnoses. If it is deemed helpful in certain cases, I can write a short

summary of the work undertaken in sessions with your written consent; however, the pros and cons of this disclosure will be discussed with you.

Payment and Cancellations.

Sessions are an hour in duration or an hour and a quarter for couples. Standard charges are £55 per session and £70 for couples. You are welcome to pay by Bank transfer or cash. The initial session, for which I charge, is to discuss your needs, explore questions, and decide if I would be the most appropriate counsellor for you.

Sessions start and end on time and you are asked to come at the agreed start time, as there are no waiting facilities. It is understandable that sometimes appointments need to be cancelled or rearranged. If you need to cancel a session, I ask for a minimum of 24 hours' notice and will charge the full cost of the session if less than 24 hours' notice is given. If I have to cancel, I will endeavour to give as much notice as possible and try to rearrange as soon as possible. If your sessions are funded through an insurance company, a claim for the cancelled appointment will be submitted to the provider, subject to the terms and conditions of your provider.

If it is agreed that remote communication is beneficial or necessary, eg Zoom, Skype, Phone, FaceTime, WhatsApp or other forms of remote communication, this will be discussed fully with you in the light of confidentiality and security.

Payment can be by cash, cheque or by bank transfer on the day of your session. I can provide an invoice if needed and if requested. I am unable to accept card payments.

I will give you as much notice as possible concerning breaks for holidays, training and Bank Holidays and ask that you do the same.

Maximising the Effectiveness of Sessions

In order to make the most of counselling sessions, I ask that we both try to commit to the therapeutic process as much as possible. This may involve considering fresh understandings and seeking different ways of being. I ask that you do not use illicit drugs or alcohol before we meet and I will reschedule and charge for a session if I feel you are under these influences when attending. Whilst anger is welcome, violence or abusive behaviour is not accepted in the room.

Communication between sessions can be made to clarify changes of appointments; however, I do not encourage contact in emergencies as I cannot guarantee to be available. If a message is left for me by email or text I will reply as soon as possible.

I will offer periods of review throughout our work together.

I ask for an emergency contact and your GP's contact number in case you cannot be contacted and I have significant cause for concern for your safety or that of other people. If you agree to provide me the personal details of someone other than your GP, eg a relative or friend, they should know you are receiving counselling.

Complaints.

If you have difficulty or complaint about our work together, I ask that you bring it to me so that we can explore it and take any necessary action. I am a member of BACP, following its code of Ethical Framework and can be contacted if you wish to make a formal complaint.

www.bacp.co.uk

if you wish to complain about how I manage your data, I again ask you to contact me directly, in the first instance, at

sally@personalreflections.org.uk

If you believe your concerns have not been addressed, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org/concerns/handling/> or 03031231113

I will report any data breach to the Independent Commissioner, to BACP and to you if it becomes apparent that any data is lost or stolen. My data protection registration is:- ICO ZA767393

Your agreement

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and accept the information above.

Emergency Contact Details:-

Client Signature:

Date

Counsellors Signature:

Date

www.personalreflections.org.uk