

Patchwork Pathways Therapy

Counselling Agreement

Introduction

As a practitioner, I offer a safe and respectful space for you to explore issues that you feel are important to bring to counselling. I understand that life can sometimes be challenging, and it can be difficult to make sense of emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Counselling provides an opportunity to be listened to attentively and without judgment, helping you to feel understood, accepted, and supported.

For children and young people, counselling may involve talking, creative activities, or play-based approaches, depending on age, development, and individual needs. Together, we will explore approaches and techniques that are suitable for your needs, creating a supportive environment in which you can reflect, gain insight, and work toward personal growth and wellbeing.

Practitioner Responsibilities

- To be available at the agreed time
- To start and end on time, each session lasting up to 50 minutes
- To offer a quiet, appropriate, and undisturbed space
- To maintain safe, professional boundaries
- To regard all contact and information as confidential unless there is reasonable doubt concerning the actual safety of the client or others. Exceptions also include being required to do so by subpoena, or knowledge of involvement in terrorism, money laundering, or drug trafficking
- To follow data protection legislation and protect client information (see Privacy Policy)
- To encourage client autonomy
- To work within the BACP Ethical Framework, including regular supervision
- To review therapeutic work and relationship regularly
- In the unlikely event of the therapist cancelling, an alternative appointment will be offered as soon as possible.

Client Responsibilities

- To attend sessions where possible and give notice if unable to attend
- To give at least 48 hours' notice if cancelling or rescheduling an appointment
- To pay additional fees for report writing or attending external agency meetings at £80 per hour or part thereof (discussed as necessary).
- To understand that the therapist may need to contact appropriate professionals if there are concerns about mine or someone else's safety or wellbeing.
- To discuss with the therapist if you feel ready to end therapy.
- To let the therapist know if you are, or are considering, entering another therapeutic relationship (e.g., alternative therapist).

Appointments and Payment:

Session fee: As agreed per 50 minute session.

For self-funding clients, payment is required within 48 hours of receiving the booking confirmation. If payment is not received within 48 hours, the appointment may be released and offered to another client.

Where counselling is arranged and funded by an organisation (for example a school, care provider or local authority), invoices will be issued to the organisation and payment is due within 14 days of the invoice date unless otherwise agreed in writing.

If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, the client, 3rd party or organisation funding the sessions, are required to provide at least 48 hours' notice. Where cancellations are made within 48 hours of the appointment time, the full session fee remains payable.

Reports, review meetings, professional consultations and written summaries are not included within the session fee and will be charged separately where requested.

Payment details:

Name on the account: Sally Shanahan

Sort code: 11-00-44

Account number: 10655968

Reference: (clients name)

Confidentiality

Everything discussed in counselling is confidential, unless I believe you or someone else may be at risk of significant harm, or where disclosure is required by law. In those cases, I may need to share information with appropriate services to ensure safety, and I would aim to discuss this with you beforehand.

I receive a minimum of 1½ hours of clinical supervision per month where client work may be discussed. Client details are anonymized, and my supervisor is bound by the same ethical code, ensuring confidentiality of any client information.

For young people, confidentiality will be respected wherever possible. However, parents or carers may be informed if there are safeguarding concerns or serious risks.

To maintain confidentiality and protect your privacy, if we happen to meet each other outside of your appointment, please be aware I will not proactively greet you. This is especially important if you are with other people. If you wish to acknowledge me openly, I will respond in an appropriate, professional manner.

3rd Party Involvement *(where applicable)*

The term 'client' may also refer to the person, 3rd party or organisation funding the counselling.

Where counselling is arranged and funded by a 3rd party (for example a parent, school, care provider or local authority), the young person remains the therapeutic client.

Information relating to attendance, cancellations, practical arrangements and safeguarding concerns may be shared where appropriate.

Detailed session content will not normally be shared without the young person's agreement unless there is a safeguarding concern or legal obligation to disclose information.

Communication and Emergencies

I can be contacted for appointment changes or brief queries by email. Enquires will usually be responded to within 48 business hours.

In an emergency:

Adults — contact your GP, NHS 111, or call 999 in an emergency. You may also contact Samaritans on 116 123.

Young people — you may also contact Childline (0800 1111) or Young Minds Crisis Messenger (text YM to 85258).

Safeguarding

As a registered practitioner, I have a duty of care to act if I believe my client or somebody else may be at risk of harm. In such cases, I may need to share information with safeguarding professionals such as social services or the GP. I will always aim to discuss this with you first where appropriate.

Professional Membership and Complaints

I am a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and work within their Ethical Framework. If you have any concerns about my practice, please raise them with me in the first instance. If we cannot resolve the issue, you can contact the BACP at www.bacp.co.uk.

Session Location

Sessions take place at the location agreed at the time of booking. This may be in person at one of my practice locations or online, where agreed.

Full location details, including address and access information, will be provided directly to clients attending in person. Location information is shared only where relevant to the client's agreed sessions and will be included in the booking confirmation.

Ending Counselling

Counselling can sometimes be an uncomfortable process where you may experience difficult thoughts and feelings. Being open and honest about this may help your progression, rather than simply ending counselling. Although you have the autonomy to end at any time and I will work with you when you feel it is a suitable time to end.

Getting the Best from Your Therapy

Be open and honest.

Share your thoughts and feelings, even if something feels embarrassing or difficult to talk about, being honest can help me understand what's really going on.

Be patient with the process.

Sometimes it may feel slow or difficult, and that's not unusual. It's important to be patient with yourself and the therapeutic journey. You might feel like giving up if things get emotional or uncomfortable, however this is often when growth happens.

Be open to feedback.

I may point out things you didn't realise about yourself which can feel surprising or challenging, being open to feedback can lead to powerful insights and progress.

Communicate with me.

If you're feeling or noticing positive changes, let me know. If I suggest something that doesn't sit well with you, let me know. This helps me understand what's working and not working and can help you feel more in control and engaged.

Trust the relationship.

A strong therapeutic relationship (connection with your therapist) is one of the most important factors in successful therapy. Trust and rapport take time to develop, so give yourself space to build that connection. Therapy works best when you feel safe, supported, and understood.

Privacy and Confidentiality Statement

Information for Clients

Your privacy and confidentiality are central to my role as your counsellor. I will not discuss you or the content of your sessions outside of the counselling space, ensuring it remains a safe and trusted environment where you can explore your thoughts, feelings, and experiences freely.

As part of professional and ethical practice, I discuss client work in clinical supervision. This is a standard requirement for therapists and is designed to support the quality and effectiveness of your therapy. Your identity is not disclosed, and supervisors are also bound by confidentiality.

Confidentiality will only be broken if there is a serious concern about your safety or the safety of others, or if I am legally required to share information. Wherever possible, I will discuss this with you before any action is taken.

Limits of Confidentiality

There are two main circumstances where confidentiality may need to be broken:

1. Risk of serious harm – If I believe that you or another person may be at risk of significant harm, I have a duty of care to share information with appropriate professionals (e.g., your GP or safeguarding services). Wherever possible, I will discuss this with you beforehand.
2. Supervision – I receive regular professional clinical supervision as required by the BACP Ethical Framework. Client work may be discussed, but the focus is on my practice, and no names or identifying details are disclosed.

Data I Hold, What It Is Used For, and How It Is Stored

I collect the following information:

- Your name and contact details
- Address and date of birth

- GP name and address
- Session notes and relevant correspondence

This information is used to communicate with you, keep accurate records, and meet professional, ethical, and legal obligations (including insurance requirements).

All information is stored securely:

- Paper records and notes are kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Electronic devices (phone, laptop, etc.) are password-protected.
- Brief notes are taken after sessions and stored separately from personal details.

Retention periods:

- For adult clients: Notes are retained for 3 years after the final session, in line with professional and insurance requirements.
- For clients under 18: Notes are retained until the client turns 21 (or 3 years after the final session, whichever is later), in line with safeguarding and insurance requirements.
- Emails, texts, and messages are deleted one month after sessions end.

Lawful Basis for Processing

I process this data for the purposes of: - Communicating with you - Record keeping - Establishing, exercising, or defending legal claims

The lawful basis for this processing is legitimate interest, as well as contractual necessity to provide a counselling service.

Sharing Your Data

I will not share your data with any third party except: - Within the limits of confidentiality described above; or - With your explicit consent, if an external referral or liaison with another service (e.g. GP) is appropriate and agreed in advance.

Your Rights Under GDPR

Unless subject to legal exemptions, you have the right to:

- Request a copy of the personal data I hold about you
- Ask me to correct any inaccurate or outdated information
- Request the erasure of data that is no longer required
- Withdraw consent for processing at any time
- Request restriction of processing during any dispute about accuracy or use
- Object to data processing (where applicable)
- Request data portability (where applicable)
- Lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you believe your data has not been handled appropriately

ICO contact: www.ico.org.uk / 0303 123 1113

Contact Details

Patchwork Pathways Therapy
Northampton
therapy@patchworkpathways.co.uk
