

Therapy Agreement

How I work:

I am committed to providing a safe, non-judgmental, reflective environment for people. I will listen very closely and do my best to help you to gain a deeper understanding of your own thoughts, behaviours and feelings. The relationship we develop between us will provide the basis for our work together as therapy is a collaborative process. There may be times when counselling can offer a challenge to your thinking and your emotions and other times when the process may feel very fast or rather slow: this is natural and is also up for discussion between us.

We're both making a commitment of time and energy to each other in deciding to work together so it's important that we are honest with each other about how we feel it is going. I have an approach to counselling that is relational, follows what feels important to you, and may involve expressive activities if that feels right. Therapy has the potential to change your life as it can promote healing, personal growth, and change if you are an active partner in the process. However, some wounds leave scars, even when we have worked hard to heal them.

Confidentiality & Records:

The content of the sessions is confidential unless I feel there is an immediate and real risk to you or somebody else. If I discover there is a need to communicate with other professionals this will happen after first seeking your permission and knowledge of what is to be discussed.

I also need to discuss how I'm working with my supervisor and during these sessions I keep your identity confidential. I make brief notes after a session and keep them securely for seven years and then shred them. I view protecting your confidentiality as a necessary and non-negotiable part of our work together, as does my professional Ethical Framework (BACP).

There can however, be legal and ethical circumstances that require any counsellor to break confidentiality. For example, there is a legal duty to disclose information when acts of terrorism are involved and when physical harm to a child has been or is likely to be caused.

It is difficult for a counsellor to maintain client confidentiality in face of a legal requirement to share information or a clear legal duty. However, wherever possible, I would discuss the possible need to break confidentiality with a client before doing so. If you think that things you need to discuss may enter this territory, please do talk this through with me.

Video recording

As part of my learning process I may request that I video parts of our sessions. I will do so only with your explicit consent and will position the video so that it is focused on me and my work, in order to keep your identity private. When the video has been presented to my supervisor it will be erased.

Therapy Agreement

Privacy Policy

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is concerned with the personal information about you that I **collect, store, and share.**

This page details my privacy policy in accordance with GDPR.

PERSONAL INFORMATION I MAY COLLECT.

- Name.
- Gender (or preferred identity).
- Age.
- Relationships & significant people in your life
- Telephone/SMS number (plus permission to send SMS & leave voice message).
- Email address.
- Counselling History.
- Medical conditions relevant to counselling.
- Prescribed medication.
- Difficulties.
- Session summary.

HOW I WILL STORE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION.

STORAGE METHODS.

- **Paper:** written notes (*described below*).
- **Smartphone:** I will store your contact information in a plain-text note app. This allows me to contact you in case of emergencies, but keeps from revealing this information to other applications (*i.e. not using a Contacts app*).
- **Email/SMS/WhatsApp:** your email address and correspondence will be stored in my email account (currently GMail) from when you contact me. Your telephone number may be stored in my SMS or WhatsApp app should we exchange messages this way. Electronic correspondence will also be held by the corresponding app (Gmail, Phone's SMS, WhatsApp).
- **Website:** none of your personal information is stored on my website, other than to momentarily collect & send it to my Gmail account for the purposes of our initial contact.
- **Video:** for learning purposes, with your consent, I may video parts of our sessions. These will be shared with my supervisor and will be erased after they have been viewed. I will endeavour to keep your identity private throughout this process.

Sue Akehurst, Registered Member MBACP (Snr Accred)

www.sueakehurstcounselling.co.uk

Telephone: 07944393245, Email: counsellingsueakehurst@gmail.com

Therapy Agreement

DOCUMENTS HELD.

PAPER...

- Contact Sheet
- Therapy Agreement
- Assessment Record
- Brief Session Notes
- GDPR Agreement

ELECTRONIC...

- Contact name & telephone
- Email/SMS/WhatsApp.

HOW I MAY PROCESS/SHARE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION.

CONSULTATION.

As part of my professional obligations I have regular consultation with another therapist qualified in this process (my supervisor). The consultation process is for my practice (rather than seeking instruction on working with you). In order to protect your privacy, my consultant will not know you personally nor professionally. I will refer to you by your first name, and I may refer to some of the content of your sessions verbally when it's helpful to my professional processes.

THERAPEUTIC WILL.

Your name and contact details will be shared with my Therapeutic Executor who is my supervisor. This is so that you will be contacted on the event of my death, should you still be in therapy with me.

EMERGENCIES.

If your health is in jeopardy (provided I have your consent) I may share your contact information with an emergency healthcare service (e.g. Mental Health Crisis Team). If I have become aware of your intent to cause harm to another person/organisation (e.g. terrorism), the law may require that I inform an authority without seeking your

Therapy Agreement

permission. In such a situation, the law may require that I share your personal information without your knowledge (known as: *whistle-blowing*).

ERASING YOUR INFORMATION.

When we have finished working together, I will erase electronic copies of your information & correspondence within one month.

I will hold onto your written information for up to seven years past the end of our working together. This is so that I have a reference of our work in situations such as you returning to counselling in the future. After this time has passed, I will shred the written information.

YOUR RIGHTS.

You have the following rights...

- To be informed what information I hold (i.e. this document).
- To see the information I hold about you (free of charge for the initial request).
- To rectify any inaccurate or incomplete personal information.
- To withdraw consent to me using your personal information.
- To request your personal information be erased (*though I can decline whilst the information is needed for me to practice lawfully & competently*).

Signed.....Client

Date

Signed.....Counsellor

Date