Privacy Policy

To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and my registration with the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) this privacy policy outlines the personal details and records I am required to hold about you. It also informs you of how this information is stored, used and destroyed from our initial contact through to after counselling has ended.

Data Security and Data Use

During our first online session, we will begin by setting a working agreement that explains how we will be working together. It also details client confidentiality and data protection, which will need to be agreed to and signed by the client and myself before our work together begins. To ensure I fulfil my role as a counsellor there is certain personal information that I hold. Such personal details recorded at intake to therapy include:

- Name,
- Address,
- Date of birth,
- Telephone number,
- Email address,
- Emergency contact (In case something were to happen to you during your session),
- GP contact details (for use with your permission),
- Details of any relevant mental or physical health issues,
- Current medication.

I will also record what brought you to counselling and any family history you may wish to share with me. Brief factual notes will also be written down following each therapy session.

Storage of Data

If you make an enquiry and then make the decision not to proceed I will ensure that any personal data is deleted or shredded within a month.

Paper copies of contact details and session notes will be stored as follows:

Clients are assigned a client code for anonymity and any session notes will use this code only. Personal details and session information will be locked away in separate filing boxes. Only I will have access to these.

My business smartphone and laptop will be used to access emails and both are password protected and only used by myself.

I have a written diary for session appointments where only your first name will be used.

I will store your telephone number on my mobile phone until our counselling relationship comes to an end. I will keep your personal details for three months after your sessions have ended, in case we have any outstanding administrative issues, or you choose to return. After this time, they will be shredded.

In line with BACP requirements, session summary notes will be kept for seven years in case you wish to return. After this time, they will be shredded.

Working online

Working online will be carried out via Zoom. This is an encrypted platform, meaning no identifiable information can be accessed. A Zoom link and password will be emailed prior to your session.

Sharing of data

Your privacy is very important to me, and I will never use your personal data for any other purposes than the administration of counselling. As well as data protection legislation I abide by the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) Ethical Framework and Data Protection: (For more information go to:

https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/3103/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions-2018.pdf)

In line with BACP requirements, my work is supervised by a qualified supervisor who ensures I am working ethically and professionally. Your first name only will be used in these sessions, and my supervisor is also bound by the same confidentiality and GDPR boundaries as myself.

No data is shared with third parties without your agreement unless it is legally required for me to do. If I have reason to believe there is a serious risk of harm to you, or others, including safeguarding issues, then I may need to share information with the appropriate services, or your next of kin. Wherever possible I will discuss with you who is to be informed. I am legally obliged to inform the authorities where there is threat of terrorism, money laundering and drug trafficking.

Therapeutic will

In the event of severe illness, incapacity or death, I have appointed a therapeutic executor to attend to my clients. The therapeutic executor is a qualified therapist and a member of the BACP, so is bound by the same ethics as me. They will contact you to inform you of the situation and offer any support you require. They will also be responsible for the correct disposal of your client notes.

Your Rights Concerning your Data

- To know what information I hold about you
- To request access to your personal information under a subject access request (please provide 1 months' notice)
- To request alteration to incomplete, inaccurate or unnecessary information (although I may need to decline this request if it is information I am lawfully required to hold).