

## **Psychotherapy : Guidance Notes**

Starting therapy is a brave and bold decision. What follows is an outline of what you can expect from me and in turn what I will expect from you over the time that we work together. Its aim is to contain and provide a framework within which the work can be carried out both work safely and ethically.

### **Starting therapy**

Your sessions with me will take place weekly on the same day at the same time and will last an hour. There is some flexibility for people who work shifts, for example, or whose work takes them away but where possible for the purpose of the therapeutic frame the same day and time is best. If you arrive part way through your allotted time, I will see you for the remainder of the time. As there is no waiting area you should try to arrive more or less on time. I will be waiting for you so please ring the bell and I will let you in.

I like people to commit to six sessions after the initial consultation if you decide to proceed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issues, after which we can review progress and think about future work if necessary.

If you are unable to attend a session, try to contact me as soon as possible, and I will do my best to arrange an alternative day/time. If the cancellation is within 24hrs of your scheduled appointment and we cannot reschedule I will have to charge you the fee for the missed session – remember the particular day and time are for you only. If your circumstances change and the time is no longer suitable, I will do my best to offer you an alternative day/time.

I can be contacted by phone, email or text message.

### **Confidentiality:**

This is a very important aspect of the therapy relationship. Everything that we discuss in the therapy session is kept in the strictest confidence. In keeping with professional good practice I have regular supervision and I will need to discuss our work with my supervisor. However, I will not disclose your names or anything that would enable you to be identified.

If you are being treated by your doctor for a psychiatric condition it is advisable for you to inform him/her that you have started therapy. Likewise it is useful for me to know if you are taking any prescribed or non-prescribed medication, particularly if it is psychoactive, and to know about any other form of therapy you are currently undertaking. I will not contact your doctor without your knowledge and permission unless there is compelling evidence that you intend to harm yourself or others.

Breaches of confidentiality are for

- Issues of child protection
- Suicide risk or risk of self-harming

- Serious criminal activity (e.g. terrorism, money laundering)

Where possible I would discuss with you first what action might be taken.

### Fees:

Whilst I try to keep my fees competitive I may have to raise them periodically, typically at the start of the year. I will give you plenty of notice.

Should your financial circumstances change over the course of therapy it may be possible to renegotiate the fee for a limited time.

### Holidays:

I will be available for you with the exception of my holidays and occasional times when I might attend a training workshop or a conference. I will give you as much notice as possible when I am unable to make a session. In the event where I miss a session because of illness, I will give you advance notice and try to offer you an alternative day/time.

Likewise, if you are taking a holiday please let me know as soon as you can before it. I anticipate clients taking a holiday at some point during the year, in addition to the public holidays.

### Ethical practice:

As a member of UKCP/BACP I am bound by the Code of Ethics and Practice of that organisation and their Complaints Procedure, in accordance with ethical practice. However if you are not happy with the service I provide please discuss this with me first and we will endeavour to resolve it through talking about your concerns.

### Endings:

Ideally, finishing therapy will be by mutual consent between me and you. Endings to formally conclude your therapy are usually planned well in advance so that we can process the changes and gains that have been made. You will normally know when you are ready to finish therapy and we can talk about this within the session.

Sometimes during the course of therapy you may feel that the therapy is not helping you. In these circumstances it is best if you can come and discuss the difficulties and doubts rather than ending abruptly. I ask that you give at least a week's notice before finishing so that we have the chance to discuss your decision and to make a proper ending, one that will be most beneficial to you. There will be no pressure on you to continue and your decision will be respected.

**If you have any questions about any of the above or you would like to add something feel free to talk to me about it at any time.**