

THE FRAMEWORK FOR THERAPEUTIC WORK

The Terms of Agreement

This represents our commitment to working together, and clarifies the arrangements that are important for therapeutic work.

Appointments -- Sessions usually take place on the same day(s) and at the same time(s) each week, and last for 50 minutes. When it comes to ending our work together, it's helpful if we can plan the ending date sometime in advance, to allow time to think about your experience and the ending of the therapy.

Financial Arrangements

- Once we agree a regular time(s) to meet, I will hold the session for you and won't use it for anything else. Therefore, if you miss or cancel a session, you will be required to pay for it, even if you let me know in advance. If you know in advance you have to cancel a session, you may ask about rescheduling and we can try to find another time; however I can't guarantee I will have another space available, or at a time that suits you. If I need to cancel, or when I'm not working over planned breaks such as Christmas, Easter and summer holiday, you will not be charged.
- I review fees annually and adjust them when appropriate. Any proposed changes will be subject to discussion.
- I invoice monthly, and I accept payment by bank transfer or cheque.
- I will give you notice of my holiday breaks well in advance.

Good Practice

I am a registered member of the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC), the British Psychoanalytic Association (BPA), the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and the Foundation for Psychotherapy and Counselling (FPC). As a member of these bodies, I work to their professional codes of ethics and good practice.

Data Protection Act 2018, Privacy and Confidentiality

Your privacy and confidentiality are respected and maintained, in line with professional standards of ethics and good practice. In addition, I am registered with the ICO, the UK data protection authority, and I'm compliant with the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). I want to inform you about any data I hold about you, and explain how it is used only by me for the lawful and specific purpose for which it is held, that is, to deliver therapy services to you, professionally, ethically and efficiently.

What information I collect and store:

- your contact details, including name, phone number, address and email address
- session dates, session attendance records, and payment records
- brief, handwritten notes summarising our meetings

The legal basis for holding your data:

It enables me to deliver therapy services to you efficiently and according to professional codes of ethics and good practice.

How I use your information:

- Your contact details are held securely by me and kept confidential, except in exceptional circumstances, explained below. I may use them to contact you, if I need to cancel or reschedule. This allows for the efficient fulfilment of the therapy contract between us.
- I take the precaution of securely entrusting your contact details with two GDPR-compliant professional colleagues for the unlikely event of my becoming incapacitated. In that situation, you would be informed and, if appropriate, offered information about further professional help. This measure is a requirement of the professional bodies of which I am a member.
- I keep attendance and payment records to ensure accurate invoicing and for tax purposes as required by law, by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC).
- I periodically consult with a supervisor to maintain standards of good practice, as required by my professional bodies. Your needs for anonymity, confidentiality and privacy are respected and maintained.
- My brief handwritten session notes are anonymous, confidential, and kept securely at my home address. Your name is not attached to them. They are for my own use, as a memory aid for our ongoing work and for supervision, which is confidential and anonymous.
- Any emails you send me are held on my locked private computer, which is secured by a firewall and regular security updates, and access to which is password protected. I do not share your emails, and I will delete them after a few months.
- Your information will never be disclosed to others outside the therapeutic setting without your knowledge and/or consent, except in rare legal circumstances, for example should there be a serious risk of actual harm to yourself or others. Otherwise any communication to your GP or any other health professional or agency would only be made with your explicit agreement.

How long do I keep your information:

Under UK law, therapists have a professional and tax responsibility to hold information for six to seven years. In my experience, patients can return for further help long after therapy has ended, and their interests are not best served by my destroying notes at the earliest opportunity. For these reasons I keep notes for ten years after the initial appointment.

If you have a complaint about the handling of your data, please discuss it with me in the first instance, to see if we can resolve it. If a solution cannot be satisfactorily agreed, you can contact the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

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