



Highbury Counselling Centre
West London Mission

The Counselling Contract

This is a mutual agreement negotiated between the Counsellor and the Client prior to the commencement of counselling. It sets out the responsibilities of our Counsellor towards his/her clients, and also the client's responsibilities in the counselling relationship.

Confidentiality:

This is a very important aspect of the counselling relationship. Everything that is discussed in the counselling session is kept in the strictest confidence.

As an organisational Member of the BACP, each HCC counsellor is required to have regular supervision and will need to discuss their work with a supervisor on a regular basis. However, they will not disclose your name or anything that would enable you to be identified.

We have a policy of informing GP's of the start and end date of your time with the service, but this is the limit of information shared unless in the following circumstances in italics. *If there is convincing evidence that you intend to harm yourself or others, we might need to break confidentiality by informing your doctor, or in serious cases the police, again this would ideally only take place with your prior knowledge.* In all other circumstances any disclosure would require a court order, even in circumstances in which you, the client, request such disclosure (e.g. court case, insurance claim etc).

Each counsellor might keep brief notes after a session, which will be anonymised and securely stored, and there is no way you would be able to be identified from the notes. Occasionally a counsellor might want to make an audio recording of your session for the purpose of monitoring their work, but this would only occur with your prior knowledge and permission. Again this data would be securely stored and destroyed after use.

Sessions:

Sessions last 50-60 minutes, and occur weekly at the same time and day. The whole session time belongs to you, whether you choose to attend or not, and your counsellor will be present for the entire time of the session. If you arrive part way through your allotted time, he/she will see you for the remainder of the time. They will not offer your time to anyone else, even if you are away on holiday. Due to waiting list pressures, there is only scope to re-arrange two sessions in the 26 week period and this is conditional upon notice being given at the start of the relationship. Any missed sessions will need to be paid for at the agreed rate and it will not be possible to make these sessions up. Finally, if you miss 2 consecutive sessions without contact, we will assume that you are no longer able to attend and withdraw your space on the therapeutic programme.

Fees:

The HCC depends on donations to enable its existence and continue to provide a low cost therapeutic service. As a guideline those on low income or the unwaged can pay as little as £5. Those clients who are in work and solvent are recommended to pay £1 for every £1000 that they earn. This is a guideline and is negotiable, however it should be adhered to whenever possible. Only a change in circumstances might facilitate renegotiation after a figure is initially agreed.

Cancellation and Holidays:

Cancellation of an appointment or failure to show for an appointment, will incur the full agreed donation. Appointments missed because you are on a holiday pre-notified at assessment or contract stage are not charged for.

Your counsellor will notify you at contract stage of any possible need on their part to break the 26 week continuity of the relationship.

Duration of Counselling:

You will be offered a counselling contract up to 26 weeks in duration.

Endings:

If you feel that you want to end the relationship before 26 weeks, it is important that you are able to talk to your counsellor about the situation first.

Complaints:

If you have a complaint about your counsellor or the service, this should be directed to the Service Manager and complaints procedures are available upon request.

Signed:

Counsellor

Signed:

Client

Agreed day and time: