



## 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 Highbury Counselling Centre (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. Exceptions to this would only include cases when *there is convincing evidence that you intend to harm yourself or others; in such cases 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).

Our client records are limited to the assessment notes, attendance records, closing notes, and details of any risk incidents. 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 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. 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 an accessible and affordable therapeutic service. The fee is discussed at the assessment and first session, and agreed with the client by taking into account one's overall financial circumstances. A change in circumstances might facilitate renegotiation after a figure is initially agreed. On occasion we may employ a sliding scale of calculating £1 for every £1000 of annual income, plus £10.

**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.

**Duration of Counselling:**

You will be offered a counselling contract of one year in duration. In some cases this contract can be reviewed after the year comes to an end.

**Endings:**

If you feel that you want to end the relationship before the end of the year's contract, 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 Clinical Coordinator and complaints procedures are available upon request.

**Counsellor**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Client**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agreed day and time for counselling sessions:

Counselling fee:

Date of First Session:

Pre- arranged absences (client):

Pre-arranged absences (counsellor)