

Kelly Paterson Counselling

Counselling agreement

This agreement outlines our responsibilities to each other. These are in line with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy's ethical framework - see www.bacp.co.uk.

Confidentiality

Our sessions are strictly confidential, with the following exceptions:

1. I share aspects of my work during clinical supervision and professional development. I do not disclose information that would enable you to be identified.
3. If I believe that you intend to harm yourself or others, I may need to inform your next of kin, doctor, or in serious cases the police. If possible, I would discuss this with you first.

Session timings

We will meet at the same time each week, and sessions last for 50 minutes. Your regular appointment time is reserved for you.

Cancellation

If you cancel with more than 24 hours' notice, I will try to find an alternative time for you that week. If that isn't possible, or you give less than 24 hours' notice, missed sessions incur the full fee - this includes work commitments, illness and other emergencies.

Holidays

If you give one week's notice, up to three sessions each year can be missed with no charge (pro rata for time-limited agreements). There is no fee if I cannot make a session.

Contact between sessions

You can contact me by phone, email or text for administrative purposes.

If we meet outside of the therapy room

It is possible that we may bump into each other outside of our therapy sessions. If this happens, I will say hello/smile if you have done the same, or make no acknowledgement if this is what you choose to do. This is to protect your privacy.

Ending

It is up to you when to leave counselling. However, it is important not to hurry this important part of our work, and so I ask you to commit to at least one pre-planned ending session so that we can fully process our work together. If I have to end our work together, I aim to give you 4 weeks' notice.

Ethics and complaints

I abide by BACP's Ethical Framework for good practice. If you are unhappy with any element of my work, please raise this with me in the first instance, so that we can find a mutual solution. If you are still unhappy, you should contact BACP, as they are responsible for issues of professional conduct - www.bacp.co.uk.

Kelly Paterson Counselling

Working online

Video

- For video calling, I use Zoom, which is password protected and encrypted
- In order to use Zoom you will need to have access to the Zoom App on your laptop, phone or PC. Please ensure this is set up before our session start - you can also test mic and audio ahead of time.
- I will send you an invitation by email to our scheduled Zoom session. The email will contain a link which will take you our meeting.
- Please ensure you have a good internet or data connection to ensure call quality.
- If the connection drops out, I suggest we also have phones available as backups and I will call you to continue the session in this case. If the phone connection drops out then we can move to WhatsApp (which is encrypted) to troubleshoot or wrap up the session by text. We would not work with therapeutic material via text, it would just be for administrative or technical communication.
- If we need to abandon the session due to technical issues that can't be resolved, I would charge the full fee if the issue was related to your equipment or connection. If it was a fault with my equipment or connection, there would be no charge.
- Zoom consultations must not be audio or video recorded, I will maintain records of our sessions as normal.

Phone

- For phone session, I will call you at the session start time. I will be using a mobile phone with headphones.
- If the connection drops out, then we can move to WhatsApp (which is encrypted) to troubleshoot or wrap up the session by text. We would not work with therapeutic material via text, it would just be for administrative or technical communication.
- If we need to abandon the session due to technical issues that can't be resolved, I would charge the full fee if the issue was related to your equipment or connection. If it was a fault with my equipment or connection, there would be no charge.

Privacy

I will be working in a private, confidential room at home, where we won't be overheard or disturbed. I encourage you to find a space for yourself that is private and interruption-free so that you can feel safe to talk. If this isn't easy in your home then is there somewhere else - your car, or a private/quiet outdoor space - where we could conduct a telephone session?

As we are communicating over the internet, there is an increased risk to security and confidentiality when using Zoom rather than face to face, so please limit identifying personal details when using this medium, for eg first names only.