

Martha O' Brien *M.A. MBACP*

BACP register no: 378234

Tel: 07538192461 (text only)

Email: [martha.counselling@gmail.com](mailto:martha.counselling@gmail.com)

## Counselling Agreement

Please read this agreement before attending sessions. Attendance indicates you agree to the practicalities and boundaries described in this document in your counselling experience.

Please read the information below as it forms an agreement as to how we will work together and outlines my professional obligations regarding confidentiality. If this is your first session I will set some time aside to discuss this agreement and to answer any questions you might have. If at any point you would like to discuss any part of it, please let me know.

## Qualifications & Professionalism

I hold a BACP accredited Masters degree in Counselling from the University of East Anglia and I am a registered member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) with registration number 378234.

As such, I abide by BACP's Ethical Framework and meet their ongoing professional requirements. In the UK counselling and psychotherapy are not protected professions, therefore my qualification and my practice being registered with the BACP ensures that my practice meets professional standards through adhering to BACP's requirements. These requirements include; ongoing professional supervision, minimum training standards, ongoing training and CPD to a minimum level each year, adherence to a professional ethical framework, and undergoing BACP's auditing procedure.

## Duration, format and cost of sessions

Each session is offered for 60 minutes and takes place online via an encrypted video conferencing software. If for any reason you cannot attend the full 60 minutes please let me know. If this requires starting the session later than the

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arranged start time, I cannot extend the session end time, as I will likely have another client scheduled.

I will send you a calendar invitation (which includes the link for the video call) for the session the week before the session. When this invitation arrives may vary depending on my session schedule during that week. Please provide an email to which you would like this link to be sent. It is advisable to use a private, personal email for this to ensure the session remains confidential.

Sessions cost £50 per hour. Please send payment for sessions to the account details below by bank transfer. I will send an receipt and invoice at the end of the month for any sessions paid and any amount outstanding.

#### Account details

Sort code: 54-21-06

Account details: 20807503

## Holidays

Where possible please provide two weeks notice of any holiday arrangements or planned breaks from sessions. I will provide you with at least two weeks notice of my holidays. Where possible in both circumstance I will offer an alternative session, however this may not always be possible.

## Contact between sessions

I work Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 8am to 4pm and I can only see clients online by prior appointment.

I am only able to respond to contact between sessions that is focused on practicalities (e.g. rescheduling/cancellations). I can be contacted during my normal working hours and the most reliable form of contacting me is by email. I will endeavour to reply to you as soon as possible, but there may be a delay as I

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will likely be in session with other clients. As it is unlikely that I will be able to answer phone calls due to being in session, please only call if there is no other means of communication available to you, and leave a voice message if you are unable to get through.

If you require urgent professional assistance outside our appointment times, please contact NHS direct telephone 111, your GP, the emergency services or the Samaritans freephone 116123.

## Ending counselling

I provide both short and long term therapy and we can discuss the planned duration of our work together during our initial session. I suggest checking in at intervals to ensure the work is remaining purposeful for you.

It is important to provide 2 sessions notice if you wish to terminate your therapy with me so that your therapy can be safely completed. Usually we would discuss the potential for ending and agree an ending process. Some people may feel comfortable to completely finish sessions. Others may wish to step down sessions to fortnightly or monthly to gradually decrease the experience of this support in their life. For others they may end but have a check-in session scheduled for several months in advance.

While the aim of counselling is to increase your sense of wellbeing and your sense of satisfaction in life, the process can be challenging at times. For this reason it is important to discuss ending, rather than doing so abruptly, and have the opportunity to consider the motivation for ending. Equally, the relationship between you and I may sometimes be challenging. By addressing this gently in counselling rather than ending, you may have the opportunity to experiment with a different way of approaching challenging experiences in an interpersonal relationship.

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## Confidentiality

As a member of the BACP I am bound by their ethical framework to protect a client's confidentiality. Therefore, everything that we discuss is confidential except in certain circumstances, which are listed below.

## Exceptions

Harm to self or others: I may need to break this confidentiality if I think you have become a danger to yourself or other people. I will attempt to discuss this with you and my supervisor first, but this will not always be possible. For legal and ethical reasons I am not bound by confidentiality if in good faith I feel that I can assist in the prevention or detection of a serious crime, this includes safeguarding issues regarding children or vulnerable adults, crimes regarding substantial financial gains and losses, and acts of terrorism.

## Record Keeping & Confidentiality

As a member of the BACP I am required to keep accurate and appropriate notes of our work together. I record brief digital session notes and keep them in a password protected online vault to which only I have access. No names or identifying information are associated with your notes.

I am registered with the Information Commissioners Office (registration number: ZA640617) and any information I keep is subject to The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA, 2018) and United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation UK-GDPR.

## Supervision

All members of BACP are required to have regular supervision. My work continues to be supervised to ensure that it is safe, ethical and effective. Aspects of our work may be discussed during these sessions, but no full name will be used and identifiable details will be omitted. My supervisor is a member of the UKAHPP and as such they are bound by the same confidentiality rules as myself.

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## Anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice

I am committed to providing an anti-discriminatory service and provide an inclusive experience and ethos. I strive to ensure that this practice is present in all our work together.

## Complaint

If you are not happy with any of our sessions or the standard of my work, I hope that you would be able to talk with me about this. I will endeavour to receive any feedback in the spirit of collaboratively working together to improve your experience.

In the event of a serious complaint, please contact BACP's Get Help with Counselling Concerns service, which provides confidential telephone and email guidance on what to do if you have concerns about your therapy or therapist. Phone 01455 883300 or 07811 762114 or 07811 762256. Please leave a message or email [gethelp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:gethelp@bacp.co.uk) or write to BACP, 15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth LE17 4HB.