



Helping people to cope and recover from the aftermath and trauma caused by rape and sexual violence

The Hope Programme

Counselling Contract: Confidentiality Agreement and Consent Form

(Not for circulation beyond The Hope Programme)

The content of this agreement is to be explained by the counsellor to each client prior to their signature. The original will be lodged with The Hope Programme and a copy can be made available if requested by the client.

Introduction

The Hope Programme recognises the importance of confidentiality for clients using the service and the counselling contract outlines the confidentiality and boundaries that a counsellor offers. The Hope Programme offers its clients the highest level of confidentiality consistent with the law and the codes of ethics of the BACP (British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapists). This protects a client from the voluntary disclosure of confidences without the client's permission, unless legally or professionally required to do so. The requirement to respect client confidentiality is obligatory upon all members of The Hope Programme staff and workers, whether paid or voluntary.

A safe therapeutic relationship is based upon respect and trust that personal issues shared during the therapeutic process will be held in confidence. All verbal and/or written exchanges will be maintained in confidence but there are circumstances in which The Hope Programme cannot legally or ethically maintain confidentiality within the service. Wherever possible, The Hope Programme will make every attempt to communicate first with the client explaining the reasons for the need to pass on information and to whom this will be given.

Summary

This document covers:

- Record Keeping
- Supervision
- Conditions of attendance

There are legislative **EXCEPTIONS** to confidentiality and they are listed below. They would qualify as areas of authorised disclosure and are made strictly within the professional guidance set out by the BACP in its *Ethical framework*. The Hope Programme must pass on any information to the relevant authorities in cases where human safety is concerned including the following cases:

- If the client threatened harm to themselves or to another person
- If The Hope Programme believed a child or protected adult is at risk of harm or abuse
- If the court instructs The Hope Programme to give information
- If the client shares information about a proposed act of terrorism or other illegal act

Signed consent by the client is required for communication with other professionals and for receiving or providing information related to their therapy.

Counsellors must be willing to be accountable to their clients and to their profession for their management of confidentiality in general and, particularly, for any disclosures made without their client's consent.

Record and note keeping

It is a requirement of the counselling and psychotherapy profession that written records of sessions and contact with the client are made and kept. The Hope Programme’s counselling service keeps brief notes on the content of each counselling session. These notes are confidential to the service, and are used to record themes and details of each session. They are a subjective record of counselling sessions, and are used to log significant information and assist counsellors in their thinking about their work with each client. These notes are kept in a paper folder in a locked filing cabinet, which is only accessible to the counselling service. The records are managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and are the joint responsibility of the counsellor and The Hope Programme.

Completed ‘Core’ forms (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) are used to evaluate change and monitor outcomes of counselling and when this information is stored on computer it is entered with a code number rather than any identifying details. Non-identifiable statistics are gathered annually to provide details of any general trends or patterns to inform practice and influence the provision within the counselling service. There is no link in this data with any material relating to the content of counselling sessions. Case notes and contact details are retained for seven years and at the end of that period the records are destroyed under secure conditions.

Sessions:

Sessions last approximately 50 minutes and it is expected that the session will begin at the agreed time. If the client arrives late for a session it will still need to end at the original finish time. If the client does not arrive or call within 15 minutes of the agreed appointment, this will be considered a cancellation and the counsellor will not be available for the remainder of the session. If the client misses the session without notification another appointment will be offered but it may not be as soon as the client would wish. If three sessions are missed consecutively without explanation, the sessions will be offered to someone else.

Cancelling or rearranging appointments

If the client needs to cancel or rearrange an appointment it is important that they let The Hope Programme know so the appointment can be offered to someone else who may be on the waiting list. In order to cancel or rearrange the client needs to contact the counsellor on an agreed telephone number, or contact the clinical lead on 07930 306327 or alternatively email on thehopeprogramme@gmail.com . If the counsellor needs to cancel an appointment (e.g. because of illness), every effort will be made to notify the client where this can be done without breaching confidentiality.

Conditions of attendance

All clients are asked to attend their sessions free from the effects of alcohol and non-medical drugs. If the client appears to be under the influence of such substances, the counsellor may choose not to see the client for that session. Threatening, abusive or violent behaviour is unacceptable and will lead to termination of the counselling agreement. The counselling is not open-ended but is negotiated according to individual circumstances. Counsellors are professionally and ethically bound not to continue with therapy if it appears not to be beneficial to the client and reserve the right to decline clients if the counsellor feels that a client’s needs may be best met elsewhere.

Supervision

Each counsellor is professionally required to have regular supervision, in which they reflect upon their work with their clients with an experienced and appropriately qualified clinical supervisor. This work is governed by the same principles of confidentiality (for further information see www.bacp.co.uk). Counsellors also discuss their work in team meetings and with their line manager, the clinical lead of The Hope Programme.

I confirm that I give consent for my counsellor and The Hope Programme supervisors to discuss my material. I confirm that I understand my sessions are confidential and that it is only in the circumstances mentioned above that confidentiality may be broken.

Client’s Signature:

Name (Printed):

Dated:

Signature of Responsible Adult if applicable:

Print Name:

Relationship to client:

I hereby give consent for my counsellor to contact my GP on the understanding that any contact will be discussed with me first, except in case of an emergency. This permission is valid during the course of counselling and up to a month after.

GP details:

Name of GP:

Practice:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Client's Signature:

Name (Printed):

Date:

Signature of Responsible Adult if applicable:

Name (Printed):

Relationship to client:

Date:

Counsellor's Signature:

Name (Printed):

Date:

The Hope Programme's Confidentiality Policy and Procedure, the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedure and the Complaints Policy & Procedure are available upon request.

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The Hope Programme is GDPR compliant.

