

Psychotherapy Contract

This contract aims to set out our rights and obligations to one another - the therapist and clients. It provides some clarity on what is expected on both sides.

Fees & Payment

My fees per session are £80 for one-to-one psychotherapy and £110 per couple. Fees are payable prior to the session and non-payment will cancel the session.

UK bank details are:

Bank: Lloyds TSB
Account Name: Julie Shankly
Bank Account No: 35230168
Sort Code: 30-90-69

International Bank details are:

IBAN: GB19LOYD30906935230168
BIC/SWIFT: LOYDGB21189

Cancellation

The minimum notice period required for cancelling, changing or postponing an appointment is 48 hours or the session will be charged. There may be times when I am forced to cancel at short notice. I will always endeavour to give 48 hours' notice. Naturally, the client will never be charged for these.

Termination

The client can terminate therapy at any time. You do not have to discuss this with me. However, it's ideal to talk in sessions about ending therapy over a minimum of 2 sessions (which is not at all compulsory). However, the client is welcome to approach this subject and bring matters to me. This might result in you terminating therapy or deciding, after you have discussed it, to stay in therapy. This is an opportunity to encourage dialogue and allow therapy to be terminated in a positive way.

Duration of appointment

Sessions are 45 minutes long. If meeting in the office please don't arrive too early (to preserve your confidentiality and that of other clients). If you turn up late for your session we will still have to finish on time.

Holidays

I will always try to let you know at least a week in advance if I intend to take holiday and therefore will not be able to provide therapy during that period. Likewise, I would prefer a week's notice should you not be able to attend because of your holiday commitments.

Contact between sessions

Contact between sessions for the purpose of arranging/rearranging appointments is always acceptable and I will always acknowledge this. I can offer you contact between sessions in the form of text or email in case of emergency or distress. There will be no charge for this. However, an emergency meeting will be charged.

Where will the appointment be held

Appointments are held over Zoom or at the office. The address of my office is:
Room 225, Spaces, 60 Canon Street, London, EC4N 6NP

Client's state when attending therapy

Clients are expected to attend sessions free from the effects/influence of alcohol and drugs.

Notes/Reports

Notes are taken prior, during and after sessions and they are kept securely on my laptop, for a period of 3 years in accordance with data protection legislation.

The applicability of complaints procedure/BACP and UKCP codes of ethics

I work within both the BACP and UKCP's complaints process and code of ethics.

Confidentiality

The psychotherapeutic relationship is confidential except in the following circumstances:

- You, the client's, safety or safety of others is at risk
- You tell me about a serious breach of the law, past or planned (including terrorism)
- I discuss the work within supervision and the supervisor is also bound by confidentiality and you are only referred to by initial or first name
- If I am unable to practice due to accident or sudden incapacity a qualified colleague will contact you and enquire about your wish for further therapy.

- If I am compelled by a court of law to disclose notes/information about the client I must do so
- Non-payment of fees resulting in legal action being taken against you
- At your request – when you might require me to breach confidentiality (e.g. for a letter to a GP)
- See the contract below for further information

Counsellor Feedback

You will be asked for feedback for counselling practice quality and for marketing purposes. Please don't feel obliged to provide this, although it will help your counsellor improve and enable future clients to make a decision about working with this service. Any marketing comments will be anonymised.

Detailed Informed Consent for Therapy Agreement

If you have any questions, please bring this form back to your next session, so you and your therapist can go through this document in as much detail as is needed.

Receipt of this document represents an agreement between us.

Psychotherapy • Voluntary Participation:

- All clients voluntarily agree to treatment, and accordingly may terminate any time without penalty.
- Counselling involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be thoughtful about the therapist you select.
- In the first couple of sessions, you should be deciding whether your therapist is right for you. If you feel it is not a good match, then your therapist will be happy to assist you in finding a new therapist.

Client Involvement:

- All clients are expected to show up to appointments on time, prepared to focus on and discuss therapy goals and issues, and will not attend while under the influence of mood altering chemicals.
- All clients are expected to be open and honest so your therapist can assist you with your goals. Counselling is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be most successful, you are encouraged to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. Inconsistent attendance can negatively affect your therapy progress.

Therapist Involvement:

- Your therapist will be prepared at the designated time, (barring emergencies), and will be attentive and supportive in meeting the therapy goals and do everything possible to assist you in achieving a greater sense of self-awareness and work toward helping you resolve problem areas.

Guarantees: Although the majority of people do get better in therapy, some do get worse. Accordingly, your therapist makes no guarantee of results. It is not possible to guarantee results such as: becoming happier, saving marriages, stopping drug abuse, becoming less depressed, and so forth.

Risks of Therapy: Just as medications sometimes causes unexpected side effects, counselling can stimulate painful memories, unanticipated changes in your life, and uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. In some cases, client's symptoms become worse during the course of therapy, occasionally necessitating hospitalization. Another risk of therapy is that throughout the process of therapeutic change it is not uncommon for clients to reach a point of change where they may feel they are different and no longer able to be the same person they were upon entering therapy. At times these feelings can be unsettling.

Benefits of Therapy: The benefits of therapy can include: a higher level of functional coping, solutions to specific problems, new insights into self, more effective means of communicating in relationships, symptomatic relief, and improved self-esteem.

Alternatives to Traditional Therapy: can include: stress management, twelve step programs, peer self-help groups, bibliotherapy, and support groups.

counselling Approach & Theory: Your therapist generally uses a therapy approach that includes a Cognitive Behavioural, Systemic, Humanistic, Solution Focused and Single Session Therapy orientation to counselling.

Your counsellor focuses largely upon

- client responsibility in therapy,
- building a relationship with clients,
- creating a nurturing environment conducive to change,
- exploration of past events and how they continue to affect you today,
- analysis of underlying belief systems and their relation to inadequate functioning or hindrance to change, and

- implementation of specific emotional, cognitive, and behavioural techniques designed to aid in change toward specified goals.

Meetings and Length of Therapy: Once we have agreed to work together, we will usually schedule one appointment every 1-2 weeks at a time we can agree upon. Session length most insurance plans cover is 45 minutes. Occasionally sessions may run as long as 50 minutes. Because our meetings are your time, you are expected to come to each session with a sense of what it is you would like to discuss or work on during that particular session.

Length of therapy in terms of number of sessions is quite variable based on client motivation, number and severity of issues to resolve, and work efforts outside of therapy sessions. On average, many people feel they have obtained what they were looking for in 10-25 sessions. For some it is fewer and for others it may go longer.

Confidentiality and Privilege: The information and content shared in therapy will remain confidential, except as noted in the next section:

Confidentiality and Privilege. Your information will not be shared with anyone without your written consent. Your information is also privileged, which means that your therapist is free from the duty to speak in court about your counselling unless you waive that right, or a judge orders it. • Exceptions to

Confidentiality and Privilege – Further Information: Your therapist is legally obligated to violate confidentiality under the following circumstances:

- When the therapist has reason to suspect that the client has been, or is currently, involved in the abuse or neglect of child
 - When the therapist has reason to suspect that the client has been, or is currently, involved, in the abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults
 - If a client is pregnant and taking street drugs
 - If the client reports sexual misconduct by another counsellor
 - If a client is a serious danger to themselves, i.e., if suicidal
 - If a client is a serious danger to someone else, i.e., if homicidal
 - If the courts order copies of records o Another time when confidentiality has limitations is for minor clients. Parents and guardians have legal right to access a minor client's records although Minor clients do have the rights to complete confidentiality in obtaining counselling for pregnancies and associated conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, and information about alcohol or drug abuse
- **Ethical Guidelines:** Your counsellor follows the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and Association for Family Therapy (AFT) ethical guidelines
 - **Medical Records:** The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless we believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case we will send them to a mental health professional of your choosing. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. We recommend you review them in your therapist's presence so we can discuss the contents. All client records include: a data sheet filled out prior to therapy, a chronological listing of appointments and fees, a copy of signed releases, copies of any correspondence regarding your case, a copy of the signed informed consent packet materials, and a copy of all therapist notes. All records will be maintained by your therapist in a secured area for a period of three years from the time of service termination. As a client you have a right to access your records. You also have a right to contest material in your records and it will be duly noted in your record. You do not have a right to alter your records or dictate information be removed. You have the right to access and view your record, but you do not own the records, they are property the therapist.
 - **Counselling and Records for Minors:** If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law provides your parents the right to review your treatment records as well as obtain information from us about your diagnosis, progress, and treatment. It is our policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to avoid unnecessary review of records and involvement in your treatment with us. If they agree, we will only provide them general information about our work together, unless we feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, we will notify them of our concern.
 - **Supporting Vendors:** In the course of operating our mental health clinic we may contract with various external vendors such as an accountant, information technology (IT), claims clearinghouse, and an electronic health record (EHR) vendor. In all these cases we have a contract in place with our vendors. This means they understand the guidelines for confidentiality and agree to abide by those regulations set forth and maintain the same level of confidentiality that healthcare professionals are bound to in the event they should encounter patient information. Careful steps are taken with our accountant and IT vendor to ensure they rarely encounter any client information. In the case of insurance claims, our claims clearinghouse and Electronic Health Record (EHR) is used to submit medical claims electronically and maintain patient records. In both cases, bank level security and encryption is used to protect client information. Their systems are also electronically automated and vendor

support rep's are only accessed if a data input error occurred. Support staff of the claims clearinghouse and EHR vendor have restricted access and are not able to access patient narrative notes. Our EHR vendor, like most EHR vendors, does have authority to use de-identified patient information.

- **Professional Fees:** If you are utilizing health insurance benefits, your health plan may have a contracted rate with your therapist or doctor that differs from the usual and customary fees listed in our fee schedule.
- **Health Insurance:** You should be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis for benefits to pay for services. Sometimes we are required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Although all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they can share the information with national medical information databanks. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the potential problems described above. Please keep us informed of changes in your financial status and insurance or medical assistance eligibility. You may be responsible for charges incurred if your coverage has changed or lapsed and you do not inform us in advance.
- **Phone Availability:** We are often not available by phone. We encourage the use of an after-hours crisis counselling agency where a counsellor is able to assist you with any problems. These include free listening services that offer confidential support from trained volunteers: Call [116 123](tel:116123) to talk to [Samaritans](http://Samaritans.org), or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours; Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the [Shout Crisis Text Line](http://ShoutCrisisTextLine.org), or text "YM" if you're under 19; If you're under 19, you can also call [0800 1111](tel:08001111) to talk to [Childline](http://Childline.org). The number will not appear on your phone bill.
- **Emergency & Interruption of Therapy:** In the event of any mental health or substance abuse emergency, we encourage you to contact the after-hours crisis service 101 or call 999
- **Termination:** Either the client or the therapist may end therapy at any time. Your voluntary involvement allows you to discontinue at any time. If your therapist feels you are no longer benefiting from therapy or your therapist feels there is a conflict in values, they may discuss termination. If you desire additional counselling your therapist will provide you with a referral competent to address your issues.
- **Client Satisfaction Survey:** We welcome feedback about the services you receive. We are dedicated to improving the delivery of services to clients. Attached is a client satisfaction survey that you may fill out at any time during or after the completion of counselling. Return it to: julie.shankly@outlook.com
- **Agreement and Terms**
- **Billing and Payments:** You will be expected to pay for each session at the beginning of our meetings, unless we have agreed on other arrangements. In the case of health insurance, you will be expected to provide any deductible or co-payments prior to our session meetings. Keep in mind that it is you (not your insurance company) that is responsible for full payment of fees. Therefore, it is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. Deviation from this agreement must be arranged Julie Shankly directly
- **Cancellation, No Show or Late Arrival:** In general, all clients must provide the therapist a minimum of 24 hours' notice in the event of a cancellation, which does not include weekends. This means if you have an appointment at 1:00pm on Monday, you will need to have cancelled by 1:00pm on the Friday prior. Clients will be charged for appointments that are not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance and for all no shows. Insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments; therefore, you will be responsible for the full amount charged. Clients arriving late will not be provided an extension of time beyond what they were scheduled so as not to disrupt other client appointments. No reduction in fees will result from shortened sessions due to a client's late arrival. Additionally, if a client misses two appointments, your therapist has the option to terminate services and refer you to another clinic for services.
- **Account Balance Maximum:** Whenever a client's account reaches an outstanding balance of £100 and no payments have been made or received toward the account, additional counselling services will be suspended. Services will remain suspended until client begins making payment toward their account. If no payments are made, services will remain suspended and/or clients may be referred to alternate providers for services
- **Collections:** If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of the services provided, and the amount due. Accounts turned over to collections may be subject to future requirements such as providing a retainer for future services.