

Counselling Contract

Between Ian Murdoch (ISR Counselling)

and

[Client]

This counselling contract details our working agreement, i.e. the way in which we work and some of the things I will and will not be able to offer. This is our template, but if there are elements of this agreement that you feel you would like to alter, we can discuss these and agree any changes between us.

The type of Counselling I offer

I am trained in and qualified to work with a type of counselling called the Person-Centred Approach (sometimes also referred to as Client Led Therapy). In the person-centred approach, the role of the therapist is to try to understand as much as possible the world as you see it.

In doing so, I will try to provide an environment for you that offers you unconditional positive regard and is entirely without judgement of anything that you tell me or that we talk about. There is a wealth of research-based evidence that indicates that when these conditions are met, clients are able to explore and understand their deeper emotions, enabling them to unpick and make sense of them. We will only however go as deep or as detailed as you feel comfortable with at any given time.

In this type of counselling, my role is not to try and tell you what you should do, rather to help you to navigate that path for yourself.

Location, Duration of Sessions and of Counselling as a whole

Our sessions will be 50 mins long and take place at a time agreed between us in advance, usually one week apart. They will take place at my counselling studio at 496 West Wycombe Road, at Thame Wellbeing or if more convenient, can be held at the Youth Enquiries Service in central High Wycombe. I can also offer on-line sessions over video conferencing software. Please see below for some specific points related to on-line counselling.

There is not a limit to the number of sessions we can have, but we will conduct a review of how we feel the sessions are going every 6 weeks or so. The decision as to how many sessions you feel you need will be entirely yours and you can terminate them at any time up to 24 hours before our next scheduled session.

Confidentiality

Our sessions will always be confidential unless I am professionally or legally obligated to breach this confidentiality. I may need to share information if I understand one or more of the following are the case.

1. There is a risk of serious harm to you or someone else
2. There is a safeguarding issue concerning a minor or vulnerable adult
3. You have disclosed something regarding a serious crime, e.g. terrorist activity or laundering of drug money.
4. You have disclosed information about FGM (female genital mutilation) or forced marriage

5. I am subpoenaed by the police to provide my notes or called as a witness in a criminal trial
6. You have requested that I release your notes to a third party

In any instance where I am required to breach your confidentiality, I will always discuss this with you first and where possible, seek your agreement. There may however be times (as listed above) where I am required to do so, even without your consent.

I will make brief notes of our sessions, and these will be kept in a secure cloud. They will however be anonymised, i.e. my notes and your personal details will be kept separately and nothing in your notes would enable you to be identified. You are able to see your notes if you so wish and details of how to arrange this are available in my Privacy Policy. I am required by my insurer to keep notes for 7 years (in the case of under 18s, for 7 years after they reach 18) and after this time they will be routinely deleted.

I attend clinical supervision on a regular basis. This is a process that is essential to the continued professionalism of all counsellors and in these sessions, I may discuss elements of our work with my supervisor. All client details will however be anonymised.

In the event that I die, I am incapacitated or otherwise unable to continue our work unexpectedly, I have a 'clinical will' which in these circumstances would be activated. You would be contacted by a fully qualified professional counsellor who would inform you of the situation at hand and make arrangements to refer you to a suitable alternative should you so wish.

For more details on confidentiality and data protection, please see my Privacy Policy on www.isrcounselling.co.uk

Boundaries

I will be available to you in person at our agreed meeting times and can be contacted by text or telephone on 07359 870951 from 9am until 9pm daily. I am not however a crisis counsellor and do not practice over telephone or video link unless we have agreed this in advance. If you are in crisis, please contact www.samaritans.org.uk or see www.isrcounselling.co.uk for other possible sources of immediate help.

All sessions are one to one, unless otherwise agreed in advance and there are no waiting facilities for friends or relatives at either of my places of counselling.

Physical contact during counselling sessions is inappropriate and I will never suggest or initiate such.

To protect your privacy, we will discuss how you would prefer to handle a chance meeting outside of the counselling environment.

Ethics

I am a registered member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and I work to their ethical framework. You can access this at www.bacp.co.uk

Cancellations and Fees

My standard rate is £60 per session, payable by cash or bank transfer within 24 hours of the session. Sessions missed without prior notice or cancelled within 24 hours of the appointment are charged at the full rate.

Complaints

If you have concerns over any aspect of our work together, please raise these with me initially and I will do all I can to alleviate them. If you feel unable to or wish to escalate the matter, you can take this to my professional body at www.bacp.co.uk.

Jurisdiction

Our work will be undertaken under and governed by the laws of England and the ethical guidelines of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

On-line Counselling

I am trained in working on-line and can offer sessions via video conferencing software (usually Zoom). There are some benefits and challenges associated with working in this medium.

Benefits

- You may feel safer working in your own space
- Cuts down travelling time
- More flexibility on times
- Convenient if you have to travel
- No chance of inadvertently bumping into someone you know

Challenges

- Are you comfortable with the technology?
- Is your space completely safe and free of interruption?
- We are reliant on bandwidth and consistent internet signal
- For some clients, on-line may feel less personal
- The journey home can offer valuable processing time.

Experience suggests that better outcomes are achieved by being consistent with the medium used (i.e. all on-line or all face to face), but if circumstances dictate, we can agree to a blended programme, or one-off sessions of one or the other. The terms of our counselling contract will apply as detailed above, but in addition, if we agree to on-line sessions, I

- Will send you a link by email to a secure and private meeting room at least 24 hours in advance of our scheduled session. Whatever media we use will be fully encrypted and confidential.
- Will ensure that I am in a private confidential space where I will not be interrupted or overheard.
- Will agree with you a fall-back position should our connection be lost for any reason (e.g. WhatsApp video call).
- Will never record our sessions without your permission, and if (in the unlikely event) we do record the session, will delete the recording within 24 hours and will not share it with any individual or on any media platform.

You agree that

- You are comfortable with and able to operate the required technology.
- You will be in a private space, unaccompanied, where you will not be interrupted or overheard (the use of headphones or ear buds may assist in preventing inadvertent 'leakage').
- You will not record the session
- You will attend the session with video and audio activated.
- If you are unable to attend or fail to log in, you will contact me by text or phone (on 07359 870951).

I understand the type of counselling that is being offered and agree to the terms detailed above.

Name

(if signing for an U18, please state your name and capacity, e.g. parent or guardian)

Signature

Ian Murdoch (MBACP)

Signature