

Client Information Sheet



Information about your counselling
Please read this important information

About Colin Beckwith Counselling

Who am I and what do I do

My name is Colin Beckwith (MBACP) BA (Hons). I offer a private one to one counselling service under the name Colin Beckwith Counselling (CBC). I am qualified as a Professional Counsellor and work within the codes of practice of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

My Fees

My fee for each session will be as advertised on the CBC website at www.cbccounselling.com. Fees can be paid by cash, cheque and BACS transfer. Any changes to my fees will be done under written agreement between us.

Your Personal Data

I have a legal responsibility under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) to protect your Personal Data. As a Data Controller I work within the rules of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

I will only process your Personal Data to ensure the correct and ethical conduct of CBC. I will NOT pass on any Personal Data to anyone, unless I have your informed consent.

Session and Assessment Notes

I am required as a Counsellor to keep session notes. Notes are written up for the Assessment and each subsequent Counselling Session.

At the Assessment I will fill in an Assessment Form which will include contact details and some background information. During our subsequent Counselling work I will write a factual narrative of each session.

It is CBC policy to file Session notes separately from Assessment material. All notes are stored securely and are not accessible to anyone but me.

Preventing Detection of an Individuals identity

It is necessary for CBC to compile basic practice data for specific purposes. This can be for historical or professional reasons. It is used confidentially within the counselling profession. One example of this is as part of my membership of BACP.

It is the policy of CBC to Pseudonymise Personal Data whenever possible. This makes the individual undetectable to anyone but me. The purpose of this is to maintain the confidential integrity of CBC, whilst honouring professional commitments.

My background

I spent a considerable part of my working life in industry as an engineer and decided to train as a Counsellor in 2010. I have been qualified as a Counsellor, to degree level since 2015 and have been working in the voluntary sector. My work includes a period as a Counsellor at a University Counselling service. I currently work part time as a Bereavement Counsellor for a local charity.

My Qualifications

I have a BA (Hons) Degree in Humanistic Counselling from the University of Chichester. The path to Degree level includes a Diploma in Humanistic Counselling from the University of Chichester. The entry requirement was my completion of a Basic Counselling Skills course also undertaken at Chichester.

Other training have I have completed

Since qualification, I have undertaken various courses and workshops to widen my effectiveness as a Counsellor. This is also a requirement of BACP who see Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as an important part of professional and ethical Counselling practice. Details of my training and CPD can be seen at www.cbccounseling.com.

Maintaining and enhancing my competence

In addition to formal training courses and CPD I attend regular sessions with my own Counsellor. This helps me maintain my own sense of well being. I see this as a crucial part of my fitness to practice as a Counsellor.

The people I am qualified to Counsel

I am specifically qualified to work with Adults over the age of 18 years on a One to One basis.

Professional and ethical Counselling Practice

I am a member of BACP and as such I am both bound and committed to operate CBC in accordance with the 'Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions' published by BACP.

This lays down ethical standards for all of my activity as a Counsellor. My professional relationship with BACP is of a confidential nature.

My location and hours of business

I have a dedicated ground floor Counselling Room located in Havant, Hampshire. I will give you all the location details prior to our first meeting.

My hours of business excluding Bank Holidays are:

Monday to Friday Daytime 8am to 5pm

Monday to Friday Evenings 7:30pm to 9:30pm by special arrangement

Lunch Break 1pm to 2pm

Evening sessions can be arranged when no suitable daytime option exists. I do not work at weekends and I may also be unavailable due to holidays.

Contacting me between sessions

I will normally be available to answer the telephone Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm. If I am not able to answer the telephone during these hours, please leave a message. I will reply within 24 hours during normal hours of business. If you need to contact me out of hours, please leave a message and I will reply within 24 hours of the commencement of business.

Contact in an emergency

I appreciate that sometimes you may need to talk to someone in an emergency. In this situation it is usually more helpful for you to call an organisation that offers a 24 hour service. Unfortunately, I would not be in a position to respond to you out of hours in a way that would be of most help to you. I give details below of organisations well placed to offer effective help in these situations. I will be glad to offer my full support in relation to this when we next meet.

The Assessment Process

The purpose of the Assessment

An Assessment is a free of charge and confidential 50 minute session in which certain administration tasks are undertaken. I will use the first part of the Assessment to explain confidentiality and how our work together might proceed. Next I will explain the Terms and Conditions of Counselling and explain my duty with regard to your Personal Data.

We will talk about the 'Terms and Conditions' and 'Personal Data Consent' forms which will need to be signed by you as Consent to proceed. I will then record your details and ask you a few questions about yourself. This will be the opportunity for you to talk about some aspects of your life which brought you to Counselling.

The content of the Assessment

I appreciate that having Counselling could be a very challenging decision for you. The assessment can signal the start of your journey toward a better sense of well being.

The Assessment includes an information gathering phase as well as a space to share something of what's going on in your life. It is different from a Counselling session in that mainly factual aspects of your experiences will be discussed.

This process can bring some emotions to the surface. I will manage the time in order to effectively acknowledge your feelings. It can be helpful to think about how much you wish to share at this stage. These feelings will be explored in the Counselling as they emerge.

Confidentiality in the Assessment and Counselling

In the Assessment and Counselling, Confidentiality is absolutely vital for an effective and safe outcome for you. It helps to create a bounded container in which the work can proceed. Moreover, without a clearly defined concept of Confidentiality, Counselling as such could not happen.

Therefore, I take Confidentiality and its role very seriously. I am held accountable for Confidentiality from when we first make contact to well after we finish. I am ethically and professionally answerable to the BACP and UK Law as well as my own morals.

Confidentiality in General

Everything that happens between us in our work together is Confidential. From your Personal Data to the actual session content, my relationship with you is bounded in Confidentiality. For example, I will not disclose to any party any existence of any working relationship between us unless I have your Informed Consent.

Changes to any routine aspects of Confidentiality will be discussed, only if a mutually agreeable need exists and it is appropriate for you. I will always seek your permission to make any changes to the agreed Circle of Confidentiality. Other aspects of Confidentiality are covered later on under the heading 'Boundaries of Confidentiality'.

Coming to the Assessment

It is best to arrive not more than 5 minutes or so before your Assessment is due to start. This ensures I can give you my full attention when you get here.

If you are late for the Assessment

Due to the constraints of the Assessment and the ground to be covered it is not possible to accommodate delays of more than about 10 minutes. It is necessary to apply this because of possible delays to subsequent sessions. It would be really helpful to let me know if you think you may be delayed. We will then re schedule an Assessment for a later date.

What happens after the Assessment

I will invite you to raise any questions which I will answer to the best of my knowledge. If I don't know the answer I will either find out or direct you to a source of information.

After the Assessment you can decide whether you want to work with me. You are under no obligation whatsoever to engage in counselling with CBC after an Assessment with me.

If you feel that you would like to work with me, we can make arrangements for how your ongoing sessions will be structured. If my availability permits, Counselling can start as soon as you are ready. Ideally, once we agree to work together we would start Counselling within a couple weeks of your Assessment.

If you find you don't feel it appropriate to work with me I can suggest other Counsellors who may be better placed to help. I will do my best to satisfy your immediate needs.

In some rare instances it may emerge that I feel that I am not in a position to offer you the most appropriate service for your needs. This may happen for various reasons which may include my assessment of my own professional competence in relation to your needs. In these circumstances I will endeavour to guide you in the most appropriate course of action that would facilitate your immediate needs and wishes.

If you remain undecided as to whether to proceed, that's really OK and I can keep your details on file if you wish. I would recommend having another Assessment if there is a gap of more than 6 months between Assessment and your decision to continue to Counselling.

Ongoing Counselling Sessions

The session structure

Each face to face session lasts 50 minutes. However, I allocate 60 minute slots for every Client I see. I use the remaining time to write and safely store your session notes. I may also undertake any administration that may be required as part of our work together. This constitutes the 'therapeutic hour' and is the basis of my routine work pattern.

Arriving for your Counselling session

Like with the Assessment, it's best to arrive at the Counselling Room not more than 5 minutes or so, before your session is due to start. This ensures I will be available to greet you at the door. I will show you to a seat where you are welcome to wait the short time for the session to start.

Arriving earlier may mean that I will not be in a position to answer the door especially if I am with another client. I feel it is important to not interrupt sessions which are in already progress. I am sure you would appreciate that an interruption could affect the flow of the session and its effectiveness for the person involved.

If you are late your Counselling session

I appreciate that life does not always go to plan. I will endeavour to facilitate the commencement of the session if you can arrive within 25 minutes of the arranged start time.

I need to keep within the constraints of the CBC session slot structure. For this reason I will unfortunately, need to end the session at our allocated ending time. Therefore, this would be a shorter session than normal. This is because I regard the 25 minutes that would remain as the minimum time in which any effective and ethical Counselling can be contained.

I can, however, accommodate a delay of up to 5 minutes and still allocate the full 50 minutes without unduly affecting the subsequent slots. Please see the 'Terms and Conditions' for further details and impact on fees payable.

Cancelling a pre booked Counselling session

I ask in the 'Terms and Conditions' that you give me at least 48 hours notice if you wish to cancel any Counselling session. This is so I can make plans to use the time in some other way.

I appreciate that it may not always be possible to give 48 hours notice. Where an emergency situation exists I would use my discretion as to whether a fee would be due. Please either phone or email me if you need to cancel the session.

Non attendance without prior notice

The CBC session structure is designed to use the time available during the day to the best effect for all Clients. Where I receive 48 hrs notice of a cancellation, it may be possible for me to re allocate a session to beneficial effect.

When this does not happen it can restrict my availability to other potential Clients who could have the benefit of this time. Please see the 'Terms and Conditions' for further details and impact on fees payable.

Late Running of sessions

I will always intend to finish our session on time. It is my responsibility to manage the time boundaries within the session. Unfortunately, this may not always be possible and very rarely, a session may overrun.

If the overrun amounts to more than 25 minutes it may impact on the running subsequent sessions. Unfortunately, a session may need to be cancelled. In these situations I will do everything possible to minimise and mitigate the impact on those affected.

I will not expect a fee to be paid for a session that has been made unavailable to you due to Late Running. Meanwhile, I am sure you realise that sometimes things do not go to plan and emergencies can happen. Please see the 'Terms and Conditions' for further details.

Boundaries of Confidentiality

Your counselling with me is Confidential and it is important to clarify what Confidentiality actually means with regard to your Counselling. Confidentiality in this sense means that our work happens within a Circle of Confidentiality comprising certain designated roles. The most prominent of these is Supervision which is a mandatory component of all ethical Counselling.

My professional development within BACP means that they also have a role in the Circle of Confidentiality by proxy. The BACP require me to record limited practice history data which I Pseudonymise.

During my CPD activities I sometimes need to reflect on my Counselling work. This is done in a Confidential setting with other Counselling Professionals. Cases may be discussed, but an Individual's name is NEVER disclosed in these circumstances. Reflecting on my practice in this way can enhance my general effectiveness as a counsellor. However, I will not mention our work in a CPD setting unless you have given me your Informed Consent. This is formalised and specifically recorded on the 'Terms and Conditions' form. You may withdraw this consent at any time and your access to counselling will not be affected.

In some circumstances, where it is appropriate, it can be helpful for me to cite our work in other ways. This may be for research, academic or professional reasons, such as case studies. Often, this comprises of Pseudonymised reference to session narratives and processes. Sometimes the making of audio recordings of session content may be applicable. I will not seek to do this unless a specific and appropriate need arises. I will not seek consent until we have explored the possible implications in our ongoing work together. There is absolutely no obligation to agree to this. Any consent you give can be withdrawn at any time without affecting your counselling.

So, to be clear when you sign the 'Terms and Conditions' form you are giving me permission to work with you in a specific way. That is, Counselling within a minimal Circle of Confidentiality. This comprises of You, Myself as member of BACP and the Supervisor. Any extensions to the Circle of Confidentiality agreed are documented on the 'Terms and Conditions' form and where appropriate the 'Extension of Confidentiality' forms.

What is Supervision.

It is vitally important to be able to offer you a Counselling service that is as far as possible the best I can make it. Therefore my work with you will be overseen at a distance. I have an experienced Counsellor qualified specifically as a Supervisor for that purpose. My regular use of Supervision is stipulated by the BACP and reflects my own professional integrity as a Counsellor.

All professional Counsellors will engage in regular Supervision in one form or another, with an experienced Supervisor. Without Supervision, Counselling as such, can not proceed. Therefore

it is a fundamental requirement that I explore aspects of our work together with my Supervisor in their setting. In Supervision I usually refer to my clients by their first name only. However, it is possible for me to use a pseudonym if that feels more appropriate for you. Supervision helps me to maintain the ethical integrity of our work together. It keeps an eye on my effectiveness as your Counsellor and your safety as my Client. It also supports me and enables me to offer you the best service I can. It is intended and born out by experience that Supervision enhances the effectiveness of Counselling. This is something which I firmly believe and commit to in my work.

Supervisors do not usually have any direct contact with the Clients of their Supervisees. I attend Supervision at their premises and usually present my work verbally. Very rarely, a Supervisor may ask for audio recordings of work with Clients. This is however very unlikely and only if the possibility exists, I will seek permission from you to do this. You are NOT obliged to consent to this and it will not affect your access to counselling if you decline.

Confidentiality and ongoing Counselling

From time to time it may be necessary to refine how your counselling needs are being met. Where appropriate we may have a dialogue involving a plan to extend the Circle of Confidentiality. Doing this is only ever done with your agreement and permission. This may be for example, to include your GP in to the existing Circle of Confidentiality. It may also be appropriate to bring in other organisations depending on circumstances. However, you are NOT obliged to do this and it will not affect your access to counselling if you decline.

Very rarely, it may be necessary to extend confidentiality for emergency reasons. The nature of the circumstances may mean that I will possibly have to seek to do this without your consent. However, I will not contact anybody unless I have explained my intentions and reasoning to you before hand. The situation usually only arises when there is a concern for the immediate safety of you or others.

Very rarely, I may be asked to disclose information to outside parties for specific legal purposes. I will never disclose any information whatsoever, to any outside parties, whatever their status without discussing it with you first. If it turns out that you feel the disclosure may be in your interests, it may be appropriate for you to consent to such a disclosure. I will only ever consider disclosing material without your consent if I receive a Court Order. Once again, I will discuss this with you and explore the implications before any material is actually disclosed. By default, I will decline to make any comment to any party that seeks information on anyone who I am working with professionally.

I am legally obliged to disclose certain very serious illegal activities to the authorities which I may become aware of during my day to day Counselling practice. The authorities deem certain illegal activities as applicable to mandatory disclosure in the pursuit of Public Interest. These activities by their nature are extremely rare and not likely to come up in our work together.

I know that some of these situations can sound a bit scary, please don't worry. Most Counselling continues without any need to break Confidentiality or intervene against your wishes.

If an emergency arises in our work together

In the unfortunate case of you being taken ill during a session it may be appropriate to inform your Emergency Contact or call an Ambulance with your consent. Should you become seriously incapacitated for any reason I will call an Ambulance on your behalf.

How many sessions will I have

It is not usually required to stipulate how many sessions we have together, but it can be helpful to have a session plan. Frequently a run of 6 sessions can be sufficient for the needs of many individuals. Sometimes more sessions may be appropriate and this will depend on our mutual understanding of your counselling needs. Sessions may run in multiples of 6 and perhaps 12 sessions may be appropriate. If required and appropriate, we can work in an open ended way that does not fix the number of sessions.

Ending Counselling

When we have agreed the number of sessions when we start the ending will usually take place when those sessions have been completed. If we are working more flexibly an awareness of an eventual ending is helpful. Reviewing the work regularly can often clarify the narrative of the work and indicate how you feel about it. I will never seek to end our work together without mutual exploration and confirmation of your readiness to end.

Choosing to see another Counsellor

Sometimes it becomes evident that things are not working out to your satisfaction. On these occasions it may be appropriate to explore and discuss the possibility of moving to another Counsellor. This is absolutely OK and can sometimes lead to a more effective outcome for you. I will endeavour to facilitate this in any way that you feel is appropriate and beneficial.

If you need to make a complaint

I am a member of BACP under the name Colin Beckwith. This gives you a facility to make a complaint about the service I offer as CBC. I will always do my utmost to treat you fairly and will endeavour to resolve any issues we may have during the course of our work together. However, I realise that sometimes it may be best for you to take the matter further. The complaints procedure is available at www.bacp.co.uk. BACP have a duty to all Clients of BACP members, to investigate complaints and where appropriate, impose sanctions on their membership of BACP.

Organisations offering immediate support

Samaritans

24 Hour Helpline for anybody
Phone 116 123 on any phone or visit www.samaritans.org

Mind

The Mental Health Charity
www.mind.org.uk

Papyrus

A society which helps young people with suicidal thoughts
www.papyrus-uk.org

The Silverline

24 Hour Helpline for older people
Phone 0800 4 70 80 90 or visit www.thesilverline.org.uk

Childline

Providing support for children in many ways
Phone 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk

NHS Direct

General health and wellbeing
Phone 111 or visit:
www.111.nhs.uk
www.nhs.co.uk

Rape Crisis England and Wales

Support for victims of rape
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Refuge

24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline
Phone 0808 2000 247 or visit www.refuge.org.uk