

Counselling Service Client Guidelines



Welcome to The Centre for Better Health Counselling Service. These guidelines serve to set out what we expect of you as a client of our service and what in turn you can expect from us.

Please note that any decisions regarding our clients' engagement with the service are taken in line with these guidelines and with input from the service team.

<p>Our service</p>	<p>We are a low-cost counselling service that provides placements to counsellors in training. All our counsellors are enrolled on a recognised counselling course and receive clinical supervision at the Centre as well as with their training organisation. It is important for clients to understand that it is likely they will be allocated to a counsellor in training and that aspects of the work may be discussed in confidence during the counsellor's clinical supervision.</p> <p>While we are able to support a broad range of issues, we are not able to work with clients whose main current presenting issue is adoption, bereavement, eating disorders or drug and alcohol misuse; or who have a level of complexity or risk that is not manageable in this service. This may include, for example, C-PTSD, BPD, active psychosis, and dissociation.</p> <p>We allocate clients to counsellors based on the complexity of their needs and the experience and ways of working of our counsellors. While we can usually meet a preference for a counsellor of a particular gender, we cannot typically accommodate other preferences, including for a particular model of counselling. If it is important to you to have a therapist that meets particular criteria, your needs may be better met by another service.</p> <p>We offer therapy under the umbrella of humanistic counselling. We do not have disorder-specific specialist practitioners, for example, for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).</p>
<p>Session fees and payment</p>	<p>We are committed to providing a quality and affordable service. For daytime sessions, we implement a sliding fee scale, with the top and middle rates helping to subsidise the £5 fee for those who are not working, sick or a carer and claiming a means-tested benefit. Fees contribute to the running of the service; including the building and staff costs.</p> <p>To access a concession rate, proof of circumstances must be emailed to us in advance of your first session. You will not be able to start counselling until we have received this.</p> <p>Payment for each session will be taken at the reception desk when you arrive. Card payments are encouraged; however, we can also accept cash if necessary. If you miss a session, we will send you a payment link, which we ask you to settle prior to the following week's session.</p> <p>When you accept a place within our counselling service, you are booking a weekly slot that is reserved for you until you end your counselling. As this slot cannot be used by anyone else if you are unable to attend, and to ensure we can remain a low-cost service, we charge for all sessions, including those you cannot attend. This is irrespective of whether you give notice or the reason (holidays, sickness, appointments, logistical issues). If planned absence is for two+ consecutive sessions, you must pay in advance and agree a return date.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical emergency) and at the Centre's discretion, the Centre may allow up to two sessions over the course of therapy free of charge.</p> <p>The Centre does not charge for sessions cancelled by your counsellor.</p>
<p>Attendance and punctuality</p>	<p>You will see the same counsellor at the same time and day each week. Taking responsibility for, and committing to your sessions, is an important part of the therapeutic process. This includes attending your session each week. We do not send reminders.</p>

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	<p>Sessions begin on the hour and last up to 50 minutes. You are expected to attend on time. If you are running late, please contact us. If you are more than 20 minutes late, your session will not take place and payment will be required. If this happens regularly, sessions could be brought to an end. If you are late, we will not call to remind you.</p>
Cancellations and absence	<p>If you are unable to attend a session, please contact us at least 24 hours in advance and not less than two hours before your session. Please give more notice wherever possible. We also encourage you to discuss any cancellations and absence with your counsellor.</p>
	<p>If you are unable to attend a session for any reason, you will not be able to reschedule.</p>
	<p>On the understanding that sometimes things happen that are beyond our control, the Centre may allow a session to take place by telephone in certain exceptional circumstances, excluding planned absences, holidays or travel for work, where feasible for your counsellor.</p>
	<p>We are not able to accommodate requests to change the agreed date and time of your weekly sessions in the case that your availability changes.</p>
	<p>If you have low attendance, your counsellor will discuss this with you if there is the opportunity to do so. As a guide, we consider low attendance to be three missed sessions out of six at any one time, regardless of the reason(s) given or whether notice has been given.</p>
	<p>If you have any concerns about your ability to continue counselling, please discuss these with your counsellor as soon as possible.</p>
Reviews	<p>We encourage you to reflect on the extent to which you feel that the counselling is of value to you and to talk to your counsellor if you have any feedback, questions or concerns.</p>
	<p>There will be a formal review during your sixth session. This is an opportunity for you and your counsellor to discuss how the sessions are going; whether your Counsellor/the Centre can meet your needs; whether you would like to continue working together; and review your goals. There will be further reviews at 12, 24 and 36 weeks. While we will exceptionally consider reallocating a client to another counsellor, this is not routine.</p>
Duration	<p>The duration of counselling will depend on your needs; and an agreement between you, your counsellor and the Centre to continue to work together. Sessions cannot continue beyond 12 months. If your counsellor leaves the service, you will be given as much notice as possible to allow time for an ending process. We will not necessarily reallocate you.</p>
Monitoring	<p>Through our counselling service, we aim to support you to achieve personal growth and improved wellbeing and quality of life. To assess your needs, as well as to understand the journey that you have been on since starting your counselling, we will ask you to respond to some questions when you apply, during and at the end of your counselling.</p>
	<p>You may feel that some of these questions are quite personal or don't resonate with you. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability; responses help us to provide a suitable service, learn whether our services are being experienced in the way we intend, and understand whether we are effectively supporting clients to achieve positive change.</p>
	<p>All responses are collected and stored in line with our Confidentiality Policy and Privacy Notice. When reporting our impact as a service, any data used will be anonymous.</p>
Terminating counselling	<p>You are free to terminate counselling at any point. We do encourage you, however, to have a final closing session with your counsellor.</p>
	<p>The Centre may decide to end your counselling in any of the following circumstances:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-payment of fee/s (for attended sessions; or for missed sessions) • Late payment of fee/s (when fees are persistently paid late) • No notice given for absence (if you miss your first counselling session without notifying us; or if you miss two consecutive sessions without notifying us). • Low attendance (your counsellor will discuss low attendance with you if there is the opportunity to do so in session. If attendance issues persist, your counsellor will discuss this with the Centre and your counselling may be brought to an end).
Returning	We only offer one discreet period of therapy; you cannot reapply in future. We can provide details of other counselling services once your therapy at the Centre comes to an end.
Confidentiality	Our service is confidential. There are circumstances, however, in which we would be required to breach confidentiality; for example, if you, or another person is at risk of harm.
Supporting statements	We are not able to act as referees for applications such as for benefits or funding, or for court proceedings. On request, we can provide you with a letter that confirms that you are attending counselling.
Restrictions	<p>Therapy will not be offered if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.</p> <p>If you are receiving therapy from another counselling service, you can only start your sessions here once that therapy has come to an end.</p>
Conduct	To successfully provide our counselling service, there must be a mutual respect between all staff, volunteers and clients. We will not tolerate rude, aggressive, threatening or abusive language or behaviour towards our staff and volunteers.
Contacting us	<p>To get in touch, including to notify us that you are unable to attend an appointment, you can call us on 020 8985 3570 (there is an answerphone service outside of office hours) or email us at reception@centreforbetterhealth.org.uk.</p> <p>We do not share counsellors' contact details with clients. We cannot arrange for you to speak to your counsellor outside of your session time.</p>
Compliments and complaints	We are committed to providing a quality, relevant and sustainable mental health service, which can demonstrate positive outcomes for service users. We would love to hear from you if you are pleased with the experience you have had. If we fall short, however, we would welcome your feedback and the opportunity to rectify the situation. If you would like to see a copy of our Compliments and Complaints Policy, please ask at reception or email us.
Crisis support	<p>We are not a crisis service. If you do not feel you can keep yourself safe, call 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E). You can find information about local and national crisis support services on our website:</p> <p>http://www.centreforbetterhealth.org.uk/external-resources#Mental-Health-Crisis</p>