

Counselling Agreement for Online & In-Person Therapy with Dublin Counselling Service Practitioners

This is an informed consent document which sets out the boundaries to our online and in-person therapy work together. Please read the information below and agree its acceptance before commencing therapy. Our practitioners have specialist training in conducting both online and in-person therapy. We are mandated reporters under the Children First Act (2015) and adhere to the Codes of Ethics & Practice of the professional accrediting bodies for counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland (IACP & IAHIP). Please see our services and profiles of our practitioners at <https://www.dublincounsellingservice.ie/>

Privacy Policy

Our practitioners are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No audio or video recordings of sessions will be made without your express consent. All records are kept securely for a period of seven years. Our Privacy Policy, Counselling Agreement, Codes of Ethics, and the Children First Act (2015) can be accessed at https://www.dublincounsellingservice.ie/counsellingagreement_privacypolicy/

Location, Duration and Frequency of Sessions

Sessions will be held Online or in our office in Wicklow Street, Dublin. The duration of each therapy session is approximately 50 minutes and will take place weekly, or as agreed.

Payment of Fee

The fee is €70 for individuals and €90 for couples to be reviewed at the beginning of each calendar year. All sessions must be pre-paid and electronic payments should be received by your therapist no later than 48 hours prior to your scheduled appointment. Clients who attend online are requested to pay by electronic transfer. Clients who attend in-person may either pay by cash or electronic transfer. Non-payment for session may result in cessation or delay of future sessions.

Lateness and Missed Sessions

Sessions are organised for an agreed date and time. If you are late attending the session, your therapist will wait in the therapy room or stay online for fifteen minutes to allow for any eventualities. If you do not make contact within this time, then the session will be considered missed and will be cancelled. You will be charged the full session fee for this. If you are late attending your session, the session will still end on time.

Cancellation Policy

When you make an appointment with your therapist, that time is reserved for you. Appointments missed or cancelled with less than a minimum of 48 hours' notice will incur the full fee, as this does not leave sufficient time to offer the appointment to someone on the waiting list. The cancellation fee may only be waived in the event of a family bereavement or a crisis and not for general ill health or work commitments. Cancellations by your therapist will result in a full refund or a rescheduled session as per your request. It may not be possible to hold a session slot open if a) you miss a scheduled appointment without giving sufficient notice or b) cancel sessions repeatedly.

Commitment to Your Therapeutic Process

It is important that you develop a routine of attending regularly as this will help you to process the personal issues you have come to explore and to achieve your therapeutic goals. Sessions normally take place on a weekly basis unless otherwise agreed in consultation with your therapist. A decision to end therapy is best discussed in advance with your therapist.

Confidentiality

Your therapy is strictly confidential except where your life or the safety of others is threatened; where there are child protection concerns; or, where any legal process supersedes the counselling arrangement.

In circumstances where exceptions to confidentiality occur your therapist will encourage and support you to seek support from a relevant agency. If it becomes clear that this will not happen, or if the danger is considered very serious, the therapist may pass the information on directly. In such cases you will be encouraged to allow consent for the therapist to help and to provide the right level of support on your behalf. This may include making an onward referral.

(Note: Psychotherapists are mandated reporters under the Children First Act; 2015).

If you are under medical supervision your permission may be requested to contact your doctor, however, no information about your counselling will be shared with any third party without your express consent.

(Note: Accredited counsellors and psychotherapists are required to attend regular supervision, however, this does not involve revealing the identity of clients and is solely for the purpose of maintaining the highest professional standards).

Online Counselling

Online counselling sessions will be conducted by video or voice via an online platform with secured end-to-end encryption. A meeting invite will be sent to you by text or email just prior to the session time and you will need to be ready to connect at the agreed time. No audio or video recordings of session will be made without your express consent. You are asked not to attend sessions under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs and that you dress appropriately for all video and in-person sessions.

Technology Failure

In the event that technical difficulties are experienced with the online platform, your therapist will contact you to continue the session by phone. So, please have your phone accessible and charged.

Data Protection

When attending online it is essential for you to ensure that you have a safe and private space to work from where you will not be disturbed and that you safe-guard and password-protect any device used for therapy. Our practitioners ensure that all information is kept safe and protected and we ask that you do the same. Sessions may not be recorded electronically. In order to maintain the confidentiality and the boundaries of our work, there will be no sharing or correspondence between us on any online social or professional network forums. You are responsible for electronically stored or printed material either sent to or received from your therapist.

Referral Policy

Dublin Counselling Service caters to a broad range of clients and presenting issues, however, where appropriate you may be referred to specialist therapy and/or agencies and support groups. Please note that Dublin Counselling Service works only with adults and in signing this agreement you indicate that you are eighteen years or over.

Emergency Contacts

If you feel you are in crisis or are in danger of harming yourself it is imperative that you contact the Emergency Services; go to your nearest Accident & Emergency Department or call the Samaritans. 'External Mental Health Services and Supports Contacts' can be accessed at <https://www.dublincounsellingservice.ie/external-mental-health-services-and-supports/>

I, the undersigned confirm that I have read, understand and consent to this Counselling Agreement:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(Please return a signed copy of this agreement to your therapist by hand, electronically or by post, prior to sessions commencing).