

# TALK TO JON

## Information Pack

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Revision 3 – June 2020

### **Changes to this pack**

I may amend this pack from time to time. If I make any substantial changes whilst you are receiving counselling, I will notify you by email.

## **Counselling Agreement**

The purpose of this agreement is to set out a framework for the work we will do together, what I expect from you and what you can expect from me. This agreement also provides a written explanation of your sessions, confidentiality, fees and what happens if you need to make a complaint.

### **Sessions**

Sessions will usually be weekly, on the same day and at the same time (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed between us). Sessions can be held in person at my room in Andover, or remotely via Zoom, telephone or similar mutually agreed methods.

- Each session will last 50 minutes
- Sessions cost £55 per session, regardless of meeting type. Payment of invoice is required on or before the day of the arranged session via bank transfer or cash
- Pricing is subject to review on 1st April every year. Any changes in pricing will be notified 28 days in advance
- If I must cancel a session, I will give you as much notice as possible
- If you are late arriving, the session would still end at the regular agreed time
- If you need to cancel, please see Appointment Policy below

### **Membership Body**

I am an Accredited Member of the National Counselling Society (NCS) and the work we do together will be carried out in accordance with their Code of Ethics which is available at <https://www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org>.

### **Professional Standards**

As an Accredited Member of NCS, I am on a Register that has been Accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. The Accredited Register programme was set up by the Government to improve standards and safety for the benefit of the public. This Accreditation means that I am committed to high professional standards, to enhancing safety and delivering a better service.

### **Confidentiality**

I will not reveal anything about you to anyone, unless you request this of me, such as contact with your GP. I would require this request to be in writing. The following circumstances are the exceptions to this:

- If I become concerned that there is a risk of significant harm to yourself or others
- If you give me cause to believe you involved in terrorist activities or laundering of drug money
- If I become aware of a safeguarding issue
- If I am ordered to appear in court as a witness or to provide client notes

I would always endeavour to speak with you and gain your consent prior to disclosing information, however this is not always possible.

### **Supervision**

I have monthly clinical supervision of my work to ensure that I am practising professionally and ethically and providing the best service to my clients. If I speak about our work during supervision, I will do this in a way that does not identify you. Supervisors are also members of a professionally body such as NCS or BACP and are bound by the same confidentiality laws as counsellors. All professionally trained counsellors in the UK are obliged by their membership bodies to receive clinical supervision on a regular basis.

### **Professional Case Studies**

On occasion, I may be required to produce an anonymous case study to further my academic training or enhance my membership level within a membership body, i.e. NCS. I may ask you during our work together if you would agree to me using completely anonymised information regarding our sessions. You are under no obligation to agree, and our relationship will not be affected in either case.

## **Social Relationships**

I make it my policy to not have any kind of relationship with my clients outside of our sessions. This is done in the interests of ensuring that our relationship always remains purely professional. I will not enter into any online relationships, i.e. via Facebook or other social media platforms, and will refuse any invitations to connect in this way. I will not look you up online and would respectfully ask that you do not look me up.

If we come across each other in public, I will always acknowledge you, but would not wish to enter a full conversation, as this may affect the therapeutic relationship we will have worked hard to establish.

## **Conflict of Interests**

Due to the nature of the conversations that we would have, I would not be able to work with you if any of the following were to apply to you:

- You are related to an existing client of mine
- You work closely with an existing client
- You are friends with an existing client (friends of friends *may* be OK; we would need to discuss this)
- We have mutual friends outside of the professional relationship
- You are closely associated with any members of my family, or vice versa

If any of the above were to come to light after starting our work together, I would need to discuss this with you and may need to refer you to a different counsellor.

## **Online Security**

I use end to end encrypted systems for online sessions of any kind. I do not record conversations and would ask that you do not do so, without discussing the reasons and gaining my consent with me before doing so.

I always use a headset to listen to you which reduces the risk of any private information being overheard in my counselling room. If you live or work in a space where others may overhear your conversation, I recommend that you use a headset as well where possible.

## **My Security**

For face to face sessions, I wear an attack alarm. Please do not take this as any kind of judgment about you; it is a necessary precaution that I take as a sole worker.

## **Liability**

I will always work with you for your benefit, and in such a way that will not cause you any harm, but it should be clear that undertaking any form of counselling is not a guarantee of its success.

## **Ending the Relationship**

There may be reasons for one of us to decide that the relationship has run its course, and that there is a desire to end our work together. In my case, I will always discuss my thinking with you, and we will decide together based on the outcome of this discussion. If you decide for any reason that you wish to end our work, I kindly ask that you let me know in session, so that any ending can be managed appropriately. This will allow me to ensure that you have sufficient support in place. I will never try to hold on to a client longer than is in their interests, but also will never cast them adrift without ensuring they are safe and have support.

## **Making a Complaint**

If you feel something is not right and you feel as if you cannot speak with me, then you can seek advice or make a complaint by going to the NCS website.

## GDPR Policy

### **What information do I collect?**

#### *Initial Assessment:*

I will ask for your name, address, telephone number(s) and email address. I will also request information on your availability, therapeutic issues, and other details which I feel relevant to our work.

During the initial assessment appointment, I will ask about your current personal, social and medical circumstances. I may also ask about your background and family history, as well as the issues which are affecting you now. I require this information so that I can make an informed decision about how best to work together.

I will also collect your GP's details, as well as those of an emergency contact.

#### *Notes:*

I will take very brief notes after each session which will be anonymous as I use a number or letter for each client and will never be stored together with your personal information.

### **What do I use your information for?**

I use information held about you in the following ways:

- To offer suitable counselling appointments
- To notify you about changes to your appointments
- To seek feedback from you on your experience of counselling with me
- To fulfil my administrative, legal and membership obligations as a registered member of NCS

### **What information do I share?**

I will not share any information about you with other organisations or people, except in the following situations:

- *Consent* - I may share your information with professional carers or others whom you have requested or agreed we should contact
- *Serious harm* - I may share your information with the relevant authorities if I have reason to believe that this may prevent serious harm being caused to you or another person
- *Compliance with law* - I may share your information where I am required to by law or by the regulations and other rules to which we are subject

### **How do I keep your information safe?**

All information you provide to me is stored as securely as possible. All paper forms and correspondence are kept in a locked container, which is kept in a locked, alarmed room. All electronic records are stored on encrypted IT systems, access to which requires password-protected, facial or fingerprint authentication. Minimal contact details are stored on my fingerprint protected smartphone that is used solely for work purposes.

Your identifiable personal information is kept separately from any session notes and other descriptive material. Client notes and other documentation are destroyed 5 years after the end of counselling in accordance with my insurance requirements. Personal contact details are destroyed/deleted after 10 years of no contact or updates.

### **Your rights**

You have the right to ask me to provide a copy of your information held by me in my records. You also have the right to require me to correct any inaccuracies in your information. If you would like to do this, please let me know.

You may withdraw your consent for me to hold and process your data at any time. However, if you do this while actively receiving counselling, our agreement will have to end. You can withdraw your consent by submitting the request by email or letter.

## **Appointment Policy**

When an appointment has been agreed, I require payment for the session on, or before, the day of the session. Invoices are currently sent out on a Monday. Non-payment will result in the cancellation of future appointments.

Please include your first name and initial of surname as the Reference, i.e. "John S" when making payment. I will normally invoice you on a Monday.

Cancellation by you (24 hours or over): No charge applied, and we will rebook for another appointment if you wish to continue.

Cancellation (Less than 24 hours): A full session charge will apply, and the fee for the missed session would be payable prior to another appointment being made.

Cancellation by me: Similar to the above, and I will refund any fees already paid for sessions I have to cancel.

If you do not attend an appointment without informing me of your wish to cancel, and I do not hear from you within 7 days, I will not book you in for further appointments. If I do not hear from you for 28 days, I will assume that you do not wish to continue counselling and will close your file.