



Couples Contract and Therapy Agreement

Developing a therapeutic relationship with you is key to my approach and my job is to get each person to where they want to be. I will help you explore the complexities of your relationship and provide a platform for you both to communicate.

It is often a big step to enter into Couples Counselling. In order to get the most out of this experience it will be helpful to read and think about the following information.

1. Confidentiality and Privacy

I [Lottie Passell-Syms] will treat the content of the sessions in the strictest confidence. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- In adherence to good practice, I will discuss my clients with a fully qualified supervisor, who is also a full member of, and abides by the ethical code of the relevant professional association.
- Should I be concerned that you may be of serious harm to yourself or others, I will contact the relevant public authority to inform them of this. As far as reasonably possible, I will attempt to seek your permission before taking such action but may have to do so without it.
- If compelled by a court or by law to disclose information or any notes I may keep. This could be the case, for example with money-laundering or drug-trafficking or acts of terrorism.
- Clients referred by other agencies such as general practitioners: letters may be written at the start and end of the work to inform the referrer of progress, and at other times if changes occur or medical intervention is required.
- If needed to facilitate the management of the delivery of counselling services, the collection of fees or the management of any complaint.
- In the event of my death or mental or physical incapacity my Professional Executor will contact you to inform you of this. This person is another therapist working to the same code of ethics.
- You may wish me to refer you to a specialist or to contact your GP on your behalf and therefore I may give information to that person as a background to the referral.

2. Length and Duration of sessions

Each session will last for 60 or 90 minutes, depending on which appointment time you have decided on. Clients should usually attend weekly, unless otherwise agreed.

Both parties will endeavour to attend on time; session times will not be extended due to lateness.

3. Payment and Session Booking

Payment will be made 48 hours before the start of each session by BACS or via my online diary. Having an appointment means that time has been reserved for you, I reserve the right to charge the full fee for appointments missed or cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice. Fees will be reviewed annually in April.

Please note both parties must attend for a session to go ahead. A session will not go ahead with only one person present.

4. Safety

We will always speak to each other with respect. We will not unduly raise our voices or threaten violence or try to intimidate in any way. You will not physically harm yourself, each other or myself, or cause damage to property during the appointments. You will not attend any session while under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. I reserve the right to end a session if I believe you are intoxicated or under the influence of non-prescribed drugs.

5. Data Protection

Handwritten records of your contact details are kept on a sheet to be completed at the start of our work together. Background notes of sessions and content, and copies of any questionnaires may be kept on file as a memory aid and to monitor progress. These records are subject to the provisions of the Act and are kept secure, private, and confidential, except as indicated in paragraph 1 above. I store written notes or therapy work in a secure, locked filing cabinet or on my computer which is password protected. Your phone number will be stored in a password protected



business mobile phone using your first name as a reference. Your number will be deleted at the end of therapy or 1 month after I have had contact from you.

To work effectively and safely, neither you nor I will attempt to record a session or part of a session without prior permission.

I will normally contact you via email or text if you prefer.

Sometimes, permission is asked by clients, their solicitors, the police and the courts to access to client records. As these records are not suitable for use in legal proceedings, I reserve the right to resist legal requests to produce these in court. Any request to provide a written report made will be considered on a case by case basis on receipt of written consent by you to the request. Any report so provided will not refer to specialist diagnosis or other matters outside the therapist's training and will be restricted to brief details of attendance dates and numbers of sessions attended.

On rare occasions, you may wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR legislation and make a subject access request in respect of your personal information held by me. If the counselling service is provided to more than one person, such release will only be undertaken if permission is given by all the individuals involved in the counselling. To exercise such a request, it should be put in writing to me, and evidence provided of your identity and proof that your address is the address to which the information is requested to be sent. Within 40 calendar days of receipt by the therapist of the request, other required proofs, I will respond, usually in the form of a schedule listing and describing the personal data held by myself. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to this subject access policy for counselling notes.

You have the right to ask to see the information I hold about you. Please ask and you can view this at your next session. You can ask me to change any information I hold about you that is incorrect. You have the right to ask me to amend or delete information I hold about you, which I will do except for legal obligations to keep- for example for my business tax purposes.

6. Reviews

We will review sessions regularly which may be on your demand or as appropriate.

7. Endings

You have the right at any time to stop attending therapy sessions. It is usual to discuss this together so that feelings about endings can be worked through and any outstanding issues covered. If I consider your needs are beyond the limits of my competence, I reserve the right to terminate our contract; this will be discussed in the session and onward recommendations may be provided.

If a couple does not attend more than one session in succession with no message then it will be assumed the therapeutic relationship has ended and the clients' file will be closed. Mutual responsibility will end and any outstanding fees will need to be paid. Work may be terminated if attendance becomes too irregular for meaningful work.

8. Online work

I will send you an email invitation to a Zoom password protected meeting, there will be a waiting room and I will let you into that meeting and then lock the room after you have entered.

Please ensure you are in a private secure space where there will be no interruption or presence of other household members, children, or pets. There should be no eating or drinking of alcohol during sessions.

Should we lose signal and get cut off I will try the Zoom link again, failing that I will telephone you and either agree to continue by phone or bring the session to an end.

For couples, please ensure that you can equally share the screen or access from two different devices if not.

9. Contact between sessions



The purpose of contact between sessions should be for administrative purposes only unless otherwise explicitly contracted for. Any information imparted by one half of the couple will always be shared by the therapist with the other party.

10. General

The delivery and management of the counselling services under this contract is deemed to be delivered within the United Kingdom whether the counselling services are delivered through a meeting in person in the United Kingdom or through electronic or telephonic means (for example, FaceTime, Zoom) and this contract is to be interpreted and governed under and by the laws of England and Wales.

11. COVID

In the event that you feel unwell or you have tested positive for COVID, please do not attend an appointment in person. If you are not experiencing any symptoms but have tested positive, with notice, we may be able to change the appointment to an online session. If you are not able to attend either online or in person, please give as much notice as possible. If you cancel within 48 hours, depending on availability I may be able to re-book your appointment free of charge for another time. I will only be able to offer this once.

By booking an appointment, you agree to and to be bound by the terms of this agreement and consent to the use described in the agreement.