



Hill Counselling Service

Your Source for Personal Growth

Confidentiality Policy

Hill Counselling Service work within the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework (2018) which requires counsellors to offer the highest possible level of confidentiality to respect the client's privacy, keeping trust and client autonomy. There are exceptions where a counsellor may need to break confidentiality; the details of when this would occur are listed below. This Policy is in place to provide information for clients on how confidentiality can be maintained, the circumstances it may be breached and what type of information is held.

Responsibilities

Hill Counselling Service is responsible for keeping sensitive information confidential and only shared on a 'need to know basis'. There is an added responsibility to respect the confidentiality of all clients in line with the BACP Ethical Framework (2018).

The confidentiality agreement of the service will be outlined within the initial contract when working with a client and aims to receive a signed written copy of this from every client seen.

Hill Counselling Service will ensure they keep client anonymity at all times (unless subject to the following exceptions as mentioned below), including in client notes and supervision.

Limits of Confidentiality

Hill Counselling Service will not pass on personal information about clients (including information on attendance at counselling sessions) to anyone outside of the service subject to the following exceptions:

- If the client threatens to cause significant risk of harm to themselves or others.
- If Hill Counselling Service believes a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or abuse.
- If the client shares information relating to the following legislation:
 - - The Terrorism Act (2000) requires that the counsellor disclose any belief of suspicion of acts of terrorism.
 - - The Drug Trafficking Act (1986) requires the counsellor to disclose to the police information of any individual making money through drug trafficking.
 - - The Road Traffic Act (2000) requires Hill Counselling Service to provide information to the police that might identify a driver in a traffic offence. In addition, if Hill Counselling Service becomes aware that a client may be

driving whilst unsafe (e.g. through epilepsy, medical condition, drug or alcohol abuse) the law requires this information to be passed to the DVLA.

- Hill Counselling Service has obtained written consent from the client to pass on information on their behalf.
- Hill Counselling Service would be liable to a court procedure if the information was not disclosed.
- Hill Counselling Service will usually attempt to gain consent from the client before passing on information, if the service is unable to do so they may pass on the information to the relevant person/agency directly.
- If a client discloses a safeguarding issue (in line with the above exceptions) then Hill Counselling Service will complete a risk assessment, and if deemed 'high risk' this will be passed on to the appropriate professional (or appropriate adult for those under 18 years of age) in line with the agency's Safeguarding Policy.
- Hill Counselling Service continues to respect the client's confidentiality and asks that the client does not bring anyone else into the session with them. There are exceptions when a third party may need to attend the counselling session.

Additionally, Clinical supervision is required to ensure that you receive the best possible counselling, therefore contents of sessions may be discussed with a registered supervisor who is bound by the same rules for confidentiality as Hill Counselling Service, personal details will remain as anonymous as possible.

Disclosure of information

- Client information will never be shared with other clients and confidentiality will only be breached in the circumstances mentioned above and aim to gain consent.
- When gaining consent from a client (including under 18's and those with additional needs) Hill Counselling Service will use the Fraser guidelines to check clients are deemed 'Gillick competent' and able to understand why and what they are giving consent for.
- Where consent is obtained verbally this will be noted in the client's file.

Data Protection/ GDPR - General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

Please refer to our Privacy Policy for more detailed information on how we hold client information and store sensitive and personal data.

- Client information (including notes) is to be stored securely in a locked storage box with access by Hill Counselling Service only
- Records or client information will not be left unattended or in an unlocked area.
- All client information will be kept for seven years, when it will then be destroyed appropriately in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), Data Protection Act (1998) and our Retention Policy.
- To respect the confidentiality and privacy of the client, client information and notes will be filed as anonymously as possible.

Retention Policy

- Hill Counselling Service will hold client information and notes for no longer than seven years after the client has left the service. This information will be stored securely in line with the GDPR - General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and Data Protection Act (1998). After seven years all client data will be destroyed unless being used as an ongoing investigation for criminal or child protection/safeguarding purposes.