

Couples Counselling Terms & Conditions

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By booking a consultation with the therapist, you agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions:

Location of Counselling

All sessions will be conducted at The Lovibond Centre, 5 Lovibond Lane, Greenwich, London SE10 9FY.

Payment

Payment is kindly requested on the day of session appointments, either by cash, personal cheque or bank transfer. Couples are deemed to be jointly and individually responsible for full payment of session fees.

Cancellation Policy

Clients are required to provide a minimum of 48-hours notice in the event that they are unable to attend a session they have booked, or else they remain liable for full payment of the session fee.

Conduct of Sessions

Sessions begin and end at the appointment times agreed in advance between therapist and client. It is the couple's responsibility to arrive on time and sessions will not over-run in the event of late arrival. If only one person is present at the start of the session, the session may start in the other person's absence, subject to the conditions on confidentiality – see below under 'Working with One Partner Individually'.

Confidentiality

Counselling involves the disclosure of sensitive, personal information. In accordance with recognised ethical codes, this information will not be disclosed to third parties outside the session, other than in the following exceptional circumstances:

- i) the therapist has reason to believe that there is a serious risk of harm to either of the clients;
- ii) either party discloses an intention to seriously harm or kill themselves;
- iii) the therapist receives a specific written request from the client/s to share information with a named third party (e.g. a legal representative).

Working with One Partner Individually

Sometimes it may be useful for the therapist to work with both or either of the clients individually.

If this is to be an option, there needs to be clear guidelines on what can be disclosed during an individual session.

The therapist generally recommends a 'No Secrets' policy and this will be the default option for clients. Sometimes the therapist will recommend a 'Complete Confidentiality' policy instead. And of course you are welcome to choose your own option, or ask the therapist for more information.

Here are the definitions:

1. A 'No Secrets' or 'Transparency' Policy: where anything either client says to the therapist in an individual session can be brought up by the therapist to the other partner either during communication/ correspondence with the other partner (eg: phone call or email) , or in an individual session with the partner or during a couples session ; or
2. A 'Complete Confidentiality' Policy which means that what is disclosed in the individual session will not be revealed to your partner;

Pros and Cons

1. No secrets policy

Pros:

- More honesty and transparency between the couple. No wondering whether your partner is keeping something from you.
- The therapist does not risk alienating the other partner by keeping a secret from them.

Cons:

- One partner may be unwilling to share certain details, such as an affair, so the individual session may not be as effective as it could be. Or a partner may be unwilling to discuss a personal issue in depth if they think all of the details will be revealed to their partner.
- The other problem is if a partner does reveal a secret that they want the therapist to keep. The choice of the therapist then is to either break confidentiality or end the couples therapy. If this does happen, the therapist can take a maximum of three individual sessions to work on supporting the client to disclose this secret to their partner in a couples session.

2. Confidentiality policy

Pros:

- Sometimes the only way clients will be completely honest with the therapist is if they are guaranteed full privacy. This honesty may also give the therapist the best chance to help the couple.

Cons:

- With the assurance of complete confidentiality, a client may reveal something he or she doesn't want their partner to know such as an affair. If this occurs, then of course the therapist must keep this information secret. Which now means the therapist is keeping a secret to benefit one partner but possibly to the detriment of the other. Power is also unbalanced, because now both the therapist and one partner know this information, but the other partner does not. It is very possible that the partner left in the dark will perceive an alliance between the therapist and the other partner, which is detrimental for couples therapy.
- The therapist may not be cognitively able to hold the secret and it may be accidentally revealed.

Recording

The therapist may request permission to voice record sessions. Any recordings are solely for internal use. Clients may refuse permission to record sessions if they wish.

Supervision

In accordance with recognised working practices, the therapist works with a couples supervisor who is a third party counselling professional. The identity of the clients will not be disclosed within supervision.