Information for Counselling Clients

Welcome to West London Centre for Counselling. We hope that the information given in this factsheet will answer some of the questions you may have so that you can get the most from your counselling sessions. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss these with your counsellor or a member of staff. We hope that you will find counselling helpful.

What can I expect from counselling?

Counselling is a talking therapy where you will explore your feelings and behaviour along with a trained, skilled professional. It is a collaborative process and you will work together to agree what you hope to achieve. A counsellor will not tell you what to do. They will offer a safe space where you can explore, process and gain clarity over personal issues and difficult feelings, and develop coping strategies for these.

Is counselling confidential?

What is being discussed during your counselling is confidential, in so far as nothing will be disclosed to people not involved in your care without your knowledge and written consent. Exceptions to this can be made when there is reason to believe that serious harm may occur to you or others. Should this situation arise, every effort will be made to discuss this with you and talk through the appropriate action required. Our counsellors are required to discuss their work with a senior counsellor/supervisor to make sure they are providing the right support for you. Your anonymity will be safeguarded and great care is taken to respect your privacy.

Will you share information with my GP?

At your assessment you will be asked if you consent to us providing basic information to your GP. Even if you say yes at first, you can change your mind at any time. The information provided to your GP will simply confirm that you are receiving NHS counselling. You will receive a copy of any letter we send to your GP.

How should I prepare for counselling?

Most people find it helpful to take some time before the session to breathe deeply, and think about what you would like to talk about. It may also be a good idea to plan not to have to do anything immediately after the session. Counselling can bring up difficult emotions and you may want to sit quietly, go for a walk, write in a journal, or do something you enjoy.

How should I prepare for online counselling?

Make sure you have a safe, private space where you will not be disturbed, distracted or overheard, and that your device is charged and ready, with camera and microphone switched on and working. You may want to switch off notifications. Your counsellor will send you a link to join the session online. If you are worried about using video technology, Age UK has some helpful guidelines: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/video-calling/
If you have opted for online counselling but find that you do not have a private space, please let us know; you may be able to come into the Centre to use one of our rooms for your sessions.

Will there be any record kept of what I say in counselling?

Some counsellors are occasionally required by their training organisation to record counselling sessions and therefore might ask for your permission to do so. If you do give your permission, a consent form needs to be signed. Your anonymity will be guaranteed and all recordings destroyed. You are entitled to withdraw your consent to your sessions being audio-taped at any time during the counselling period. When counsellors make clinical progress notes these are stored securely at all times in accordance with our data protection and information governance policies.

Can I bring children, pets, relatives or friends to my counselling sessions?

Adults may wait in the waiting room. Unaccompanied children cannot be left in the waiting room under any circumstances. Pets are not allowed in the Centre. Babies up to 6 months may be brought into counselling sessions if you are unable to find childcare. A carer or support worker may be able to attend by prior agreement.

How many counselling sessions can I have?

You will be offered up to 12 counselling sessions on a weekly basis. Each appointment will last approximately 50 minutes. Please be aware there is a cancellation policy where your counselling may be ended if you do not attend appointments regularly. Full details are included in your appointment card, letters from your counsellor and in the separate ‘Information for Clients on the Waiting List’ factsheet.

How do I know that you adhere to professional standards?

West London Centre for Counselling is an Accredited Service of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and adheres to the ‘Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy’: https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/

How can I give feedback?

As part of our continual effort to improve our service and as part of our funding requirements, you will receive text messages with a link to complete a short evaluation questionnaire online, after your assessment and again after your counselling treatment has ended. Your comments and suggestions are extremely valuable and we thank you in advance for answering these questions. You are also welcome to send any feedback to wlcc@wlcc.org.uk.