

Welcome

Welcome to counselling! My name is Jen Christie, and I am a fully qualified Integrative Counsellor. Whether this is your first time experiencing counselling, or you have tried it several times before, I trust your time with me will provide you with an opportunity to begin to explore those areas of your life that have been difficult, within a professional, friendly and relaxed space. I offer counselling for adults and welcome individuals of all backgrounds and communities, as well as Christian pastoral care for those individuals who wish to talk about their faith.

Counselling Contract

This contract forms an agreement between you (the client) and me (the counsellor). By signing it, you are confirming you understand and accept the terms within it. Please sign both copies provided so that we each hold a copy of the contract for our records.

Membership

1. As a Registered and an Accredited Member (Membership number: 387495) of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP), I am bound by their Ethical Framework (BACP, 2018¹). A copy of this Ethical Framework is available on request, or may be viewed on the BACP's website <https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/3103/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions-2018.pdf>.

Assessment & Sessions

2. We begin with a relaxed assessment session where I gather information about you and the problems you are experiencing. This session also gives you a chance to see if counselling feels like the right way forward. Following assessment, if I can safely and ethically work with the issues you talk about, then we will normally start with six sessions. However, if I believe you might need specialised support, then I will try to signpost you to a more suitable counsellor or mental health professional.
3. You are not contracted to any specific number of sessions. Counselling is your choice, and you can terminate therapy without further cost at any time you wish.
4. The normal duration of each session is 50-55 minutes, although I reserve the right to amend that time for therapeutic reasons. If, for any reason, you are late for a session, I will see you for the duration of the remainder but will be unable to work beyond the allotted time due to other commitments.

¹ Copyright © 2018 British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

5. In the case of an emergency, it is understood that sometimes it may be necessary for clients to cancel their appointment last minute or fail to attend without warning. On these occasions, it is at my discretion if a fee will be charged. In general, however, if you fail to give less than 24 hours' notice of your intention to cancel or postpone an agreed counselling session, or if there is a repeat pattern of cancellations/not attending, I reserve the right to charge in full for each session missed.
6. As part of my code of practice I am required to carry out continuing professional development and to engage in monthly clinical supervision. This is to ensure an ethical and professional service to my clients. I may discuss your case in supervision, but I will not use any identifying details.
7. The counselling relationship will remain a professional one at all times, the boundaries of which (such as contact outside of our sessions) can be agreed between us during our sessions.
8. No audio or video recording of sessions will be carried out without the clear knowledge and express written consent of each of us.

Confidentiality

9. Confidentiality is extremely important in the counselling process, and it will be maintained according to the BACP Ethical Framework and current legal requirements. Confidentiality does not apply where it would mean that I, as your counsellor, might break the law or where withholding information means I would breach the BACP Ethical Framework.
 - a) Confidentiality may be broken if I consider there is a risk you may significantly harm yourself or others.

In such exceptional circumstances, where there is concern for your well-being or that of others, it may be necessary to seek help outside the counselling relationship. In such an event where I am considering breaching confidentiality, I will endeavour to consult you first in order that we can work together to find the best ethical and legal way forward. There may be occasions, however, when I have to seek help outside the counselling relationship without your consent, but I will only share with the appropriate individual(s) minimal details that are relevant to your case.
 - b) Confidentiality must be broken if you disclose new information (i.e. the police are not already aware of the incident) concerning the following:
 - acts of terrorism,
 - serious safeguarding concerns in relation to child abuse and/or the protection of vulnerable adults; or
 - drug trafficking,

and such disclosures will be passed onto the relevant authority without delay. Due consideration should be exercised before disclosing anything of a previously unreported criminal nature, as I am obligated to contact relevant authorities.

Data Protection & Record Keeping

10. I make notes on our counselling sessions to help me deliver a high standard of care to you. Counselling notes maintain a reliable history of important information relating to your health, counselling given and relevant events. Your notes will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018²) and stored securely for seven years following the end of counselling, after which time they will be destroyed. I am a registered Data Protection Officer with the Information Commissioner (ZB168248)³ and abide by their legal framework on holding personal information.
11. My notes are disclosed to no-one other than my clinical supervisor, unless required under a court of law subpoena. You have the right to inspect your records should you so wish, and this will be fulfilled during a therapy session.

Payment

12. The cost for each session (assessment and/or counselling) will be £50. Payment to be made before or on the day of each session, by cash or BACS payment. Non-attendance of a session without warning (less than 24 hours) will be charged at the full session rate. Please note my bank details for BACS payment –
Account: JL Christie; Sort Code: 98-10-75; Account No.: 10305234.
13. If agreed payments for counselling are not being paid, then I reserve the right to terminate therapy.
14. Session fees are required to be increased incrementally from time to time and I will give current clients 3 months' warning of any increase.

End of counselling

15. I may end the counselling if, after discussion with you, it was felt that it would not be beneficial or appropriate to continue. I may recommend another mental health professional or agency for additional support.
16. Counselling can, at times, be demanding, frustrating, and emotional. You may find the process difficult and feel the need to end therapy. Your feedback on the process will be asked for at the end of each session and if you feel unhappy with

² <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

³ <https://ico.org.uk/>

any aspect of the counselling being offered, please let me know. This gives us both the chance to address and resolve any issues. In the normal course of events, you will probably know when you are ready to finish counselling, and we will agree together on how we can prepare for this.

17. I will not suddenly or without warning terminate our contract, except in exceptional circumstances, which would become clear in the course of our work together. This would be fully discussed at that time. Please note any threats or acts of violence will invalidate this agreement and counselling will cease. Sessions will not take place if you arrive under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed medication.

Time off

18. I will let you know of any periods of time I will be taking off well in advance. There may be occasions when sessions have to be cancelled because of illness or due to training sessions or meetings. I will try to give you as much notice as possible of any cancellation and will offer an alternative time. For this reason, please let me know if there is any change in your contact details.

Boundaries

19. In order to ensure the counselling relationship remains professional, no gifts will be accepted by me, and I will not offer any gifts to you, the client. Additionally, I will not be able to provide character references or any other supporting correspondence in order to protect your confidentiality. Contact between us in between sessions is normally limited to arranging sessions (via phone, text or email) and/or me emailing you, the client, session-related information.

Complaints & Legal Liability

20. In the event of you being unhappy with the service you receive, please discuss this with me. If you feel unable to do so or do not receive a satisfactory resolution, then you have the right to complain to my professional body, the BACP at <https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/how-to-complain-about-a-bacp-member/>
21. I hold Professional Liability Insurance with Towergate Professional Risks.

I (the client) confirm that I understand and agree to the above terms.

Signed (client): _____ Date: _____

I (the counsellor) confirm that I understand and agree to the above terms.

Signed (counsellor): _____ Date: _____

Date/time of first session: _____

Contact Details: Mob: 07823 845676
Email: jenchristiecounselling@protonmail.com
Website: www.jenchristiecounselling.com
Address: 42 Church Street, Ahoghill & Church of Ireland Parish
Hall, Main Street, Portglenone