**Online Counselling Agreement**

**Working online**

Welcome to online counselling with Zoom. Here is some information to help us work in as safe a way as possible. I recommend that you use a private computer or laptop and not a work or public computer. You will need a microphone and headset unless your computer has built in facilities. Before our session, I will send you a session link via email or text which will invite you to join our Zoom session. For your own safety and confidentiality, please ensure this is not accessible to anyone else.

Before our first online session, we will agree a session time that best suits you. This will be for 50 minutes and is normally on the same day and at the same time each week. Try to find a safe, comfortable and confidential environment where you cannot be overlooked, heard or disturbed. We can, if you wish, also arrange a short tech session in order to ‘meet’ briefly and check the connection.

**Technology breakdown arrangements**

Computers and the internet are not always completely effective all of the time, so in our first session we can discuss what to do in the case of a breakdown in communication. If a problem with the internet prevents or interrupts the session as planned, with your permission, I will text you on the contact number that you have provided to attempt to rectify the issue. If we are unable to reconnect, I will offer a short phone call to allow the session to be closed safely.

**Confidentiality**

This is a very important aspect of the counselling relationship, which I take very seriously. In the vast majority of circumstances, the information you share will be kept in the strictest of confidence. However, there are a few limitations to the confidentiality I can provide, which are stated below:

If there is convincing evidence that you intend to harm yourself or others, I will need to break confidentiality by informing your doctor or, in serious cases, the police, emergency services or another appropriate third party. Wherever possible, and if it is considered appropriate, you will be informed of this. If you are being treated by your doctor for your mental health, it is advisable that you inform him or her about your counselling sessions. However, I will not confer with your doctor without your knowledge.

I have a legal responsibility to report disclosures relating to any of the following:

* Drug Trafficking Act 1994
* Money Laundering Regulations 2007
* Terrorism Act 2000
* Road Traffic Act
* Child Protection Offences

I have monthly supervision where I may discuss our work together. However, I will not disclose your name or anything that would enable you to be identified. Any information that my supervisor receives is also treated as confidential and subject to the same ethical criteria as counselling. Written case notes made for sessions are limited in nature and kept confidential.

**Online Confidentiality**

Absolute security whilst working online unfortunately does not exist. There are however, some reasonable steps that can be taken by you and will also be undertaken by myself:

* Ensure that your Wi-fi connection is secure.
* Check that your firewalls and virus protection are up to date. I am responsible for maintaining the security of my computer systems. It is the client’s responsibility to manage virus protection on their own computer. For more information on how to use Zoom securely please refer to their website.
* Clear your cookies at the end of a session if someone else is accessing your device.
* Try to arrange your session at a time when you will not be overheard or interrupted by visitors or phone calls. I would ask that any other phones or devices are turned off or switched to silent during our session.
* Use an email account that is not accessible by anyone else.

**Guidelines for emergency contact**

If an emergency arises during our session, I will share with you the appropriate support that you can access during this period. If you are considering serious harm to either yourself or someone else, I will endeavour to discuss the options with you fully. If, however, I feel the risk is serious enough, I will get immediate help. This may include contacting your emergency contact, doctor or the emergency services.

**Privacy Statement**

In undertaking counselling, you will be providing me with certain personal data. In so doing, it is important that you are aware of and agree to the following:

* This contract and other documentation that includes personal data are stored in a locked filing cabinet and in a separate location from your notes, which are anonymous, and stored digitally in an encrypted file.

You can find further information relating to the way I store your data on my website: <https://www.beachcounselling.co.uk>

**Code of Ethics**

I abide by the BACP Ethical Framework (links can be found at [www.beachcounselling.co.uk](http://www.beachcounselling.co.uk)). If you feel that I am not conducting myself in an ethical manner, or have any other concerns, they are available to assist you and I would encourage you to do this if you are worried in any way. Please feel free to discuss any concerns with me, if you feel able to do so.

**Social Media**

I do not interact with clients, past or present, on any social media platforms and will not add clients or accept friend requests on my personal pages. I have a professional Facebook and Instagram page which clients are welcome to follow.

**Contact Outside of Sessions**

Contact should be kept to a minimum outside of sessions. However, if you do need to contact me to rearrange or cancel a session, please allow 24 hours for a response. I will, however, endeavour to get back to you before that time if possible.

Should you happen to meet me outside of your session please be aware that I will not greet you. This is to protect your privacy and maintain confidentiality. This is especially important if you are with other people. If you acknowledge me openly, I will respond in an appropriate, professional manner. Should we find that we are part of the same group, either social or professional, serious consideration will be given to the complications of this dual role relationship. Where appropriate, and possible, you or I will withdraw.

**Cancellations**

Please allow 24 hours’ notice for any cancellation to avoid incurring a fee. If you do need to cancel within 24 hours of a session, you will be charged in full. Please may I advise that no further sessions can be booked until payment from the prior session has been received. If I have to cancel a session, I will aim to provide you with at least 48 hours’ notice. If I do have to cancel the session at very short notice your next session will be free of charge.

**Payment**

My session fee is £55 and will remain the same during our work together. Please can this be paid by bank transfer, using the BACS details below, prior tothe session.

Account Name: Catherine Beach

Account Number: 33259595

Sort Code: 20-17-92

Reference: Please put your initials in the reference section of the payment.