Help Ariseth

Counselling & Psychotherapy Services

Counselling Contract and Working Agreement

Counsellor	Funmilola Sonubi
Practice	Help Ariseth Counselling Service
Email	admin@helpariseth.com
Phone / text	07956 030808
Website	www.helpariseth.com

1. The purpose of this agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to set out clearly the arrangement for counselling services between you and me. Please read the information below carefully. It forms an agreement by setting out, from the start, a description of the therapeutic process, any agreed goals, costs and timescales. It also sets out the boundaries that will apply during the counselling period.

You are welcome to sign this agreement before we meet as an indication that you understand its contents. Otherwise, at our first session I will set some time aside for us to discuss this agreement and answer any questions you may have, and will then ask you to sign it to show that you understand its contents. The information below will help you make an informed decision about whether you would like to continue with counselling.

1.1 Anti-discriminatory practice

I am committed to providing an anti-discriminatory service. I strive to ensure that this practice is present in all our work together.

1.2 Qualifications

I am a Registered Accredited member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and of the Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC). At all times, the counselling I offer and the terms of this agreement should be consistent with the codes of ethics published by my professional organisations. I will always follow these codes of ethics. I will work with reasonable skill and care, to the standard expected of a professionally qualified counsellor who is competent to take on the work set out in this agreement. For more information, please see www.bacp.co.uk/ethical-framework and ACC's Ethics and Practice at www.acc-uk.org.

1.3 The way that I work

There are a variety of approaches to the ways that practitioners work with their clients. I have been trained in a therapeutic approach known as Integrative Counselling. This means that I draw from a range of therapeutic approaches and tailor these to your needs, your goals and what you bring to our sessions. I mainly integrate person-centred, psychodynamic and cognitive behavioural theories. Further information about the way that I work can be found at www.helpariseth.com, and further information about the different therapeutic approaches can be found at www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/types-of-therapy.

I will provide, to the best of my ability, a counselling service that offers a safe, supportive, non-judgemental space. I do not offer advice; rather, we collaboratively explore your options. I am equipped and trained to offer Christian perspectives to clients who specifically request this.

During the therapeutic process, you may connect with feelings and memories from the past, so self-care is important. I will consider any requests you may have and come to an agreement with you about your expectations. We will discuss any agreed goals or outcomes, which we may agree to change at any time while we are working together.

1.4 Relationship

The therapeutic relationship between us is a professional one. We agree that we will only be in contact at the times agreed, or to change or cancel a session. I can be contacted by email or, preferably, by text during my normal working hours, Monday to Saturday, 9am to 9pm. I will aim to reply to you within 1 working day.

If we meet by chance outside our session time and place, we may acknowledge each other politely without stating the nature of our professional relationship, unless either of us has said that we do not want to be acknowledged outside counselling.

I will not be able to accept any invitations from you via social media, during or after our work, nor will I initiate contact with you via social media sites or forums.

1.5 What counselling is

Counselling is a collaborative, time-limited or open-ended process in which you are supported to explore personal, relational, emotional, spiritual and/or behavioural issues in a safe and confidential setting.

1.6 What counselling is not

The counsellor does not provide legal, financial or medical advice and will not make decisions for the client. The client remains responsible for their own choices, actions and wellbeing.

1.7 Professional standards

The counsellor agrees to work within recognised professional and ethical standards (the BACP Ethical Framework and ACC Ethics and Practice) and within the limits of their training, competence and registration.

1.8 Guidelines for emergency contact

Please let me know if you currently have any thoughts about ending your life, or whether you have had such thoughts or acted on them in the past. If so, please outline what support you sought at the time.

If you are currently experiencing such thoughts, we will discuss the right support for you to access between sessions, such as talking with a friend, calling Samaritans free on 116 123, emailing jo@samaritans.org, visiting the CALM website at www.thecalmzone.net, or speaking with your GP.

1.9 Crisis

I do not provide a crisis service. If you find yourself in a major crisis and are considering serious self-harm, it is vital to get immediate help. This could include me contacting your GP, your emergency contact, or your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) service.

All personal information you disclose will be kept confidential and not used for any purpose other than your counselling record. To make sure I hold up-to-date records, please tell me at the time of any change to your address, phone number, emergency contact, GP or employment.

> **If you are not due to see me and you feel you are in crisis** and need immediate emergency or urgent professional help, please contact NHS 111, your GP, the emergency services on 999, or Samaritans free on 116 123. Please also tell a friend.

1.10 Keep safe policy

Where you may have declared a clear intention to end your life, or if I have reason to believe this to be the case, we may, after a careful discussion, agree to put in place a "keep safe" policy. Under this, you agree to take certain steps, such as getting in touch with your GP, a mental health crisis team or Samaritans, as a way of safeguarding you and ensuring your safety.

I consent to Funmilola Sonubi contacting a third party (for example, my GP, a crisis mental health team or my emergency contact) should this become necessary.

Client signature _____

GP surgery and phone number _____

Emergency contact and phone number _____

These details are only used in extreme circumstances, to ensure your safety.

2. Session times, frequency and location

2.1 Session times

Sessions will normally be held weekly or fortnightly, depending on your availability and affordability. During the initial assessment appointment, we will agree the day and time of your sessions.

Agreed session day and time _____

2.2 Number of sessions

We can review after 6 sessions and discuss how you feel our work is progressing. You may choose to continue our work on an ongoing basis, for a fixed number of sessions, or to end. We can review your progress regularly, and agree how often you would like to have reviews.

2.3 Rescheduling a session

If you would like to reschedule an appointment, I will do my best to accommodate your request but cannot guarantee this. The rescheduled appointment may be in person or online, depending on mutual availability. I ask for at least 48 hours' notice by email or text to reschedule an appointment.

2.4 Length of sessions

Initial sessions may last up to 90 minutes, but sessions typically last 50 to 60 minutes.

2.5 Location

Sessions will normally be held online via Zoom. If you choose to attend in person at my office in Rainham, there is an extra charge of £25 for the use of the office space. If the weather is favourable, we may agree to meet in my local park to avoid the extra charge.

2.6 Counsellor delays

If the counsellor is delayed by unforeseen circumstances, the client will be contacted as soon as possible and, where appropriate, the lost time will be made up or the session rescheduled.

3. Fees and payment

3.1 Session fee

The fee for a 60-minute counselling session is £80. If you are a student or unemployed, please ask about reduced fees.

3.2 Late cancellation and missed sessions

The full fee applies where there is a late cancellation (less than 48 hours' notice) and/or when you miss a session without prior notice. Payment also applies if you arrive late.

3.3 When payment is due

Fees are payable in advance, at least 30 minutes before the session starts.

3.4 Fee reviews

I review my fees annually in January and will give you one month's notice of any increase.

3.5 How to pay

Payment is by bank transfer to Help Ariseth Counselling Service (Barclays). Bank details will be sent to you directly when your first session is confirmed.

> **Please note:** my bank details will only ever come from me directly. If you receive a message asking you to pay into a different account, please do not pay. Contact me on 07956 030808 to check first.

4. Cancellation, lateness and missed sessions

4.1 Cancellation notice

If you would like to cancel an appointment, I ask for at least 48 hours' notice by email or text, to avoid an invoice being produced and a fee being charged.

Unless I am ill or there is an emergency, I will give you at least one week's notice if I need to cancel a session. Where I cancel within one week, I will do my best to offer to reschedule, depending on mutual availability.

4.2 Lateness

We will try to arrange a convenient time for the counselling session to take place. If you are late, I will need to end at the agreed time and may not be able to extend the session.

4.3 Ending a session early

I am unable to deliver effective counselling if you attend a session under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. In this case, I would discuss the issue with you, and we would agree to end the session and agree a period of abstinence. This session will still be payable.

4.4 Consecutive cancellations

To gain maximum therapeutic benefit, sessions are scheduled weekly or fortnightly, and it is not recommended to cancel more than 2 consecutive sessions (that is, a gap of more than 3 weeks between sessions). In that case, we may need to review our work together, because long gaps can fragment the therapeutic process.

Two consecutive late cancellations (less than 48 hours' notice) and/or two consecutive non-attendances (without any notice) may be treated as a breach of this counselling agreement.

4.5 Planned and unplanned breaks

We agree to let each other know in advance of any planned breaks, for example holidays or medical treatment, and to give as much notice as possible. We agree to give each other a minimum of 2 weeks' notice of any holiday arrangements.

If, in unexpected circumstances, I am unable to continue providing a counselling service for two months or longer, I will give you as much notice as possible so that we can plan for our ending and make alternative arrangements for you.

4.6 Ending your counselling

You may end your counselling at any time by giving me one week's notice. You do not have to give me a reason for your decision. One or two weeks before the end of our agreed number of sessions, I will review your progress with you, and in some situations we may agree to extend the number of sessions and/or change how often we meet. Any extension will be on the same terms as this agreement.

If I feel unable to continue to offer the service, I will give you two weeks' notice in writing that I must end the counselling. I have the right to end sessions without notice if, for example, I feel threatened. If I have given you notice to end the sessions, I will make reasonable efforts to suggest an alternative counsellor for you, as required.

5. Confidentiality and its limits

All information you share with me is confidential. As a member of BACP and ACC, I am bound by their ethical frameworks to protect client confidentiality.

5.1 Confidentiality

The content of counselling sessions is treated as strictly confidential. The counsellor will not normally disclose information to any third party without the client's explicit consent.

5.2 Exceptions

Confidentiality may be broken without the client's consent where the counsellor has a legal or ethical duty to do so, for example:

- where there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the client or to another person

- where there is disclosure of serious criminal activity, especially involving children or vulnerable adults
- where required by a court order or other legal obligation
- where information must be shared with safeguarding authorities under statutory duties.

5.3 Other reasons

- Where a client makes a complaint to my professional body, I reserve the right to breach confidentiality and use my session notes to address the complaint. Wherever possible, you will be told about this.
- For online counselling, the UK police and other government authorities can ask for access to an individual's online accounts where illegal activity is suspected. For this reason, I cannot guarantee confidentiality in circumstances where such access is granted.

If I need to contact anyone about you, it will be in confidence. I will try my best to give you the reasons for contacting someone else, in line with the points above, unless the law does not allow this.

5.4 Supervision

All members of BACP and ACC are required to have regular supervision. My work is supervised to ensure that it is safe, ethical and effective. Aspects of our work may be discussed in supervision, but your full name will not be used and identifying details will be removed. My supervisor is a member of BACP and is bound by the same confidentiality rules as I am. Your identity will be protected as far as reasonably possible.

5.5 Discussing a break in confidentiality

Wherever possible, if confidentiality must be broken, the counsellor will try to discuss this with the client first and agree a way forward, unless doing so would increase risk.

6. Record-keeping and data protection

6.1 The counsellor may keep brief written records of sessions for professional and legal reasons.

6.2 Records will be stored securely (for example, in a locked cabinet or an encrypted electronic system) and kept only for as long as necessary, in line with data protection law (UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018). See our Privacy Policy at helpariseth.com/privacy-policy.

6.3 You have the right, subject to legal limits, to request access to the personal data held about you and to ask for inaccurate information to be corrected.

6.4 Records will not normally be shared with third parties without your written consent, except in the circumstances described in Section 5.

7. Professional boundaries

7.1 The counselling relationship is professional, not social, business or romantic. Contact between client and counsellor will normally be limited to agreed channels (phone, text or email) and to matters directly related to counselling.

7.2 The counsellor will not engage in any sexual, exploitative or dual relationship with the client.

7.3 The counsellor will not accept or provide significant gifts, favours or personal loans. Any small tokens (for example, at Christmas) will be handled sensitively and may be declined.

7.4 Physical contact will not usually form part of the counselling relationship, and will only occur, if at all, with clear, explicit consent and for supportive, non-exploitative reasons.

8. Communication between sessions

8.1 The counsellor can be contacted between sessions on 07956 030808 (preferably by text) or by email at admin@helpariseth.com. These channels are for practical matters (appointments and cancellations) only and are not intended for counselling discussions.

8.2 The counsellor will aim to respond within 1 working day, but cannot guarantee an immediate response and is not an emergency service.

8.3 In an emergency or crisis, the client should contact the appropriate services (GP, NHS 111, 999, a local crisis team or Samaritans) or go to A&E.

9. Online and telephone counselling

9.1 The client agrees to join from a private, quiet space where they are unlikely to be overheard or interrupted.

9.2 The client is responsible for having a stable internet or phone connection. Sessions disrupted by technical issues will be handled at the counsellor's discretion (for example, by switching to telephone or rescheduling).

9.3 The client agrees not to record sessions (audio or video) without the counsellor's prior written consent. The counsellor will not record sessions without the client's written consent.

10. Supervision, training and professional development

10.1 The counsellor is required to take part in regular professional supervision for ethical practice. Brief, anonymised material from sessions may be discussed with a supervisor.

10.2 From time to time, the counsellor may be involved in training, research or professional development. Any use of client material beyond supervision will only happen with the client's explicit, written and informed consent, and will be anonymised.

11. Suitability, referrals and scope of practice

11.1 If at any stage the counsellor judges that the client's needs fall outside their competence, they will discuss this openly and, where possible, help the client to access a more suitable service (for example, specialist mental health, addiction or debt advice services).

11.2 Where appropriate, the client may be encouraged to seek support alongside counselling from medical professionals (for example, a GP or psychiatrist) or other agencies.

12. Ending counselling

12.1 The client may choose to end counselling at any time (see Section 4.6). Wherever possible, the client agrees to attend at least one final session to allow for a planned ending.

12.2 The counsellor may propose ending counselling where:

- the agreed goals have been achieved
- counselling is no longer considered beneficial
- there is a serious or persistent breach of this agreement
- there is a conflict of interest or other ethical concern.

12.3 Sudden endings can be painful. Both parties commit, as far as possible, to give reasonable notice and to work towards a planned, therapeutic ending.

13. Complaints and feedback

13.1 If you have a complaint about me, I hope you will feel able to talk with me about it. I will deal with your complaint promptly and responsibly, in line with the codes of ethics of the professional organisations I belong to. I welcome feedback at any time about what is or is not helpful in our work.

13.2 If you have a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to raise it with me directly in the first instance, so that we can address it together.

13.3 If the concern cannot be resolved, you have the right to raise a formal complaint with BACP and/or ACC.

14. The law and our commitment

The laws of England and Wales apply to this agreement.

If there is anything you do not understand about this agreement, or if you would prefer it in a different format, please let me know.

You and I agree to make a commitment to work together in line with the terms of this agreement, so that you can work towards achieving your desired goals. A copy of this agreement is available on request.

15. Ethical and legal framework

15.1 The counsellor agrees to abide by the ethical codes of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC).

15.2 This agreement is intended to be consistent with the law that applies where counselling is provided. If any part of this agreement is found to be invalid, the rest will continue to apply.

16. Consent and agreement

By signing below, both parties confirm that they have read, understood and agree to the terms of this counselling agreement. The client has had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification.

Client

Name (print)

Signature

Date

Counsellor

Name (print)

Signature

Date