

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Sample Working Agreement

I Found Help | Version 1.0 | 26 July 2026

This This agreement offers a clear and caring starting point for our work. It is not meant to make therapy feel rigid. We can return to it whenever your needs, circumstances or our way of working change. Questions, uncertainty and differences are welcome parts of the relationship.

Our agreement

Client		Therapist	
Start date		First review	
Planned review/ending		Agreement version	1.0 26 July 2026

Practical arrangements

Session length		Frequency	
Regular day/ time		Format	☐ Online ☐ In-person ☐ Hybrid
Session fee		Initial plan (sessions)	

Zoom meeting link	
Meeting ID & passcode	
Contact	chriscounselling@ifoundhelp.uk

The twelve-session plan is a starting point, not a minimum or a maximum. You can ask to review, pause or end therapy at any time.

Before we begin

You are welcome to ask about anything in this agreement before signing it or at any point in our work. If a practical or relational part of the agreement no longer feels helpful, we can explore what needs to change while keeping safety, fairness and professional responsibilities in view.

How we will work together

I work in an integrative and relational way. Alongside the concerns that bring you to therapy, we may notice feelings, body responses, memories, patterns in relationships, the ways you protect yourself, and what happens between us in the room. We will stay curious about the process rather than rush toward a fixed explanation or solution.

- **Your pace and choice.** You choose what to bring and how quickly we approach it. You can pause, say no, ask a question or tell me when something does not feel right.
- **The relationship matters.** The relationship itself can become part of the work. If you feel misunderstood, disappointed, distant, pressured or unsure about me, there is room to bring that into our conversation.
- **Inclusion and difference.** We can make space for identity, culture, race, migration, faith, class, disability, neurodivergence, gender, sexuality, relationships, power and discrimination. You do not have to disclose or explain more than feels right for you.
- **Care with challenge.** Therapy can sometimes stir difficult feelings before things feel clearer. We will pay attention to your capacity, sources of support and what helps you feel grounded, rather than treating discomfort as something you simply have to push through.
- **A living process.** Change is rarely a straight line. Reviews will make room for progress, setbacks, uncertainty, unexpected themes and the possibility that your hopes for therapy may change.

What I will offer

- **Presence and care.** I will aim to offer a steady, private and emotionally attentive space where you can speak honestly without being judged or hurried.
- **Thoughtful attention.** I will listen to your words and remain curious about feelings, pauses, patterns and the wider context shaping your experience.
- **Openness.** I will share reflections with care, explain my thinking and acknowledge when I am uncertain or may have misunderstood you.
- **Feedback and repair.** If something between us causes hurt or distance, I will try to listen, understand my part and consider what repair or change may be possible.
- **Professional care.** I will work within the current BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and my competence, maintain appropriate professional membership, insurance, continuing development and clinical supervision, and speak with you if another kind of support may be more helpful.

What may help our work

Honesty without blame. Bring what feels most important, including doubts about therapy, changes in your wellbeing, thoughts of self-harm, concerns about safety, or experiences you have not yet known how to name.

- **Continuity.** Regular sessions can help us hold continuity. If attending becomes difficult, we can explore what is happening rather than assume it means you are not committed.
- **Changed circumstances.** Let me know when practical circumstances, medication, other professional support or important relationships change in a way that may affect our work.

- **Shared review.** Neither of us needs to pretend that the work is helping. We can review openly what is useful, what feels stuck and whether a different approach, another service, a pause or an ending would better support you.

Confidentiality, safeguarding and trust

Therapy needs enough privacy for you to speak openly. I will treat what you share with care. Confidentiality is not absolute, and the limits below are included so that you know in advance how I would approach a serious concern.

The usual circle of confidentiality

- **Your information.** I will not normally contact your GP, family, employer, emergency contact or another professional without your knowledge and agreement. If joined-up support may help, we can discuss together what would be useful to share.
- **Clinical supervision.** I receive regular clinical supervision so that I can reflect on the quality and safety of my work. I normally use a client code, pseudonym or non-identifying description. My supervisor also works within professional confidentiality.
- **Recording.** Sessions will not be audio-recorded, video-recorded or transcribed unless we have a separate written conversation and you have freely agreed.
- **Unexpected incapacity.** If I become unexpectedly unable to work, a nominated professional executor or senior colleague may use the minimum contact information needed to tell you that sessions cannot continue and offer continuity or referral information.

When information may need to be shared

I may need to share relevant information where I reasonably believe one of the following circumstances applies:

- there is an immediate or serious risk of death or serious harm to you or another person, and protective action is needed;
- a child may be experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect or significant harm;
- an adult with care and support needs may be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and may be unable to protect themselves; or
- a law, court order or specific statutory duty requires information or action.

How we will approach a difficult decision

Talking about suicidal thoughts, self-harm, domestic abuse or abuse from the past does not automatically mean that confidentiality will be broken. We will consider what is happening for you, your wishes, the immediacy and seriousness of any danger, who else may be affected, available support and the relevant safeguarding or legal responsibilities.

- **Talk first where possible.** Where it is safe and appropriate, I will speak with you first and we will try to agree the next step.
- **Share the minimum.** If sharing is needed, I will explain what may be shared, with whom and why. I will share only information that is relevant and proportionate.

- **Urgent exceptions.** I may need to act before speaking with you if the situation is urgent, prior discussion would increase danger or interfere with protective action, or the law prevents it.
- **Record the reasoning.** I will keep a clear, focused record of the concern, our discussion, the decision and the reasons for any action.

Risk, safety and urgent support

We will approach risk directly, calmly and compassionately. We can explore what is happening now, what may change, what helps you stay safe and the least intrusive response that can still offer meaningful protection. A label or score will not replace understanding your particular situation.

- **Urgent help.** If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E. For urgent mental health support in England that is not an immediate life-threatening emergency, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option. If you already have a crisis plan or mental-health-team contact, use that pathway.
- **Between sessions.** I Found Help is not a 24-hour emergency or crisis service, and email is not continuously monitored. You can ask whether an earlier session is available, but I may not be able to respond immediately.
- **Online safety.** For online work, I may check your current location and the safest way to reach you if there is a serious concern. If the connection fails, we will first try to reconnect and then use the backup contact we have agreed.

Sessions, contact and payment

- **Regular sessions.** We will meet at the time and in the format recorded on the first page. Any variation will be agreed in advance where possible.
- **Session length.** Sessions normally last 60 minutes. If a longer session may be helpful, we will agree the length and fee before booking it so there are no surprises.
- **Time boundaries.** If you arrive late, we will use the time that remains and normally finish at the agreed time so that later commitments are respected.
- **Cancellation.** The appointment time is held for you and is rarely possible to offer to someone else at short notice. If you cancel with less than 48 hours' notice or do not attend, the full fee will normally be payable. Please tell me as soon as you can; if something exceptional has happened, we can speak about it.
- **If I cancel.** If I need to cancel, no fee will be charged. I will give as much notice as I reasonably can and offer another time where possible.
- **Planned breaks.** I will give advance notice of planned holidays. We can think together about how breaks may affect you and whether any additional support needs to be considered.
- **Payment.** An invoice will include the bank-transfer details. Any concession or different fee will be recorded in writing. Please raise questions or payment difficulties early so that we can discuss them openly.

Contact between sessions

- **Email.** Email is suitable for appointments and brief practical contact. It is not a substitute for a therapy session, and ordinary email is not the best place for detailed or highly sensitive personal information.

- **Meeting outside therapy.** If we unexpectedly meet in public, I will protect your privacy by allowing you to decide whether and how we acknowledge one another.
- **Online privacy.** For online sessions, we will each use a private setting as far as possible. Headphones can help, and neither of us will allow another person to listen without prior discussion and agreement.

Reviewing the work

We will usually begin with an initial plan of twelve sessions and pause around session six to review. We can also review sooner whenever either of us feels it would help.

- **What is changing.** We can notice what has changed, what remains painful, what feels newly possible and whether the way we are working feels helpful.
- **How the relationship feels.** We can speak about trust, closeness, distance, misunderstanding, power, cultural difference and anything in our relationship that may be affecting the work.
- **What happens next.** We can decide together whether to continue, change the focus or frequency, take a planned pause, prepare for an ending or consider another source of support.

Referral and other support

At times our work may suggest that support from a GP, psychiatrist, specialist therapist, crisis service, advocacy service or another practitioner could be helpful. I will explain why I am raising this and, wherever possible, we will consider the options together. A referral is not a judgement or a rejection; it is part of trying to match support to what you need.

Endings

You can end therapy at any time and are not required to complete twelve sessions. Where possible, I value having one or more ending conversations so that we can make sense of the decision, recognise what has happened in the work and think about what support you may want next. The decision to end remains yours.

I may also need to suggest a pause or ending if I cannot offer the work safely or competently, if the practical agreement repeatedly cannot be sustained, if there is an unmanageable conflict of interest, or if another service is better placed to help. I will explain my concern and support a thoughtful transition wherever reasonably possible.

Concerns, complaints and repair

If you feel dissatisfied, misunderstood or harmed, I want there to be room to tell me. Where it feels safe, we can slow down, listen carefully to what has happened and consider what repair or change may be needed. Raising a concern will not be treated as a failure of therapy.

- **Speaking with me.** You can raise a concern in a session or in writing. I will respond respectfully, explain the next steps and keep an appropriate record.
- **Formal route.** If we cannot resolve the concern, or you prefer not to raise it with me, you can use the complaints route of the professional body that applies to my practice, currently BACP. I will provide current details and cooperate with a fair process.
- **Data protection.** A concern about how personal information has been used can also be raised with the Information Commissioner's Office. The Privacy Notice explains how.

Records, privacy and data protection

I Found Help - Chris Counselling & Psychotherapy (Chris Gresch) is responsible for the personal information held about you for counselling. I will use only what is reasonably needed to arrange, provide and account for our work.

- **What may be held.** This may include your contact details, information you share in assessment or therapy, appointments, payment records, correspondence, an emergency contact you provide, and relevant safeguarding, complaint or legal records.
- **Proportionate notes.** My therapy notes are focused records of key themes, decisions, safety considerations and agreed actions rather than a word-for-word account of sessions.
- **Storage and sharing.** Records are kept securely, with access limited to those who genuinely need it. The minimum necessary information may be shared with my clinical supervisor, secure service providers and, where lawful and necessary, an insurer, legal adviser, GP or other professional, emergency or safeguarding service, professional body or court.
- **How long it is kept.** Information is kept only for as long as needed under the current I Found Help retention schedule. The period considers the date of last contact, professional and insurance requirements, complaints or legal matters, safeguarding needs and financial-record duties. Records are then securely deleted or anonymised where appropriate.
- **Your choices and rights.** Depending on the circumstances, you can ask to access or correct your information, request erasure or restriction, object to some use, or withdraw consent for an optional use. Some rights have lawful limits, and I will explain these if they apply.
- **Data concerns.** If a data concern or breach arises, I will respond promptly and follow the I Found Help Data Breach Procedure, including telling you or the Information Commissioner's Office where this is required.

The fuller Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy explain how information is used, the current retention periods, your rights and how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office. You can ask me for a copy or contact chriscounselling@ifoundhelp.uk.

Teaching, research and publication

This agreement does not give blanket permission to use you or our work as an identifiable example in teaching, research, publication, assessment or publicity. Any optional use would need a separate discussion, appropriate anonymisation and written permission where required. You are free to decline without this affecting your therapy.

Agreement and signatures

Signing confirms that we have discussed this agreement, that you have had the opportunity to ask questions, and that we intend to work within it. It remains a living agreement: signing does not remove your right to raise a concern, request a review, pause or end therapy.

By signing, we confirm that:

- the personal and practical details recorded in the agreement are accurate, and we will tell each other when something important changes;
- we have discussed the usual circle of confidentiality and the limited safeguarding, serious-risk and legal circumstances in which information may need to be shared;
- we will bring difficulties into the relationship where possible and review the agreement when the work or circumstances change; and

- you have been offered access to the I Found Help Safeguarding Policy, Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

External communication

No routine permission is given for contact with your GP, family, employer, emergency contact or another service. Any routine contact will be discussed and agreed separately, subject to the safeguarding, serious-risk and legal limits above.

Signatures

Client name		Therapist name	
Signature		Signature	
Date		Date	
Next review		Preferred contact	

Please keep a copy of the signed agreement. If a material term changes, we will record the change and confirm it together in writing.