

Welcome to Breathe

We can all face challenging times in our life. Although we can't change life experiences, we can change how we react and we can learn how to manage our mood.

Our counsellors work with you to establish a safe space where you can build a trusting, open relationship – giving opportunity to express troubling feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

We provide face to face and remote support for individuals, couples and [young people](#), each providing a tailored approach.

When you are not feeling well it is sometimes difficult to take everything in, so please make time to be in a quiet and calm place to read through this guide and direct any questions you may have to your Therapist or Head Counsellor.



Definition of counselling and psychotherapy

Counselling and psychotherapy are umbrella terms that cover a range of **talking therapies**. They are delivered by trained practitioners who work with people over a short or long term to help them bring about effective change or enhance their wellbeing.' Counselling allows a person to talk about their problems and feelings in a confidential, safe environment.

Why people choose to have therapy

Usually, individuals choose to have therapy because they are experiencing difficulties and distress in their lives. Other life issues and events which can be very difficult to deal with include bereavement, divorce, redundancy, health issues, bullying amongst others. However, you do not have to be in crisis or on the verge of one, before choosing to have therapy. You may be experiencing underlying feelings of dissatisfaction with life in general, or be seeking balance in your life and spirituality. It may be easier to talk about personal, family, or relationship issues with a person who is independent of friends and family.

What is therapy?

Therapy is time set aside by you and the therapist to look at what has brought you to therapy. This may include talking about life events (past and present), feelings, emotions, relationships, ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour.

Therapists and clients need to keep sessions to a reasonable length of time to ensure that they both can maintain their energy and focus and get the most out of the session. In one-to-one therapy, a session will be limited to 50 minutes per session. In the initial assessment, you may find it useful to discuss what approach or modality you would like to work with.

The therapist will do their best to help you to look at your issues and identify the right course of action for you, either to help you resolve your difficulties or help you find ways of coping. Talking about these things may take time, and will not necessarily all be included in the initial assessment. The number of sessions offered will be limited, so it is best to ask about this in advance. We offer 8

therapy sessions, if more are needed, this may be possible. This is at the discretion of the supervisory team.

Types of therapeutic approaches or modalities in brief

A therapy session is a time set aside on an agreed date at an agreed place. The counsellor will reach an agreement with you about confidentiality. Therapy is available for individuals, couples and families.

Psychological therapies used with our organisation depend on the training of our counsellors but generally fall into the following categories:

Humanistic Therapies, which focus on self-development in the 'here and now'.

Behavioural Therapies, which focus on cognitions and behaviours.

Psychoanalytical and Psychodynamic Therapies, which focus on the unconscious relationship patterns that evolved from childhood.

Arts Therapies, which use creative arts within the therapeutic process.

This is a generalisation though and counselling or psychotherapy usually overlaps some of these techniques. Some counsellors or psychotherapists practice a form of **integrative** therapy, which means they draw on and blend specific types of techniques.

Other practitioners work in an **eclectic** way, which means they take elements of several different models and combine them when working with clients. There are also a number of specific other therapies that can be used.



Below is a breakdown of some of the different psychological therapies available.

Humanistic Therapies

Humanistic therapies focus on self-development, growth and responsibilities. They seek to help individuals recognise their strengths, creativity and choice in the 'here and now'.

Existential Therapy

Existential therapy focuses on exploring the meaning of certain issues through a philosophical perspective, instead of a technique-based approach.

Person-Centred Therapy (also known as client-centred counselling)

Person-centred therapy focuses on an individual's self-worth and values. Being valued as a person, without being judged, can help an individual to accept who they are, and reconnect with themselves.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

Also known as solution-focused therapy or brief therapy, this approach predominantly looks at what the individual wants to achieve rather than historical problems. Questions are asked by the therapist

to help the individual uncover their own strengths and resources. Solution-focused therapy can be especially helpful to those who are goal-orientated and have a desire to change.

Systemic Counselling

Systemic Counselling or Therapy seeks to help you understand, not only yourself as an individual (system) but as part of the many 'systems' that you might be part of; couple, family, friends, work, organisations or community. Helping to identify and understand patterns, beliefs and ways of communicating according to role and positioning within these 'systems'.

Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis is based on the theory that we each have three ego states: Parent, adult and child. By recognising ego-states, transactional analysis attempts to identify how individuals communicate, and how this can be changed.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapies

Cognitive Behavioural therapies are based on the way you think (cognitive) and/or the way you behave. These therapies recognise that it is possible to change or recondition our thoughts or behaviour to overcome specific problems.

This can involve Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Behavioural Therapy, Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Cognitive Therapy.



Psychoanalytical and Psychodynamic Therapies

Psychoanalytical and psychodynamic therapies are based on an individual's unconscious thoughts and perceptions that have developed throughout their childhood, and how these affect their current behaviour and thoughts.

Psychodynamic Therapy

Psychodynamic therapy evolved from psychoanalytic therapy and seeks to discover how unconscious thoughts affect current behaviour. Psychodynamic therapy usually focuses on more immediate problems and attempts to provide a quicker solution. This can involve Jungian therapy, psychoanalysis, psychoanalytical therapy and psychodynamic therapy.

Sex Therapy

Clinical Sexology is the discipline of working with sex and relationship issues. This involves taking a biopsychosocial approach - incorporating all of the client's experiences inside and outside of the body, and working in a pluralistic manner. Pluralism is based on the view that no one therapeutic approach can resolve all client presentations and that different clients are likely to want, and benefit from, different interventions in therapy.

Issues that can be worked with include but are not limited to lack/loss of sexual function and desire, out of control sexual behaviours, shame and trauma, fertility issues, as well as exploring one's sexual or gender identity. Relationship issues can include recovery from affairs, mismatched desire,

communication and relationship breakdown. Sex doesn't need to be a presenting issue when coming in for relationship therapy.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential in a therapy relationship as part of building trust. (BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy [2018]). However, confidentiality is not absolute, and there are exceptions.

Sometimes, counsellors may need to make a referral to an agency or organisation (for example GP, police or social services) when there is a serious risk of imminent harm to their clients or to others, for example where a client is seriously mentally ill and needs hospitalisation, or in cases of child or elder abuse. There may be times when a therapist is required by law to break confidentiality, for example, about terrorist activities. It may also be a criminal offence to 'tip off' a client when such a disclosure has to be made.

Disclosures may sometimes be made at the client's request, for example, where a client asks for help when they are the victim of abuse, or for an assessment or report to help with a court case involving a claim for damages by the client. You and your therapist should talk together in their first session and reach agreement about the limits of confidentiality for your work together.



Therapists do not make telephone calls or engage in discussions about you to your GP, employer, partner, family members, friends, or to other agencies to find out, clarify, or add to your personal information without your knowledge. This would be an absolute breach of confidentiality and trust.

After discussion with your therapist, you should be clear about what information may need to be shared and with whom it may be shared.

Contracts and Boundaries

Therapists should establish clear boundaries. This is a framework where you and the therapist have agreed a contract covering the following:

- Dates and times of therapy sessions
- How and when the therapist and client can be contacted
- Agreement about the limits of confidentiality
- Clarification of the nature of the relationship, i.e. that it is a professional one where the therapist will not be a personal friend

A written contract will be provided for you to take away, usually in your first meeting, stating the agreement you have made to work together.

What Therapy is Not

Therapy is not advice giving or persuasion orientated to the therapist's point of view, although therapists may offer information, and some therapeutic approaches may ask you to do homework as part of your therapy. Nor is it just a friendly chat discussing the week's events as you would with a friend.

The therapist is an impartial professional, who is able to listen to you non-judgmentally and to work with your emotions and not get emotional themselves. The therapist helps you to develop understanding of yourself and others and to find your own solutions, making no demands upon you except for the terms agreed in your therapeutic contract.

Therapy sessions are normally regular and not held at random, for example, two sessions this week, one next week and then 'see how we go'. Some therapy models allow some flexibility in the spacing of sessions. Sessions are held in counselling rooms.

Therapist Qualities

Therapists aim to be impartial, and be able to express warmth and empathy to assist you to talk openly about your feelings and emotions. They should also be non-judgmental (this means not judging what a person discloses about themselves, their attitudes or behaviours); fair; open and trustworthy to enable a respectful working relationship to develop between them and the individual.

The therapist should be either undergoing professional training or be professionally trained and qualified, and have knowledge about the issues that you want to discuss.

The therapist and their supervisor should be members of a recognised professional body such as the BACP, or UKCP, and preferably accredited by them. In the BACP Ethical Framework therapists are encouraged to develop their personal qualities in terms of their empathy, sincerity, integrity, resilience, respect, humility, competence, fairness, wisdom, and courage.

For further information and explanation see www.bacp.co.uk; the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018) (the Ethical Framework).

Communication and Accountability

It is important that you notify the office manager if you are unable to make a booked appointment. If you fail to attend three counselling sessions without sufficient reason then you will be advised that counselling will finish and that you may, if you wish, go back on the waiting list.

As previously explained, your therapist must receive regular supervision from a qualified supervisor to ensure your therapist is helped to help you. This also provides a form of accountability to our organisation. If you have any concerns about your counseling that cannot be resolved with your therapist then please contact the office – telephone 029 20440191.

COMMUNITY ADVICE AND LISTENING LINE (CALL)

If you need urgent support before or during your counselling appointments you can contact the Community Advice & Listening Line, a 24 hour mental health telephone helpline on

Freephone: 0800 132 737 or Text 'help' to: 81066