

Counselling Client Agreement 2024

Who am I?

My name is Julia Sherwood of STC Counselling. Primarily, I work with people who are supporting someone with dementia.

Both my grandmothers had dementia as did my mother, for whom I was the primary support until she died in 2020. My partner has early-onset dementia; I cared for him at home for many years. He is now in a hospital-level care facility.

After a career in Learning and Development, I retrained as a counsellor and obtained a Postgraduate degree in Counselling Theory. I am a Provisional Member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC). I continue to study for a Master of Counselling. Other qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Education, and a Postgraduate degree in Adult Education.

What is the aim of this counselling?

This counselling provides a confidential opportunity to explore your personal and relational issues related to supporting a family member or friend with dementia, within a safe environment. During counselling, we may set goals agreed between you as the client and me as your counsellor. My role is to help you through the process without judgement or telling you what to do. Your role is to agree to work towards these goals. I may on occasion give information, homework, or offer suggestions. If at any time we feel I can no longer help you, I will offer to refer you to someone who can. The more you can take what was discussed during our session and practice it, apply it, work at it or think about it in between sessions, the more you will get out of coming to see me.

Frequency of sessions and payment

Usually, we will work together fortnightly for at least six sessions. Many people find it beneficial to meet regularly to maintain momentum for the changes and help keep things on track. We can stop whenever you want to, or whenever we agree you have reached your initial goals. You can pay whatever is affordable to you for each session and suggested options are shown below.

Please circle the one that works for your circumstance:

\$35 per session

\$65 per session

\$100 per session

\$130 per session

If you can't make the appointment

If you can't make the appointment, please contact me as soon as possible as there is usually a waitlisted client that I can see in that time. If you are late for your appointment, we'll still have to finish on time to be fair to the next client.

Confidentiality & limits to confidentiality

In most cases the fact that you are seeing me, and anything you might say to me, is private and I won't tell anyone else about this without your permission. There are exceptions to this privacy:

1. If you have been referred by an organisation, I will liaise with the person who referred you to inform them that we are working together, and I'll let them know when the counselling has concluded. Only with your permission would I share other relevant information that may help them support you within their role.
2. If there is a situation where you or someone else are at risk of serious harm, which I could prevent by breaking confidentiality, then I am ethically bound to act to prevent that harm. Unless there is an emergency, or it would increase the risk of harm I would still try to discuss this with you first.
3. All counsellors receive professional supervision. I meet with my counselling supervisor regularly. This is where I may discuss aspects of our work that are challenging, successful or just seem to need reflecting on. Regular supervision provides a check on the quality and safety of my work, a means to develop knowledge and skills, and a place to talk about ways that counselling work might affect me. Though the focus is primarily on me and the work I'm doing, I will also talk about clients during supervision. I will do my best to avoid saying anything that might identify a client.
4. As a Masters student counsellor I am expected to record the audio of some counselling sessions to analyse my counselling process and potentially share this with my supervisor (leaving out names or other identifying information) so they can assess my capability. **This is entirely voluntary on your part and would always require your signed agreement.** The audio would be deleted after the session with the supervisor.

Notes & files

I keep a record of each session on file while I am working with you. I do keep notes securely after counselling in case you choose to return at any stage.

Contact outside of therapy

If we were to meet in another situation outside of counselling, I would wait for you to make the first approach. It is fine to act as though we haven't met.

Extra support and crisis situations

I am only able to offer limited support outside of session times. It is okay for you to email if you need to, however, remember that it may take me a while to get back to you. In an emergency **call 111**. In a crisis call Healthline for your local area mental service team: **0800 611 116**

- I have read and understood the above outline of issues that may affect counselling and I agree to counselling under the conditions outlined above.
- I have read and understand the privacy information, confidentiality information, benefits and issues surrounding therapy.
- I know I can ask any questions and discuss anything I choose.
- I understand that taking part in counselling is my own choice and that I may withdraw at any time.

(signed)..... (date).....