



## **Online and telephone counselling contract**

### **Purpose of this agreement**

It is important that we have set out the terms under which we will be working together before the counselling begins, to avoid misunderstanding and to make our work together more productive.

I ask that you read the following agreement carefully. If you have any questions regarding the content of the agreement, or would like further information, please contact me at: (jmillaronline@protonmail.com), or 00447761 023027.

This document is five pages long, and there is a space at the end for your electronic signature.

### **What is Online or telephone Counselling?**

Online or telephone counselling provides an opportunity to explore a personal difficulty in a confidential and supportive environment. This may include expressing feelings that are painful, and which many of us experience at certain times in our lives. Online or telephone counselling gives you the opportunity to access counselling support at a time and in a place which is convenient to you.

This contract applies to both online and telephone counselling and hereafter when it refers to online counselling this includes telephone counselling.

Online counselling can provide support for a broad range of personal difficulties, but there are occasions where it would not be considered suitable, for example where a client is at risk for example. If this applies for you either when applying for support, or during ongoing sessions I will offer information of alternative sources of support, which you can make contact with and request support from.

### **What sort of issues can I contact you about?**

Online counselling may be able to help with a very wide range of issues including, abuse, anxiety, stress, depression, eating difficulties, loneliness, relationship problems, bereavement, self-esteem, sexual orientation, sexual abuse, discrimination, pet bereavement, and many more.

Not all types of issues can be resolved through online counselling and I will advise you if face to face counselling, or some other form of support might be more suitable for you. Where I consider that online counselling would not be the most suitable means of support I will make every effort to assist you in a referral to a suitable alternative source of support.

I am not able to provide online counselling to any person who is under the age of 18 or who is in crisis. If this applies to you I can help with information on referral to other agencies providing face to face counselling services who offer crisis support, or if you are under 18, to online services which are specifically directed to a younger age group.

### **Geographical limits**

The advantage of online counselling is that the counsellor and client can be distant from each other, even in different countries. Some countries have different registration and practice requirements for online counselling, in particular some states of the USA and Canada. For this reason Julie Millar counselling does not accept clients from these countries.

### **How does it work in practice?**

We will agree an 'appointment time'. This might be via telephone, internet voice only (VOIP) or webcam. These meetings could be weekly or more frequently if you request this.

Webcam and internet voice only meetings are conducted on on Vsee which is a secure and encrypted online platform used for online counselling. You can download Vsee software without charge at [www.vsee.com](http://www.vsee.com). If there is any technical issue with the Vsee platform the Zoom platform will be used as an alternative. Zoom is also secure and encrypted and can be accessed via the Zoom website at <https://zoom.us/>

Please ensure you have Vsee installed prior to the webcam appointment and add me as a contact: [jmillarcounselling@gmail.com](mailto:jmillarcounselling@gmail.com). You will need to email me prior to the appointment, to let me know your Vsee contact details.

If for any reason we experience technical issues during a 'real time' appointment I will try to re-connect with you, but if this is not possible we will make contact via telephone.

If we have arranged telephone counselling I will contact you from my mobile 07761 023027 at the appointment time.

### **Payment for your sessions**

Session fees are currently £40.00 for 50 minutes. The initial appointment will include some further assessment questions to help my understanding of how I can help you find a way forward with what has brought you to counselling.

The Payment of £40.00 for your session is due a minimum of 24 hours prior to the appointment time. Payment may be made by bank transfer or by Paypal. First sessions should be paid for through the Paypal, and I will send a payment request through the Paypal invoice system. You do not need to have a Paypal account to pay this way. After this my banking details are available on request for bank transfers.

If you have made payment for a session but are unable to meet at the appointed time or cancel with less than 48 hours notice I will retain a late cancellation fee for £10 for the session unless we have experienced a technological breakdown which prevents us meeting online. In the event of this occurring we would discuss how to re-arrange the scheduled appointment.

By using the paypal facility on my websites you are covered by Paypal's privacy policy: <https://www.paypal.com/ie/webapps/mpp/ua/privacy-full>

## **About the way I work**

I will provide, to the best of my ability, online counselling sessions that endeavour to create a supportive, non-judgmental environment, in which you will be given time and space to understand and gain insight into what is troubling you. This process can foster growth and lead to positive change in your life. More details about my way of working is available on my website.

Online counselling is different to face-to-face work as misunderstandings may occur due to a lack of usual facial expressions and tone of voice. It is therefore important for us both to feel comfortable to ask for clarification if we are unsure of something we say or refer to within our exchanges and leads to a misunderstanding or rupture in the counselling relationship occurring.

## **Confidentiality, Security, and Data Protection**

The content of your emails or online appointments will not be communicated with a third party except for the purposes of supervision of my work. In this instance, your identity will not be revealed, and the presenting issues are discussed in a general context, to help ensure I am working ethically and safely with clients. I strongly recommend that online clients use an encrypted email server for sending and receiving email exchanges when engaging with counselling, particularly when communicating anything of a personal or sensitive nature. Using an encrypted email server helps to ensure that our communication will not be intercepted by a third party. A free and secure email provider is [www.protonmail.com](http://www.protonmail.com) My protonmail address is: [jmillaronline@protonmail.com](mailto:jmillaronline@protonmail.com).

I recommend that you use a space which is private and where you will not be disturbed by other people during the webcam/ voice only/ telephone counselling session.

Julie Millar counselling regularly has virus protection software on all devices that are used for client communication, and this software is regularly updated. I recommend installing and using virus protection software on any device you use for online counselling.

In respect of online counselling via email, SMS, and webcam the UK police force and other international government authorities can ask for access to an individual's email account or synchronous messaging account where there is suspicion of illegal activities. On this basis I am not able to guarantee confidentiality in circumstances which lead to access being granted.

Where a complaint is made by a client to my professional body (BACP) I reserve the right to breach confidentiality and to use my session notes in order to address any grievances which might occur within the counselling practice of Julie Millar counselling. Wherever possible you will be informed of this.

At the end of our counselling agreement copies of our exchanges and assessment documents and counselling notes will be stored securely offline for a period of 5 years and then destroyed by shredding after this time. I am a registered Data Controller and Data Processor and abide by the regulations imposed by such procedures. My registration number is: ZA344440. Julie Millar counselling has a policy for data processing and storage. The procedures in this document have been compiled in relation to GDPR (General Data Privacy Regulations) from May 26<sup>th</sup> 2018 onwards.

## **What information is kept about me and who has access?**

As the Data Controller and data Processor I maintain and store brief notes relating to your sessions. I will not share this data with someone other than yourself, unless required by a court of law. Under GDPR you have the right to request a copy of session records. Where requested by you these will be within 30 days in electronic format, Under GDPR you have the right to ask for records to be

amended if you feel they are inaccurate. If you wish to ask for an amendment or if you raise objection to any data kept by me, such objection will be stored with the original session notes. A more detailed summary of your data protection rights is available as a separate document.

### **How is my information stored?**

The Client agreement, assessment form and data processing consent you are asked to complete are stored in password protected computer files. Brief session notes are paper based, anonymised and stored in a locked cabinet.

Any electronic contact we have during the process of assessment and ongoing sessions will be deleted from my computer at the end of our agreed work together. Your phone number may be stored anonymously on my phone if we engage with 'real time' sessions using Vsee and is deleted at the end of the counselling contract.

Please indicate your agreement to these data processing procedures by signing the separate data processing consent form.

Please take time to read through my website privacy policy at [www.juliemillarcounselling.com](http://www.juliemillarcounselling.com)

My website is hosted by Websites for Therapists ([www.websitesfortherapists.co.uk](http://www.websitesfortherapists.co.uk)) which is also GDPR compliant.

### **Guidelines for Emergency Contact**

Online counselling **cannot** provide an emergency service for clients.

In the event of an emergency arising whilst you are engaged in online work or if you were experiencing suicidal thoughts, I would discuss with you the appropriate support that you could access during this period.

If you found yourself in a major crisis and were considering serious self harm it would be vital to get immediate help. This could include contacting your GP, or your nearest accident and emergency service (A & E).

You could also call the Samaritans on :116123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) ( email emergency support). Befrienders Worldwide list sources of support internationally [www.befrienders.org/](http://www.befrienders.org/)

All personal information disclosed will be kept confidential and not used for any purposes other than a counselling record.

### **Legal basis and jurisdiction**

This agreement shall be construed and governed in all respects in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and any dispute or differences in relation to this agreement shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts.

### **Social Media**

It is not permissible to publicise the content of our exchanges or share them with a third party using social media or other aspects of personal and public forums.

I have a social media presence on Facebook and a blog. You are very welcome to like or follow my posts on these counselling pages. I do not accept friend requests from clients, nor will I look for you

on any social media or online. I will only use the contact details you have provided to keep in touch with you for appointment times or alterations to our meeting arrangements.

### **Professional body membership**

I am a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and abide by the Ethical Framework and standards of that body. Further information about the BACP Ethical Framework may be found at <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-andstandards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/>

### **Complaints**

Complaints about my practice may be directed to me in the first instance. If you are not satisfied how I have dealt with your complaint you may contact BACP on 01455 883300 option 3 or email [ask@bacp.co.uk](mailto:ask@bacp.co.uk).

**Please sign and return the agreement to me together with the assessment form and the data processing consent as attachments if you would like to proceed with online counselling and to certify that you are over 18 years of age:**

**signature:**

**Full name:**

**Date:**

You can print out this sheet to sign and return to me as a scanned document or photo, or you can insert an electronic signature