



# Matthew Haggis

## Counselling Agreement

**Aim of counselling:** The aim of counselling is to provide you, the client, with a confidential opportunity to explore personal, relational, and professional issues in safety. My role is to help you through this process without telling you what to do and without judging you. I may on occasions give information or offer suggestions. During counselling, we agree the aim of the work, and any specific goals you want to work towards. If at any time I feel I can no longer help you, I will offer to refer you to someone who I believe may be able to.

**Theoretical Approach:** I was originally trained in the Dialogue approach at the University of Edinburgh, which is based on theories of Psychodynamic and Person-centred psychology. I have since added professional development that has allowed me to integrate aspects of Transactional Analysis, Psychosynthesis, and Gestalt. My work is underpinned by an Existentialist approach to exploring the experience and meaning of who we are in the world right now.

**Confidentiality:** I offer a completely confidential service and under normal circumstances no information about you will be passed on to a third person. The only exceptions to this are:

- Within the confidentiality of professional counselling supervision.
- If you have asked me to share your information
- I would be at risk of prosecution if the information about you were not passed on (for example, if you disclosed information about Terrorism or Money Laundering).
- If I believe that you or another person is in danger of serious harm

**Ethical standards:** I am a member of BACP (the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) and am bound by BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (available via my website). I take individual boundaries seriously and seek to work in the most ethical way. While you and I, as client and counsellor, may form a close and supportive relationship, a counsellor is not a friend and I cannot accept social invitations.

**Sessions:** Counselling sessions are for 60 minutes and will be every week at a day and time suitable to ourselves. We may however mutually decide to change an agreed appointment if required. Each session will begin at the agreed time and will end one hour later. Any work together that begins after this time due to late arrival for whatever reason cannot be extended beyond the agreed finish time. We may mutually decide to change the interval of time between sessions after a suitable review.

**Cancellations:** If for any reason I have to cancel a session I will aim to provide you with at least 24 hours' notice. Likewise I will expect you to give me 24 hours' notice if you are unable to attend. I reserve the right to charge you for a session you cancel without this notice.

**Commitment:** This process involves your commitment, your honesty both with yourself and me, and a genuine desire to change. On my part, I have a sincere helping intent and provide commitment, honesty and genuine respect for you as an individual. We will agree the frequency and duration of the counselling sessions at the beginning of the work, and we will both make the utmost effort to attend all agreed appointments.

**Fees:** A 60-minute session is £50 (rates correct as of January 2020) although concessions are available for unwaged clients and students. I reserve the right to review my fees annually and would always give you, the client, 28 days' notice of any amendment.

**Fee payment:** Ideally, payment should be made by cash, cheque or transfer immediately after each session. Cheques should be made payable to Matthew Haggis. Payment is also possible by Paym or direct BACS transfer, and bank details can be provided on request.

**Ending counselling:** When therapy is open-ended, as opposed to when working to an agreed limit, it is important that ending is not sudden or unplanned. We will regularly review progress to help determine the duration of our work together. If circumstances bring an abrupt end to the therapy, both you and I agree to use our best endeavours to arrange and attend a final ending session.

**Record keeping:** I keep brief written notes on each session, which you are welcome to see at any time. These notes and the personal details you provide are kept separately from each other in password-protected files on computer, expressly for the administration of my client work. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and no personal details will ever be passed to other agencies except as required by law. At the end of our work together your details and my notes will be stored securely for a period of three years in case they are required (such as your wishing to return to counselling). After that time they will be securely erased.

**Insurance:** I hold both public liability and professional indemnity insurance. The insuring body is Howden Professional.

**Holidays:** I will attempt to give a minimum of two weeks' notice of any planned holidays, and I ask for at least two weeks from you of the same.

**Contact outside of counselling sessions:** To cancel or rearrange an appointment please send me an email or text, or leave a message on my voicemail, and I will respond to you as soon as I can. Other contact outside of agreed sessions is not advisable as it can interfere with the therapy. For this reason I also have a policy of not joining with clients on social media, so I will not respond to requests to be 'connections' or 'friends' etc. during or after working together therapeutically. To protect the confidentiality of the work, if we meet accidentally outside of a session I shall not acknowledge you unless you choose to acknowledge me first.

**Supervision:** All counsellors undertake professional supervision. Supervision helps me to think more deeply about the work you and I are doing together and provides extra support and safety for both of us. In line with professional requirements and standards, I may discuss my work with you within my supervision. Supervision is bound by the same confidentiality that applies to our sessions.

**Complaints/concerns/queries:** Please do not hesitate to discuss anything that is impacting negatively on your counselling experience with me. If this is not possible, and you have a serious concern about my professional behaviour or ethics, you should contact BACP for details of their complaints procedure.

Client Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_