

Privacy Policy

The statement which outlines how I will use, gather, disclose, and manage your data.

Privacy Statement

The following statement has been made in compliance with the General Data Protection Register May 2018 (GDPR: <https://ico.org.uk>) and is subject to change and updates.

As you engage with the services I offer, I will request information about you that enables me to carry out the service in a professional manner. You have a right to know how your information will be stored and processed. I am registered with the ICO (information Commissioners Office) as a Data Controller and a Data Processor because of how I collect your data and what I do with it.

What information do I collect?

After the initial enquiry and telephone call, if we are able to proceed, I will send you 3 documents:

1. Information About The Services I Offer
2. The Grounded Heart Privacy Policy
3. Key Information About You.

These documents can be sent to you via email or Royal Mail. The second 2 forms will be completed and signed by you and returned to me via email.

If an initial assessment is arranged, we will meet online via zoom, and I will ask you some questions and complete an Assessment Form of both general (example; name, contact details, date of birth) and more sensitive information about the problem that brings you to counselling and your family and mental health history.. This helps me to begin to build an understanding of you and your context and also helps me to know if we are suited to working together. If counselling begins I will make anonymised notes of the work we do together and store copies of any letters written to related professionals. Any emails other than those about appointment will be printed and stored securely.

In addition to the above, my computer will also store your email address and if paying by bank transfer your name may appear on our bank statement. Should I need to phone you, my phone records will show your number but not your name.

Why do I collect your information?

I collect this information to fulfil my contractual and professional obligations to you. The information is helpful to me in three main ways: it aids my communication with you, it enables me to consider carefully if I am the right counsellor for you and it enables me to keep track of the work we are doing and to be able to do this in an ethical and professional way.

What do I do with your information?

All printed information is stored in a locked filing cabinet. Anonymised notes are stored separately to any other data. This information is stored for 5 years.

In the event of me becoming incapacitated or deceased, my Professional Will be activated. The executor of this will is Jean Delevingne, an accredited counsellor with the BACP working under their strict guidelines and ethical Framework. My executor will follow instructions to securely retrieve my stored data, and safely destroy it. You will be contacted by Jean by the means indicated on the Assessment Form.

As part of our work I might have to contact designated outside agencies such as The Police, Social Services, GP or other authority, if an issue is raised that is in direct conflict with my legal or ethical obligations. These are explained in the Our Working Agreement. When at all possible I will discuss this with you first.

Online Security

I have taken measures to encrypt my email messages as they are sent from me. I strongly advise you to

- check that your Wi-Fi is secure, (most home Wi-Fi connections are now encrypted)
- ensure your devices are password protected
- Not leave your devices where other people can access them.
- Use a personal computer and/or email account and a private Wi-Fi connection, not a public one.
- Ensure your device has anti-virus software, firewall protection and encryption.

I cannot be held responsible for any security breaches outside of my control.

For video counselling I use the platform Zoom because this is encrypted and supported by my professional bodies.

How long do I keep data for?

Please let me know if you decide not to proceed beyond the early stages of setting up counselling. The Assessment Form and any data collected from you, will then be securely destroyed. If your start is delayed, I will keep any collected data for 2 months after which it will be destroyed. Should you wish to approach me for counselling after the 2 month period the initial appointment would need to be repeated.

Whilst working with you I need to keep information to fulfil my contractual commitment to you, I also have a legitimate interest to keep information for up to 5 years in relation to client information that might be needed by a court of law.

What are your rights?

You have the right to see the information we keep and make any corrections if it is not accurate. You have the right to ask that your data be destroyed, however, should you withdraw consent I will keep minimum details that identify you for 5 years and erase all other information. You have the right to ask that your data be transferred to other services. You have the right to restrict processing where the data is inaccurate, the processing is unlawful, or the Data Controller no longer needs the information. I will never use your client data for marketing unless you choose to be kept informed of any training or courses I offer.

You have the right to complain. If you are unhappy with any aspect of working with me, please discuss this with me in the first instance. I adhere to the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) Ethical Framework and the ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors). Details of how to make a formal complaint can be found on their respective websites. If your complaint concerns how your data has been processed please contact the ICO (information Commissioners Office). Website links can be found at the bottom of this document.

Your consent and my contractual rights

When you sign this form, you give consent for me to collect your data. When counselling ends you will have a further opportunity to withdraw consent to keep your data. Should you withdraw your consent at that stage I will still have a legal and legitimate interest to keep records that identify you, should there be a case brought in a court and will I keep minimum data in order to do this.

When you agree with this Privacy Statement, you give your consent to your counsellor, Amanda Hedger to collect your personal and sensitive data. By agreeing, you understand that your counsellor Amanda Hedger, may contact your GP or other relevant professionals but whenever possible this will be discussed with you first. By agreeing you also understand that your counsellor will keep your information for 5 years and that you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time therefore minimising the information that is kept.

If you have any difficulty understanding this document or have any questions, please let me know.

Useful Links

BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) Ethical Framework www.bacp.co.uk

ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors) www.acc-uk.org

General Data Protection Regulation May 2018 (GDPR: <https://ico.org.uk>)

My ICO registration number is ZA760258.