**Laura Mole Counselling**

**Counselling Information and Agreement**

This document is written information to help you feel supported whilst we work together. Once you have read this, and if you agree to it’s contents, please email me saying so, before we start our work together.

**About Your Counsellor**

I’m Laura, a qualified and experienced Integrative Counsellor, and a qualified Online and Telephone counsellor (ACTO).  I am a member of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) and follows their code of ethics.  More information on the code of ethics can be found on the BACP website <https://www.bacp.co.uk/> .

**Counselling**

Counselling is a way to share issues with a trained professional who can guide you to your own answers in a confidential environment.

Counselling can be short term, for a few sessions or longer open-ended work.  What you would like from counselling will be agreed in the first session, and regularly reviewed.  Sessions are usually weekly at the same time each week, but a more flexible arrangement can be made if therapeutically suitable.

The therapy that I provide is called “Humanistic Integrative Counselling”.  This means that because no one person is the same as another, the therapist may use different styles and therapeutic interventions to connect a client with their issues to best suit their personality and needs.

A mixture of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, CBT, Attachment Theory and Person-Centred counselling may be used as well as other intervention styles.  ERP (a special form of CBT) will be used to treat OCD.  Please ask me for more information on each.

**Confidentiality and it’s limits**

Sessions are confidential between client and therapist.  There are however some rare exceptions where I need to break confidentiality.  Even in these rare circumstances, I do not take this decision lightly, and will only share the minimum amount of information needed.

I will always aim to inform you if possible, when I have to do this, and where I need to take the information before doing so.  Some examples of instances are:

·      I am legally obliged to share information with authorities that relate to terrorism, trafficking, and money laundering.

·      If someone is at risk of serious harm (death, abuse etc), I will need to share enough information to keep that person safe.

·      I may be ordered by a court of law to share session notes.

**Scheduling**

The agreed day and time for therapy will have been agreed between us.  We will try to keep it the same time each week/ every other week for stability, however rescheduling can take place by you if needed and if 48 hours notice is given.  Please see the cancellations policy for cancelling reschedules.

Therapy sessions run for 50 minutes.

If you arrive late for a session, your time cannot be extended, therefore please arrive on time to benefit from your full session.

If I am late, I will try to extend the session if possible, or make up the time in future sessions.

At the beginning of an intervention it is helpful to schedule ahead times when you may not be able to attend. I will also make you aware of any dates when I will be unavailable.  I will aim to give at least 3 weeks’ notice of any planned absence where possible.

If for any reason you are unable to attend a scheduled session it is important that you make me aware 48 hours beforehand to avoid charge (including due to illness - please see “Fees, payments and cancellations section”).

If I have to cancel a session I will give you as much notice as possible, and will also try to reschedule with you for a different time.  You will not be charged for the cancelled session.

Clients under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or those who become physically threatening will be asked to leave the session.

Children (who are not the client), or other people are not permitted in sessions unless agreed.

**Fees, payments, and cancellations**

Fees have been agreed at £85 per session.

Payment can be made by BACS to:

Laura Mole

Account number: 48210278

Sort Code: 60-83-71

Sessions need to be paid for 24 hours in advance.

If payment has not been made for the previous session by the time of our next appointment, payment for the previous session and the current session will need to be paid in advance of you attending the session.

Email reminders will be sent for outstanding payments.

Sessions cancelled less than 48hrs in advance and missed sessions will still be charged the full fee.  This includes if you or a loved one are ill.

If rescheduled appointments are made then cancelled the same week, the cancellation fee will still apply.  For instance, if you reschedule your Tuesday appointment, letting me know on the Sunday, and we agree to meet on the Thursday instead, even if you cancel the Thursday appointment with 48 hours notice, there will still be a cancellation fee.

**Working With Clients Under 18 Years Old**

If working with a client who is under the age of 18, I usually have contact with parents or carers for an initial referral conversation, to arrange an assessment session, scheduling session times, and payment and cancellations.  I recommend that a parent is at the first 5 minutes of the initial assessment if the client is OK with this.

Session content is confidential between my client and I and not discussed with parents unless the client wishes, or has been agreed as part of the work (e.g ERP family sessions to support client), or unless there is a safeguarding risk.  This is so that the young person can feel able to be completely open without it being shared anywhere else.

Although at the initial consultation I will speak to you about what has been happening, I kindly ask that you don’t send me “updates” once our work has started unless I request them.  I also ask that you don’t make “requests” about what we talk about, even if for you there is an issue at home that you would like me to address.  It is important for the therapeutic work that I experience my client’s story as they see it.  If you do send me unsolicited update emails or texts between sessions, unfortunately I won’t read them, and you need to be aware that for transparency I will let my client know that you have been in contact.

We will communicate about payments, session bookings and cancellations, and of course, if there is a major issue that comes up, you can get in contact to arrange a time to speak about it.

Please see the BACP website for more information on working with Children and Young people.

**Contact outside of sessions**

I am contactable outside of sessions Monday to Friday via email for session arrangements.  I will endeavour to respond within 48 hours to any correspondence.

If you feel you need an additional session in between your usual times, this can be arranged if I have availability.

I unfortunately cannot be contacted in the case of a mental health emergency.  If you feel as though you are in crisis  please contact  your GP or A and E, 111 or 999.  For those under 18 years old - Childline: 0800 1111, Kooth ([https://www.kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com/)) or the CAMHS 24 hour crisis line Mental Health Direct: 0300 555 1000.

**Breaks and endings**

The decision to end therapy will usually be made by the client, or mutually agreed.  You may wish to work in an open-ended way or have a specific number of sessions agreed upon at the start.  We can talk about this together.

Sometimes I may suggest an ending to your therapy.  Reasons for this may include:

·      You have made significant progress on the issues you first came for

·      If it seems you may no longer be benefitting from the sessions

·      I may refer you on to a different service if I feel my skillset is not the most suited to your issues.

·      If we discoverer we are linked closely socially or in another context.

Any endings or changes will always be managed with care and sensitivity, and I will help you with the next steps.

When you are ready to end therapy, you may decide to work towards ending through several sessions, or have one last session.  Where possible, please let me know so that an ending can be planned for.  A “therapeutic ending” can be a very healing experience for clients, particularly if they have had bad experiences of endings in the past.

**Face to Face Sessions**

In person sessions are held at my practice in Stanmore.  The address is:

Suite 8, 37 Stanmore Hill, Stanmore, Harrow, HA7 3DS

The Buzzer for my office is left blank.  Press it when you arrive and I will release the door for you to come in.

The office is in a shared building with other small businesses.  You may see other people in the corridors, but they won’t know why you are there.

Access to my room is via a staircase.  Once you come up, please take a seat in the corridor until I call you in.

There are toilet facilities both downstairs and upstairs.

There is no parking available in the car park but there is plenty of on road parking in the surrounding roads.  There is a parking restriction from 3pm to 4pm in resident bays.  During this time, 1 hour free parking is available in any paid for council space, as long as a parking session is booked on the app.

I do have personal reasons to be in Stanmore, and you may see me out in public. Please let me know whether you would like me to either ignore you, or say hello.

**Albert the dog**

I have a small to medium sized, quiet dog called Albert.  He sometimes comes to work with me.  He is not a therapy dog.  He sits under my desk during sessions and won’t disturb us.  He is a rescue dog who feels a little nervous, so won’t come to you for fuss, unless you give him some time and space (and if that’s what you want).  He does not like to be picked up by people he doesn’t know, so please don’t try to pick him up.

If you don’t like dogs, are allergic, or just don’t want him to be in the room, please let me know in advance, as I have somewhere else he can be.  It is my priority that you feel comfortable in the space, and that your therapeutic experience is not disturbed.

If you would like Albert to be in the room, or if you don’t mind him being there, please state in your email confirmation of this agreement by explicitly saying “Yes to the dog”. This is for insurance purposes.

**Online / Phone Sessions**

If your therapy is online, this will be via Zoom.  A one-time use link to your session will be emailed to you at least 5 minutes before the start time to allow you to get ready.

If there is a technical difficulty on my part, I will try to extend the session for the time lost.  This will be done wherever possible.

Online and phone sessions are not recorded by me and should not be recorded by the client unless prior permission is given.

Due to the nature of online and phone counselling we will need to agree a process for contacting one another if you leave the session unexpectedly and are no longer contactable.  This is so I can ensure you are not in danger.  This may mean contacting a nominated contact that you provide.

Online and phone counselling is not sufficient support if you feel you are in immediate crisis.  Signs of crisis may be feelings of wanting to harm yourself or another. In this case please consider contacting your local accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital and ask to speak to someone from the crisis team.

*If you feel you need immediate assistance you may consider contacting the Samaritans, they are available 24/7 by telephone free on 116 123 or by email on* *jo@samaritans.org*

**Social Media**

I have a professional online presence on Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook for the purposes of marketing.  You are welcome to follow me on Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok or Instagram, but no therapeutic conversations or session arrangements can take place via this medium.

I won’t acknowledge or follow clients on social media even when a comment on one of my posts has been made.  This is to protect your confidentiality and maintain professionalism.  I don’t accept friend requests or LinkedIn requests from clients. If we find out that we are in the same online group (for instance a Facebook group) we may have to consider blocking each other.

**Complaints and Feedback**

As it is my intention to help to heal and not to harm, in the first instance please try to talk to me about any concerns.  I always welcome your feedback and will try to alleviate any issues, or repair any hurt caused.

If you feel as though you cannot address it directly with me, please contact my professional body and follow their complaints procedure.

I am registered with the BACP.  The contact details for the registered body can be found on the website <https://www.bacp.co.uk/>

I am insured to work with clients worldwide (online), however this is subject to English Law with the Exclusive Jurisdiction of the Courts of England and Wales.  Agreeing to this contract means agreeing to exclusively follow UK procedures in the event of any complaints.

At the end of therapy with me, I may send you an anonymous questionnaire link about my service (through Survey Monkey or similar).  Your input allows me improve my service for other people, and is most welcome.

**If you agree to this counselling agreement, please send me an email confirming this.**

**We can discuss any points of this at any time, and mutually agree any changes.**

**GDPR Privacy Notice**

General Data Protection Regulations legally require me to inform you of what data I hold about you, how I use your data, how I keep it safe, lists of any 3rd party software I use that incorporates your sensitive data, how the 3rd party services relate to my work, and your rights to the data I hold about you.

**Collection of personal information**

I may collect the following data:

Name and date of birth.

Address, Telephone/SMS number, Email address together with your preferred method of contact.

A trusted person who can be contacted in an emergency.  The purpose of this includes if you are taken ill in session, or if we are working online and you are unexpectedly uncontactable, or if any emergency occurs.

Doctor’s details, Medical conditions, Prescribed medication, Previous experience of mental health treatment/diagnosis, permission to contact GP in an emergency.

Counselling history, Relationships and family (past and present), Presenting issues.

**Storage of personal information**

Mobile phone/SMS:

I store your contact number on my work phone but use only your initials to identify you. This allows me to make contact in urgent situations or to identify you if you call or message. The phone I use is password protected, encrypted and only used for work purposes.  It is also traceable if stolen and I can wipe it of information remotely.

I have voicemail on this phone and no one else has access to it.  I delete any voicemails once they have been listened to, and I only retain text messages for a 2 week period, unless necessary for our work together.

Email:

Electronic correspondence is made via my email address laura@lauramolecounselling.com.  This is an email account held via Proton Mail, a secure email service and is password protected and encrypted. I would contact you via this method for the purposes of setting up an initial meeting or confirming subsequent appointments, and for sending you any paperwork necessary for our work.  If I send you documents we have worked on together (for instance with CBT) I will password protect them and send them to you.  We will have mutually agreed a password beforehand that I will tell you verbally.

Electronic records:

Client information that is kept electronically is stored securely on a PC and any session notes are anonymised.  The PC is password protected, has robust anti-virus software and no one else has use of the device.  The PC’s data does not synchronise with any cloud services.

The PC is backed up to an encrypted storage device that is password protected.

Websites:

If you send me a contact form from my website, the name and details you enter will be held in the content management system of my secure Wix account until I delete them.  Once first contact has been made and we either communicate through email or phone I delete your details on the site.  For full details please visit <https://www.lauramolecounselling.com/terms-and-conditions>

Paper:

I use paper records – Client Record Sheet containing contact information, Counsellor & Client Agreement, Privacy Notice & Agreement, Initial Assessment Form, Session Notes.

NB: The Initial Assessment Form and Session Notes are anonymised and kept separately from any contact information that would identify you. All paper records are stored securely in a lockable cabinet.

**How I process/share your personal information**

Supervision:

In line with BACP requirements, I take my work to a supervisor to have another professional perspective. Your anonymity will be respected throughout this process.

Breaking Confidentiality:

If I believe that your safety or another person’s safety is at significant risk, I may contact the suitable authority without your permission. This includes your doctor, the emergency services and the mental health crisis team.  I will aim to inform you before doing so wherever possible.

I am also required by law to pass on information relating to acts of terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking and ongoing abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. I will at all times attempt to gain your permission before breaking confidentiality in these instances. I do, however, retain the right to do so without your consent.

Therapeutic Will:

It is considered best practice for your counsellor to have a therapeutic will. In the event of hospitalisation or my death (or similar of a close relative), my Therapeutic Executor will make contact to inform you of the situation and to advise you of your options.

Erasing your personal information:

When we have finished working together, I will erase all electronic correspondence (emails, texts) after one month. I retain your case notes securely for 5 years after the last session or if you are under the age of 18 your records will be stored until 5 years after you turn 18. At this point all information held on paper will be shredded and any electronic notes will be deleted.

**Disclaimer**

The information you provide to me is kept in accordance with GDPR guidelines for the UK.  Although I only use 3rd party providers who adhere to the European GDPR I cannot be responsible for any data breaches that occur due to their negligence.

As technology is fallible there is also a risk (although extremely small) that a client’s data may be compromised in an unforeseen way.  If any breaches are made either by user error, technological failure, or malicious cyber-attack (hacking) the ICO will be informed and every effort will be made as per GDPR to recover and protect any lost data.  The client will be informed if any sensitive identifiable data is compromised, and every effort will be made to repair any damage caused.

Clients may consider whether their own technology is up to date in terms of updates and anti-virus software to minimise risk of a data breach.

**Your rights**

You have the following rights with respect to your personal information:

The right to be informed what personal information I hold (i.e. this document)

The right to request a copy of the personal information I hold on you (free of charge and within one calendar month)

The right to request that I rectify any inaccurate or incomplete personal information

To right to withdraw consent from me using/processing your personal information

To right to request that some or all of your personal information be erased. I can, however, decline this request whilst the information is needed for me to practise lawfully and competently.

If you have any concerns about the way your data is handled please speak to your therapist in the first instance.  If they are unable to rectify the situation to your satisfaction you can contact the Information Commissioners Office directly and make a complaint. <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

**Acknowledgment** **and Consent**

Once you have discussed the counselling agreement and GDPR notice with me in the initial session, please send an email to laura@lauramolecounselling.com acknowledging that:

You understand and agree to the policies detailed in the counselling agreement;

We have discussed and clarified any questions you may have about this document.

I agree with the terms of the counselling agreement and GDPR notice from Laura Mole Counselling.

* Yes
* No

I agree to have Albert the dog in the room when I have therapy.

* Yes
* No

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_