



**JESSICA SHEPHERD
COUNSELLING**

What to Expect from Your First Counselling Session

Jessica Shepherd Counselling

Before Your Session

If You're Coming Face-to-Face (Herne Bay)

- Address: [Full address will be provided in your booking confirmation]
- Parking: Free parking available on-site - Please park in any of the street parking free options before entering the private close.
- Arrival: Please arrive 5 minutes early to settle in
- What to bring: Just yourself - no forms or homework needed!
- Finding me: I will meet you on the hour of your appointment out front of the address. I will then walk you around the building into the counselling space.



If You're Meeting Online

- Zoom link: Sent 24 hours before your session
- Tech check: Test your camera and microphone beforehand
- Space: Find somewhere private and comfortable
- Backup plan: Have my phone number handy in case of technical issues

Your First 50 Minutes Together

Getting Settled (First 10 minutes)

- Brief introductions and getting comfortable
- Quick overview of how sessions work
- Any immediate questions about the process
- Setting up the space so you feel at ease

Your Story & Current Situation (25-30 minutes)

- What's brought you here right now? - Share whatever feels important
- What you're hoping for - We'll explore your goals together (these can change!)
- A bit about your background - Only what you're comfortable sharing
- Previous therapy experiences - If relevant, but no pressure

Understanding How We'll Work Together (10-15 minutes)

- My approach explained - Person-centred, which means you lead the way
- Practical arrangements - Frequency, cancellations, contact between sessions

- Questions about the process - Anything you're wondering about
- Planning ahead - When would you like to meet next?

What Your First Session Is

-  Your space - This time is completely yours
-  A conversation - Not an interview or interrogation
-  Goal-setting - We'll explore what you want from counselling
-  Getting to know each other - Seeing if we work well together
-  Practical planning - Sorting out the logistics that work for you
-  Completely confidential - Everything stays between us

What Your First Session Isn't

-  A deep dive - We won't rush into heavy topics
-  Problem-solving mode - I won't give advice or quick fixes
-  Diagnostic - No labels or clinical assessments
-  Overwhelming - We'll go at your pace
-  One-size-fits-all - This is tailored to you

Common First Session Feelings (All Normal!)

"I Don't Know Where to Start"

Perfect! That's what I'm here for. I'll ask gentle questions to help you find your starting point.

"What If I Get Emotional?"

Emotions are welcome here. We have tissues, we can pause, and there's no pressure to push through anything.

"What If I Don't Have Anything 'Big' to Talk About?"

You don't need a crisis to benefit from counselling. Everyday struggles, life transitions, or just wanting to understand yourself better are all valid reasons.

"What If I Go Blank?"

Totally normal! Sometimes minds go quiet in new situations. We can sit with the silence or I can ask questions to help.

"What If We Don't Click?"

That's valuable information too. We can discuss it openly, and I can help you find someone who might be a better fit.

My Approach - What You Can Expect From Me

Person-Centred Therapy Means:

- You're the expert on your own life and experiences
- I won't give advice or tell you what to do
- We work collaboratively - this is a partnership
- Your pace, your priorities - you decide what we focus on
- Non-judgmental space - all parts of you are welcome here

ADHD & Neurodivergent Specialisation:

- I get it - I understand ND brains and experiences
- Flexible approach - We can adapt sessions to work for you
- Sensory considerations - Let me know what helps you feel comfortable
- No masking needed - Be authentically yourself

Practical Information

Session Details

- Duration: 50 minutes
- Frequency: Usually weekly to start, but we can adjust
- Cost: £45 per session, or £350 for 10 sessions (saves £100)
- Payment: Bank transfer after each session

Between Sessions

- Contact: Email is best for non-urgent matters
- Response time: Usually within 24-48 hours
- Crisis support: I'm not a crisis service - we'll discuss emergency contacts

Cancellations

- Notice needed: 24 hours when possible
- Life happens: We can be flexible, especially for ADHD brains!
- Rescheduling: Always an option

Questions You Might Want to Ask Me

Feel free to ask about any of these (or anything else!):

- **How long have you been working with [ADHD/teens/adults]?**
- **What's your experience with [specific issue]?**
- **How do you typically work with someone like me?**
- **What if I need to contact you between sessions?**
- **How will we know if therapy is working?**
- **What happens if I want to stop or take a break?**

After Your First Session

Follow-Up

- I'll send a brief follow-up email within 24 hours
- This might include any resources we discussed
- Confirmation of your next appointment

Reflection Time

- It's normal to feel various things after your first session
- Some people feel relieved, others feel stirred up - both are normal
- Give yourself time to process

17 Next Steps

- We'll have discussed when to meet next
- You can always adjust frequency as we go
- No long-term commitments required

Remember: This Is Your Journey

- There's no "right" way to do therapy
- Progress isn't always linear - expect ups and downs
- You can change direction anytime
- Small steps count - you don't need dramatic breakthroughs
- You're already brave for taking this step

Final Reminders

What to Bring

- Just yourself!
- A drink if you'd like one
- Any questions you have
- An open mind (but no pressure!)

Timing

- Face-to-face: Arrive 5 minutes early
- Online: Join the Zoom room right on time
- Running late? Just let me know - we can adjust

Last Thoughts

Starting therapy takes courage, and you've already taken the hardest step. I'm looking forward to meeting you and beginning this journey together.

Contact Information

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 Face-to-face: Herne Bay, Kent

 Online: UK & Ireland

Remember: Your first session is about getting comfortable and seeing if we're a good fit. There's no pressure to dive deep or have everything figured out. We'll take it one step at a time, at your pace.