



**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



### 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.