



# Privacy Policy for Psychotherapy Practice

## 1. Introduction

### Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide high-quality, ethical, and client-centered psychotherapy services. We are committed to fostering a supportive and confidential environment that promotes mental health and well-being. Our goal is to empower clients through evidence-based practices and continuous professional development.

### Scope of Practice:

Our practice encompasses a wide range of psychotherapy services, including individual, couples, family, and group therapy. We address various mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, trauma, relationship difficulties, and personal growth. Our therapists are trained in multiple therapeutic modalities to meet the diverse needs of our clients.

## 2. Ethical Guidelines

- **Adherence to Professional Standards:** Follow guidelines set by relevant professional organizations (e.g., APA, [IACP](#), BACP).
- **Confidentiality:** All client information is kept confidential except where mandated by law.
- **Informed Consent:** An informed consent from clients, explaining the nature and purpose of treatment, risks, benefits, and alternatives.
- **Dual Relationships and Boundaries:** Maintain professional boundaries and avoid dual relationships that could impair objectivity or professionalism. Conflict of the interest. In general counselling practice the counsellor and psychotherapist can reject work with close clients, family members etc.

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### 3. Legal Compliance

- **Licensing Requirements:** All practitioners in Hibernium Therapy are appropriately licensed and maintain their licensure through continuing education. The accreditation professional body is [IACP](#).
- **Mandated Reporting:** Abide by laws regarding reporting abuse, neglect, or threats of harm to self or others. Same regulation is related to the boundaries of confidentiality and introduce in [client contract](#)
- **Record Keeping:** Hibernium Therapy maintains accurate and secure client records in accordance with legal requirements. Separate policy for record keeping.

### 4. Record Retention

- **Data Retention Principles:** Personal data should not be kept longer than necessary for its purpose.
- **Retention Period:** Retain records for 7 years after the last date of service delivery. For children and young people, retain records until the client is 25 (or 26 if therapy ended at age 17) or 8 years after their death, whichever is sooner.
- **Special Cases:** If under investigation or litigation is likely, retain files as they may be used as evidence.
- **Insurance Requirements:** Check with insurance providers for specific retention period requirements.
- **Inclusion in Client Contract:** Include information on record retention in the Client/Therapist Contract.

### 5. Principles for Record Keeping

- **Policy and Procedures:** Separate policy and procedures for record keeping.
- **Compliance:** The policies comply with the IACP Code of Ethics.
- **Retention and Succession Planning:** Plan for the retention and succession of client records in the event of a therapist's incapacitation or death will link with adequate law.

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- **Third-Party Services:** When the record is kept by the or provide for services on behalf of a third party, the client will be informed separately.
- **Damage Contingency:** The procedures to protect records from damage (e.g., fire, system breakdown) are implemented.
- **Quality of Records:** Records are clear, correct, respectful of confidentiality, and fit for purpose.
- **Security:** Records are secure, including password protection for electronic systems.
- **Secure Information Sharing:** A secure pathway for electronic information sharing. Encrypted.
- **Contemporaneous Records:** Maintain timely records of decisions made.
- **Authentication:** Sign and date records at the time of writing.
- **GDPR Compliance:** Records comply with GDPR and Data Protection Acts.

### 6. Client Contract

- **Content:** Include names, frequency and duration of sessions, fees, appointment policies, commitment, continuity, doctor referrals, therapist supervision, and succession planning.
- **Ethical Practice:** Adhere to the IACP Code of Ethics.
- **Confidentiality and Legal Obligations:** Define limits of confidentiality and legal obligations, including reporting. Separate on the clients contract.
- **Privacy Policy:** Attach the privacy policy and ensure clients acknowledge understanding.
- **Termination of Sessions:** Outline procedures for session termination.
- **Out of Session Contact:** Define policies for contact outside sessions.
- **Client Declaration:** Include a declaration of understanding at the end of the contract.

### 7. Privacy Policy

- **Purpose:** Detail how client data is used, stored, retention schedule, and destruction policy.
- **GDPR Compliance:** Ensure clients are informed about data handling practices.

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- **Data Storage:** Outline storage methods, including physical and electronic security measures.
- **Risk Assessment:** Identify and address potential risks to client data.
- **Accountability:** Maintain a GDPR compliance file with records of steps taken, including CPD certificates and seminar attendance notes.

### 8. Clinical Practice

- **Treatment Planning:** Develop individualized treatment plans with measurable goals.
- **Evidence-Based Practices:** Utilize evidence-based interventions and stay updated with current research.
- **Supervision and Consultation:** Engage in regular supervision and peer consultation to ensure high standards of practice.
- **Cultural Competence:** Provide culturally sensitive care and continuously work on understanding and respecting diversity.

### 9. Operational Policies

- **Appointment Scheduling:** Implement a clear process for scheduling, rescheduling, and cancelling appointments.
- **Fee Structure and Billing:** Provide transparent information about fees, insurance billing, and payment policies.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Have clear protocols for managing crises and emergencies, including after-hours support.
- **Client Rights and Responsibilities:** Inform clients of their rights and responsibilities within the therapeutic relationship.

### 10. Technology Use

- **Teletherapy Policies:** Establish guidelines for conducting therapy sessions via telehealth platforms, ensuring privacy and compliance with relevant regulations (e.g., HIPAA).

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- **Electronic Communication:** Outline appropriate use of email, text, and other electronic communications with clients.

### 11. Risk Management

- **Professional Liability Insurance:** All practitioners carry adequate liability insurance.
- **Complaint and Grievance Procedures:** Implement a clear process for handling client complaints and grievances.

### 12. Training and Development

- **Continuing Education:** Require ongoing education and training for all staff to stay current with best practices.
- **Ethical Training:** Regularly conduct training sessions on ethical issues and dilemmas.

### 13. Quality Assurance

- **Client Feedback:** Collect and analyse client feedback to improve services.
- **Outcome Measurement:** Regularly assess treatment outcomes to ensure efficacy and make necessary adjustments.

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