

Counselling Agreement

Welcome

Thank you for choosing Unmasked NN CIC.

Counselling provides a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space where you can explore your thoughts, feelings and experiences. Your counsellor will work alongside you, offering empathy, support and professional guidance to help you better understand yourself and work towards the changes you hope to make.

This agreement explains how counselling works, what you can expect from your counsellor, and what is expected of you as a client. Please take the time to read it carefully before your first session.

Before Counselling Begins

Before counselling starts, you will complete a referral and assessment form. This helps us understand your needs and ensure that our service is appropriate for you.

During your first session, your counsellor will discuss your goals, answer any questions you may have, and ensure you feel comfortable with the counselling process. If, at any stage, we feel another service would better meet your needs, we will discuss this openly with you and offer appropriate signposting where possible.

Sessions

Counselling sessions last **50 minutes**.

Counselling works best when attended regularly, and we usually recommend weekly sessions, particularly at the beginning of therapy. The number of sessions will be agreed between you and your counsellor and reviewed throughout your counselling.

Building the Therapeutic Relationship

Counselling is a process, and developing trust and a therapeutic relationship takes time. It is normal for the first few sessions to feel unfamiliar, emotional or even uncomfortable. Many people find that the benefits of counselling develop gradually as they build a trusting relationship with their counsellor.

We encourage you to give yourself time to settle into counselling before deciding whether it is right for you. If something doesn't feel right, we encourage you to discuss this openly with your counsellor so that any concerns can be explored together.

Your progress and goals will be reviewed regularly throughout counselling.

If you arrive late, your session will still finish at the agreed time. If you are more than **10 minutes late** without making contact, your session may be considered cancelled and charged in accordance with this agreement.

Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries help create a safe and consistent counselling relationship.

To protect your confidentiality, your counsellor will not approach you if they see you outside of sessions unless you choose to acknowledge them first.

Counsellors cannot offer therapeutic support between appointments. Email should only be used for practical matters such as arranging or rearranging appointments, and your counsellor will respond as soon as reasonably possible.

To maintain professional boundaries, counsellors do not communicate with clients through personal social media accounts or accept friend or follow requests.

Payments and Cancellations

All sessions must be paid in advance by BACS transfer.

Payment should be made **at least 48 hours before your appointment**.

Bank Details

Account Name: UNMASKED NN CIC

Bank: HSBC

Sort Code: 40-03-33

Account Number: 92379619

Please use your full name as the payment reference.

Your agreed counselling fee will be confirmed before your first appointment.

- **Qualified Counselling:** £40–£60 per session.
- **Low-Cost Student Counselling:** £20–£35 per session, based on what you identified as affordable during your referral.

If you need to cancel or rearrange a session, please provide **at least 48 hours' notice**.

Appointments cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice, missed appointments, or appointments where payment has not been received may still be chargeable.

Repeated non-attendance or missed payments may result in your counselling ending.

Confidentiality

Everything discussed during counselling is confidential.

However, confidentiality may need to be broken if:

- there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or another person;
- there are safeguarding concerns relating to a child or vulnerable adult;
- disclosure is required by law or court order;
- there is knowledge of serious criminal activity, such as terrorism or money laundering; or
- you give permission for information to be shared.

Your counsellor receives regular clinical supervision to ensure safe and ethical practice. Your work may be discussed anonymously with their supervisor, who is also bound by confidentiality.

If there are serious concerns about your safety, your counsellor may contact your GP, emergency contact or relevant emergency services. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with you first.

Data Protection

Unmasked NN CIC complies with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

We securely store your personal details, referral information, attendance records and minimal counselling notes. Records are stored securely, treated confidentially and retained for **five years** following the end of counselling before being securely destroyed, in accordance with insurance requirements.

Unmasked NN CIC is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Online Counselling

If your sessions take place online or by telephone, you are responsible for ensuring you are in a private and confidential space where you will not be overheard or interrupted.

Counselling sessions must not be recorded by either party unless this has been agreed in advance.

If technical difficulties occur, your counsellor will make reasonable attempts to reconnect or contact you by email. Sessions will still finish at the agreed time.

Crisis Support

Unmasked NN CIC is **not a crisis service** and cannot provide emergency support between counselling sessions.

If you feel unable to keep yourself or somebody else safe, please:

- Call **999**
- Attend your nearest Accident & Emergency Department
- Call **NHS 111** and select the **Mental Health Option**

Equality, Respect and Complaints

Unmasked NN CIC is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and neurodiversity-affirming service. We welcome people of all backgrounds, identities and lived experiences.

If you have any concerns about your counselling, we encourage you to discuss them with your counsellor in the first instance. If you remain unhappy, you may contact Unmasked NN CIC directly at info@unmaskednn.org

Your counsellor will be registered with the BACP or NCPS, you also have the right to raise concerns through their professional body's complaints procedure.

Ending Counselling

You are free to end counselling at any time. Wherever possible, we encourage you to discuss this with your counsellor so that you can have a planned and supportive ending.

Your counsellor may also recommend ending or reviewing counselling if another service would better meet your needs, if professional boundaries are repeatedly not respected, or if ongoing counselling is no longer appropriate.

Client Agreement

By completing and submitting the **Unmasked NN CIC Counselling Referral Form**, and ticking the declaration confirming you have read this agreement, you acknowledge that you:

- have read and understood this counselling agreement;
- have had the opportunity to ask any questions before counselling begins;
- understand the limits of confidentiality;
- understand and agree to the payment, attendance and cancellation policies;
- consent to your personal information being stored and processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018;
- understand that Unmasked NN CIC is not a crisis service and know how to access emergency support if required; and
- agree to participate in counselling under the terms outlined in this agreement.