

Lone Working Policy for The Healing Space

This policy outlines procedures for lone working, particularly in the context of walk and talk therapy and ecotherapy sessions, to ensure the safety and well-being of both the counsellor (Gemma Brown) and clients.

1. Purpose

This policy aims to minimize the risks associated with lone working by establishing clear guidelines and procedures for planning, conducting, and reviewing lone working activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all lone working activities undertaken by Gemma Brown, the owner and counsellor at The Healing Space, including but not limited to:

Walk and talk therapy sessions.

Ecotherapy sessions.

Home visits (if applicable).

Working alone in the office outside of normal hours.

3. Risk Assessment

Before undertaking any lone working activity, a thorough risk assessment will be conducted, considering the following factors:

Location: For walk and talk and ecotherapy, the specific route or location will be assessed for safety (e.g., accessibility, lighting, potential hazards, proximity to help). Consideration will be given to remote or isolated locations.

Client: Individual client risk assessments will be carried out to identify any potential risks they may pose (e.g., history of aggression, unpredictable behaviour).

Environment: Environmental factors such as weather conditions, terrain, and potential wildlife will be considered.

Communication: The availability of mobile phone signal and other communication methods will be checked.

Time of Day: Working during daylight hours will be prioritized where possible. If working at night, additional precautions will be taken.

Emergency Procedures: Clear emergency procedures will be established and understood.

4. Walk and Talk/Ecotherapy Specific Procedures:

Route Planning: Routes will be planned in advance, considering safety, accessibility, and mobile phone signal strength. Clients will be informed of the planned route. Alternative routes will be identified in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Client Suitability: Clients will be assessed for their suitability for walk and talk/ecotherapy. Clients with certain mental health conditions or physical limitations may not be appropriate for this type of therapy.

Check-In System: A system for checking in after each session will be in place. This may involve contacting a designated person or leaving a message.

Personal Safety: Gemma Brown will carry a mobile phone with a fully charged battery and ensure it has credit. Consideration will be given to carrying a personal safety alarm.

Emergency Contact: Emergency contact details will be readily available.

Weather Conditions: Sessions will be cancelled or postponed if weather conditions are deemed unsafe.

Clothing and Equipment: Appropriate clothing and footwear will be worn, considering the weather and terrain. Any necessary equipment (e.g., first aid kit) will be carried.

5. General Lone Working Procedures:

Communication: Gemma Brown will inform someone of their whereabouts, expected duration of the activity, and contact details.

Mobile Phone: A mobile phone will be carried at all times and fully charged.

Personal Safety: Gemma Brown will be aware of their surroundings and take necessary precautions to ensure their personal safety.

Security: When working alone in the office, appropriate security measures will be taken (e.g., locking doors, activating alarms).

Emergency Procedures: Gemma Brown will be familiar with emergency procedures, including how to contact emergency services.

Training: Appropriate training on lone working safety and risk assessment will be undertaken.

6. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the policy and identify any areas for improvement.

7. Record Keeping

Records of risk assessments, incident reports, and policy reviews will be maintained.

8. Responsibilities

Gemma Brown is responsible for adhering to this lone working policy and ensuring their own safety.

9. Incident Reporting

Any incidents or near misses related to lone working must be reported to Gemma Brown as soon as possible. A written record of the incident will be made.

10. Policy Availability

This policy will be made available to all relevant parties.