



Counsellors' Expectations of BCS and BCS Expectations of Counsellors

Procedure applies to:	All counsellors
Procedure approved by:	Trustee for Counselling
Procedure start date:	Prior to 2012
Procedure last updated:	December 2020
Procedure review date:	December 2021
Version number:	5
Contact for queries about procedure:	Head of Counselling
To be read in conjunction with:	Counsellors' Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure Volunteer Counsellors' Problem Resolution Procedure

This document describes what Basingstoke Counselling Service (BCS) provides for counsellors who undertake counselling of BCS clients, and what BCS in turn expects of such counsellors.

BCS expects all counsellors to signify that they have read a copy of these Expectations and to abide by their provisions. With the passage of time, changes to these Expectations may become appropriate; the Trustees reserve the right to modify them as necessary. Modifications will be notified to all counsellors.

Counsellors are volunteers; they are not employees of BCS, and may under no circumstances represent themselves as employees.

Counselling Standards

1. In order that the highest standards of counselling should be maintained, and that the professional reputation of BCS is safeguarded, BCS will offer counselling opportunities only to counsellors who have successfully undergone or are currently undertaking a substantial training involving counselling skills and, in the opinion of the interview panel and the external assessor appointed by BCS, are likely to be able satisfactorily to perform the duties of a counsellor.
2. BCS will maintain the appointment of a Head of Counselling who is responsible for standards within the service and will oversee all aspects of counselling. The appointment of the Head of Counselling is the ultimate responsibility of the Trustees.

What BCS Offers to Counsellors

3. BCS offers to counsellors an opportunity to continue to develop counselling skills under the supervision of a suitably qualified supervisor. All counsellors will be given group supervision and one (or two for BCS trainees) individual tutorials

with the supervisor each year. Each counsellor can expect to remain with the same supervisor for a period of two years.

4. BCS will maintain association with a nationally recognised organisation which, in the opinion of the Trustees, will provide appropriate counselling standards under which counsellors will operate. The degree of association and the organisation with which BCS associates may change from time to time, and under these circumstances the Trustees will provide counsellors with details of the changes made and the rationale behind such changes.
5. BCS will maintain an insurance policy providing professional indemnity for each counsellor. The policy will be taken out with an insurance company which, in the opinion of the Trustees, provides a reputable service appropriate to BCS needs.
6. BCS will allocate clients to counsellors according to the availability and learning needs of individual counsellors and the availability of suitable clients. Allocation of clients will be the responsibility of the Head of Counselling and at the discretion of the supervisor.
7. BCS will provide workshops and further training to counsellors as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources. The costs of such workshops and training will be borne by counsellors who attend workshops or training sessions, and BCS undertakes to keep these to reasonable levels.
8. BCS will support the decision of any counsellor who feels that the counselling session cannot proceed because the client is under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol.

What BCS Expects of Counsellors

9. All counsellors are expected to commit to the Service for a minimum of two years. This is due to the nature of the open-ended work that we offer clients.
10. Counsellors are expected to adhere to the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, and to maintain a professional and confidential service to clients. Counsellors are expected to show ongoing commitment to their own personal growth and professional development.
11. It is a requirement for BCS counsellors to be a member of a professional counselling body whilst seeing BCS clients.
12. Counsellors are expected to dress professionally, but not corporately, for client sessions. Jeans, shorts, sportswear, trainers and revealing clothing are not considered appropriate attire for BCS Counsellors.
13. Counsellors meetings are held three times a year to inform counsellors of what is happening in the service and to enable them to raise issues of importance to them. Counsellors are asked to attend.
14. Clients:
 - a) Counsellors are asked to develop their client load in agreement with their supervisor to a minimum of three clients, and may be asked to accept four clients if necessary, e.g. to reduce the waiting list. By arrangement with the Head of Counselling, counsellors may be able to take additional clients.

- b) Counsellors are asked to fit their client hours into the 'block' system that BCS operates. Blocks are available Monday to Thursday from 8am-12pm, 12.30pm-4.30pm and 5pm-9pm. Half blocks may be available on request.
- c) Time must be allocated to each client to complete all necessary administrative procedures, including completing record sheets and closing forms, and any necessary correspondence with GPs and referrers.
- d) Counsellors are expected to be available for not less than 46 weeks per year. It is expected that counsellors will take holidays of not longer than two weeks duration at a time, except in exceptional circumstances; and are asked to inform the Administrator of all holiday dates and other periods of non-availability.

15. Supervision:

- a) Counsellors are expected to attend group supervision for a period of one and a half hours every week (or fortnight in some instances), and should inform the supervisor of any anticipated absence. Trainee counsellors may be required to co-ordinate holidays with their supervisor.
- b) During supervisor breaks, peer supervision is an expectation across all supervision groups. The rationale for this is to recognise the importance of continuing to have a reflective space, even if the supervisor is absent.
- c) Counsellors are expected to attend individual tutorial meetings with the counsellor's supervisor annually (or twice a year for BCS trainees) on mutually agreed dates. Each counsellor is expected to complete a self-assessment report which should be kept as an ongoing record. Counsellors should expect supervisors to add comments to assessment reports.

16. Each counsellor is expected to attend at least 12 hours of additional suitable training each year at the counsellor's expense. Such training may be undertaken at BCS or elsewhere.

17. BCS trainees are required to undertake personal therapy for the duration of the Diploma course and ideally beyond.

As part of the application process, trainees from external institutions are required to have had a minimum of six months' therapy with a psychodynamic or integrative counsellor prior to applying. External trainees are required to remain in weekly therapy for the duration of their training whilst on placement at BCS, and ideally beyond.

Qualified counsellors should be prepared to undertake personal counselling or therapy if recommended by the counsellor's supervisor.

18. Each counsellor must adhere to BCS's established policies and procedures as set out in the Service Handbook available SharePoint. Counsellors should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of the Handbook.

19. Each counsellor is responsible for ensuring that all case notes are kept up to date and that strict confidentiality is maintained at all times.

20. Each counsellor is responsible for requesting that the client makes a donation to the Service commensurate with the client's ability to pay.

21. Withdrawal from Service

Counsellors are requested to give no less than three months' and ideally six months' notice of withdrawal from counselling. This is in order to recognise the needs of clients in the time required to terminate the counselling relationship in long-term work.

It is the responsibility of the counsellor to inform both their supervisor and the Head of Counselling of their intention to leave and appropriate ending dates will be discussed in supervision. No conversations with clients should take place before discussion in supervision. Discussions may take place at a senior level to ensure the client's welfare.

There are two options available to the affected client(s), i.e. working towards an ending with their present counsellor, or being referred on to another counsellor within the Service. These options will be explored with the client by the departing counsellor, in consultation with their supervisor.

Should a counsellor's departure be unplanned, the Head of Counselling will contact the counsellor's clients to offer an opportunity to discuss the situation.

In either case, if the affected client(s) wish(es) to continue with the Service, he/she will be re-allocated to an experienced counsellor as soon as possible, with due regard to boundaries.

The departing counsellor is asked to respect ethical and professional boundaries, and should refrain from seeing any client privately who was referred to them within their Service role for a period of at least one year after the counsellor leaves the Service. There may be exceptional circumstances where a different arrangement is agreed by the senior clinical team.

Where a supervisor or Head of Counselling is concerned about a counsellor continuing at BCS, the procedures outlined in the Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure or the Volunteer Counsellors' Problem Resolution Procedure should be followed as appropriate.

Declaration by Counsellor

I have read and understood the Counsellors' Expectations of BCS and BCS Expectations of Counsellors, and I understand that failure by me to act in accordance with its provisions may result in my services being no longer required.

Signed: _____

Name: _____
Please print

Date: _____

(Please return signed copy to the Head of Counselling)