

Privacy Notice

This Privacy Notice explains how I collect, store, use, protect and retain personal information in relation to the counselling and psychotherapy services I provide.

I process personal information in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For the purposes of data protection law, I am the data controller for the personal information I hold about my clients.

Personal information I hold

I keep the personal information I need to provide and administer the counselling and psychotherapy service. In most cases, this is limited to your name, email address and telephone number.

Occasionally, I may hold additional information, such as your address, date of birth, GP details, insurance details or other relevant administrative information. This is usually only where it is necessary for a specific purpose, for example where therapy is arranged or funded through an insurer or another third party, where a report or letter has been requested, or where there is another professional, legal or administrative reason to hold the information.

During therapy, you may share personal and sensitive information about your life, history, relationships, health, feelings, difficulties or circumstances. This information is part of the confidential therapeutic conversation. I do not usually keep ongoing session notes or detailed clinical records of what is discussed in sessions.

How information is used

Personal information is used only where necessary for the provision and administration of counselling and psychotherapy services.

This may include arranging and managing appointments, communicating with you about practical matters, receiving payment, liaising with an insurer or third party where this has been agreed or is necessary, preparing a report or letter where requested and agreed, responding to a professional or legal obligation, or acting where there is a serious risk or safeguarding concern.

The lawful basis for processing personal information is usually that it is necessary for the provision of counselling and psychotherapy services and for the management of the professional agreement between us. In some circumstances, information may also be processed where there is a legal obligation to do so, or where there is a legitimate interest in maintaining appropriate professional, administrative, insurance-related or safeguarding records.

Sensitive personal information

Counselling and psychotherapy may involve information about your health, personal life, relationships, history, difficulties, beliefs, sexuality, family circumstances or other sensitive matters.

Under data protection law, this may include special category data. I process such information only where it is necessary for the provision of counselling and psychotherapy services, for maintaining appropriate professional standards, for supervision, or where required by law or necessary for reasons of safeguarding or serious risk.

How information is stored

Basic contact details may be stored in password-protected electronic form, including on a smartphone, so that I can communicate with you about appointments and practical matters.

Where I hold additional administrative information or documents, these are stored securely. Any paper-based documents containing personal information are kept in a locked cabinet in my office, to which I have exclusive access.

I aim to keep personal information to the minimum necessary for the proper administration of the service and for meeting relevant legal, ethical, professional or insurance-related responsibilities.

Records

I do not usually keep ongoing session notes or detailed clinical records of what is discussed in counselling sessions.

Where it is necessary to keep a record of a specific matter, for example in relation to risk, safeguarding, correspondence, insurance, reports, complaints, supervision, or significant professional decisions, this information is kept securely and handled in accordance with this Privacy Notice.

Supervision

As part of ethical and professional practice, I may discuss aspects of my clinical work in supervision. Supervision helps support the quality, safety and integrity of the work.

When I refer to client work in supervision, identifying details are not disclosed. My supervisor is also bound by confidentiality and works in accordance with professional ethical standards.

Sharing information

Personal information is not shared with third parties without your consent, except in exceptional circumstances.

These may include situations where there is a serious risk of harm to you or to another person; where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect; where disclosure is required by law; where I am legally compelled to provide information; or where the information relates to terrorism, money laundering, or another serious crime.

Where possible and appropriate, I would aim to discuss this with you before sharing information. However, this may not always be possible, depending on the particular circumstances.

Your rights

You have rights in relation to the personal information I hold about you. These may include the right to request access to your personal data, the right to have inaccurate information corrected, the right to request deletion of information, the right to restrict or object to certain forms of processing, and the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.

These rights are not absolute in every circumstance. For example, some information may need to be retained where there is a legal, professional, ethical or insurance-related reason to do so.

If you wish to make a request concerning your personal information, you can contact me by email or through the contact form on my website.

Guy Van de Walle, PhD – Psychotherapist, Counsellor & Psychologist

BACP Accredited (<http://www.bacp.co.uk/>). Working in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions



Retention of information

Personal information is kept only for as long as necessary in relation to the purpose for which it is held.

Basic administrative and contact information, and any records that need to be retained for professional, legal, ethical or insurance-related reasons, are kept securely for seven years after the end of counselling and are then securely destroyed.

Data security and breaches

I take reasonable steps to protect the personal information I hold from loss, misuse, unauthorised access or disclosure.

If a personal data breach occurs, I will assess the nature and seriousness of the breach. Where the breach meets the threshold for reporting, I will notify the Information Commissioner's Office without undue delay and, where feasible, within 72 hours of becoming aware of it. Where appropriate, I will also inform any affected client.

Further information

The Information Commissioner's Office provides information about data protection rights and responsibilities. Further information is available from the ICO website.