

Why Cancellation Fees Apply in Counselling and Psychotherapy

Counselling and psychotherapy depend on regularity, continuity and a protected space in which the work can take place. When we agree to meet weekly, a specific appointment time is reserved for you. This time is not simply an isolated appointment, but part of the therapeutic frame within which the work develops.

For this reason, missed sessions and late cancellations have both practical and therapeutic consequences. Practically, the time has been set aside and cannot usually be offered to another client at short notice. Therapeutically, regular attendance helps to sustain the continuity, depth and seriousness of the work. Interruptions can sometimes be unavoidable, but when they become frequent or are arranged at short notice, they can affect the stability and momentum of the counselling process.

A reserved weekly appointment

When a regular appointment is agreed, that time is held for you. This means that I do not offer it to another client, and I organise my clinical availability around it. The fee therefore covers not only the time spent together in the session, but also the reserved availability of that weekly appointment.

This does not mean that cancellations are never possible. I recognise that life sometimes requires flexibility, and my cancellation policy allows for this. However, flexibility has to be balanced with the need to protect the regularity of the work and the viability of the practice.

The cancellation policy

If you need to cancel a session, please give at least one week's notice.

If less than one week's notice is given, half the session fee is payable.

If less than 48 hours' notice is given, or if a session is missed, the full fee is payable.

Where possible, and subject to availability, you may request to rearrange your appointment within the same week. If this is discussed and agreed, the cancellation fee will not apply. Rebooking only takes effect once it has been confirmed.

This policy is applied consistently so that the terms of the work remain clear, fair and reliable.

Why the policy matters

Cancellation policies are common in counselling, psychotherapy and other appointment-based professions. Their purpose is not punitive. They exist because a reserved appointment time involves a real commitment from both client and therapist.

From the client's side, the regular appointment supports engagement with the therapeutic process. From the therapist's side, it protects the time, availability and continuity needed to provide the service responsibly.

The policy also helps to prevent uncertainty or negotiation each time a cancellation occurs. This is important because money, absence, commitment, disappointment, guilt or frustration can all become emotionally charged in therapy. A clear policy provides a stable framework within which these matters can be handled openly and professionally.

Flexibility and limits

The policy is intended to be clear rather than harsh. It allows cancellations with sufficient notice and, where feasible, same-week rebooking without an additional charge. At the same time, it recognises that late cancellations and missed sessions have consequences for the therapeutic work and for the management of the practice.

If you know that you will be away, or that you may be unable to attend, please let me know as early as possible. Planned breaks, holidays and other interruptions can then be discussed and managed in a way that protects the continuity of the work as much as possible.

In summary

The cancellation policy exists to protect the therapeutic frame, the regularity of the work, and the reserved time that has been set aside for you. It also ensures that the practical terms of counselling are clear from the beginning.

If you have any concerns or questions about the policy, you are welcome to raise them during a session.